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The Cognitive Value of Love in Tolstoy: A Study in Aesthetics

Juharyan, Victoria

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THE COGNITIVE VALUE OF LOVE IN TOLSTOY:

A STUDY IN AESTHETICS

Victoria Juharyan

A DISSERTATION

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OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This dissertation traces a vital trajectory in Tolstoy's thought – the evolution of the relationship between love and knowledge – and discusses the shifts that occur in Tolstoy's aesthetic paradigm in response to a change in this relationship. The dynamic between love and knowledge for Tolstoy is not only a philosophical conundrum explored in the content of his works but a moral and epistemological configuration that directly affects his aesthetics: the overall form and genre of his works as well as particular narrative techniques employed in these works.

As Tolstoy revises his philosophy of love, his aesthetics change accordingly. Before the crisis, trying to follow the steps of Plato in the Symposium from love of a particular person to universal love, Tolstoy repeatedly failed to arrive at the all-inclusive love [agape] he so longed for. There was always an excluded remainder. If the romanticization of the family led him to nationalism, romantic love led either to distractive passions, or, at best, to a single biological family. The family as a model even when including the neighbor in its sphere of love, could not extend to a love of humanity as a whole. Tolstoy could not be comfortable with such vicious circularity. However, he did not 'fix' the paradoxes. Instead, after the crisis, he reversed the direction of Plato's 'Ladder': we are now supposed to begin with the love of everything, which will logically imply the love of particular people as constituent parts. Even though he sees this as a state of being rather than a developmental process, late Tolstoy now fails to 'arrive' at a satisfying love of particular human beings, be it family members or lovers. Love individuates, singles people out based on their particular characteristics, but this would contradict Tolstoy's new conception of subjectivity, which

follows his new philosophy of love: that we are all the same underneath, thus can all be known and loved. This, in turn, changed which consciousnesses Tolstoy found necessary to represent: instead of depicting the consciousnesses of characters he loves in order to show their development, Tolstoy now depicts consciousnesses that fail to see his newly discovered truth and need to be taught a lesson. This dissertation moves chronologically through the corpus of Tolstoy's work, explicating the shifting priorities he awards to cognition and to love in terms provided by Russian and European aestheticians (primarily Kant and Bakhtin) and speculating on larger questions of art and deontology through a Tolstoyan lens.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements vii

Introduction: 1

Love's Lessons 2

A Typology of Love 6

The Cognitive Value of Love in the Philosophical Tradition 9

Plato and the Ladder of Love 10

Love and Saint Augustine 14

Aquinas and Reasoned Love 15

Rousseau's *Amour de Soi*, *Amour-propre*, and *Pitié* 16

Kant and Respect instead of Love 19

Kant and *Eros* 22

Kant: Love as Inclination and Feeling 23

Hegel and Love as Dialectic 24

Schopenhauer and "Metaphysics of Love" 27

Chapter 1: Early Tolstoy as a Platonist: Love as a Prerequisite for Knowledge 33

Transcending Language 36

In Love's or the Other's Eyes 40

Love as Attention: Early Tolstoy and Early Bakhtin 41

Loving Perception 44

Bakhtin's Theory of Cognition 46

Early Tolstoy and Early Bakhtin 50

Narrating Universal Experiences 52

The Responsibility of Articulated Imagination 53

Ludic Love and Watching Gamely 56

Perceiving Perceiving Perception 58

From Childhood to Youth: Looking Like an Adult 64

Love Between Author and Hero 69

Conclusion: Seeing Through Love 72

Chapter 2: The Moral-Epistemological Crisis in *Anna Karenina*: Knowledge as a Prerequisite for Love 76

Who Knows More? Dolly's Forgiveness 80

Eros and Eating 82

Love's Effect on Perception 88

Love as Transgression 92

Universal or Individual Ethics: Kant and Bakhtin 95

Vengeance, Forgiveness, and the Lack of a Story 99

Love, Knowledge, and Forgiveness: To Know Is to Forgive 100

Bakhtin: Author and God 103

Tolstoy as God 108

Love, Redemption, and Aesthetics from *War and Peace* to *Anna Karenina* 109

Love and Forgiveness versus Love and Punishment 111

Anna's Inability To Be Contained, or the Genre of the Adultery Novel 116

Storge as the Delimitation of Both Levin's and Kitty's Love 120

How Do I Know Myself or My Neighbor? 124

Does My Love Extend to My Nation? 127

How Do I Recognize My Neighbor? 129

Toward Universal Love 134

Chapter 3: Late Tolstoy: Climbing Down Plato's Ladder 138

Ladders in Tolstoy's Works 142

An Example: Father Sergius 146

Impersonal Life 153

Father Sergius and Ivan Ilyich 157

Pashenka and Praskovya 160

Which Comes First, Universal Love or Love of the Individual? 162

Love and Knowledge in *Resurrection* 168

Perspectivism and the Oak Tree 177

"Reasonable Consciousness" and Science as Imitation of Imitation 179

Late Tolstoy and Hegel's Ladder 195

Is Tolstoy's "Christian Love" Love? 198

Falling off the Ladder 202

Centrality of Love 204

Conclusion 208

Afterword: Some Classical Categories of Love in the Russian Tradition 209

Solovyov: *Eros* in Action 210

Rozanov's "Family as Religion": *Storge* and *Eros* 215

Berdyaev and *Eros* as Free Creation 218

A Few Last Words 226

Works Cited 228

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INTRODUCTION

> "The hero of my tale—whom I love with all the power of my soul, whom I have tried to portray in all its beauty, who has been, is, and always will be beautiful—is the Truth." (Katz, 45)

When we talk about truth, we are talking about knowledge. If the acquisition of knowledge is an aim of philosophy and philology, love immediately becomes intricately linked with the inquiry. Tolstoy ends "Sevastopol in May"—the second installment in his triptych of Sevastopol stories—by explicitly linking love, beauty, and truth. Searching for truth, according to Tolstoy, is a metaphysical enterprise. It requires an exercise of the desiring and loving soul; it is the product not only of the mind, but also the heart. What's more, if epistemology is the search for some basis for justified beliefs, then Tolstoy is offering a possible ground for what makes justified beliefs appear justified. He links love inextricably with the search for justified belief, for truth. What does love have to do with truth? Why does it not, for instance, distract us from what is true?

Tolstoy sought many paths from loving the individual to universal love. But there were constant obstacles. The romanticization of the family led him to nationalism, and romantic love led either to distracting passions, or, at best, to love that was exclusive to members of one's family. The family as a model, even when it included the neighbor in its sphere of love, could not logically be extended to love of humanity as a whole.

Tolstoy could not be comfortable with such vicious circularity. However, he never "resolved" these paradoxes. Instead, after his crisis, he reversed the direction of Plato's "ladder." He posits that we should begin with a love of all others, a universal love, which (he hoped) logically implies or progresses toward a love for particular people, as love of the whole logically includes the constituent parts. Although he sees this as a state of being rather than a developmental process, late Tolstoy still fails to "arrive" at a satisfying love of particular human beings, be it family members, neighbors or lovers. Love individuates based on attraction; it singles people out based on their unrepeatable particularities and differentiates them. (This metaphysical principle is equivalent to Leibniz's "identity of the indiscernible:" no two separate objects can have all properties in common.) This "particular" love, with differentiated beloved objects, contradicts Tolstoy's new cosmology, chiefly his conception of subjectivity, which implies that objects are *essentially* undifferentiated and eventually discoverable as such. This is what allows them to be known and thus loved. This change in models of love and subjectivity, in turn, changed which consciousnesses Tolstoy found necessary to represent in his artistic works. Instead of depicting the consciousnesses of characters he loves in order to show their development, instead of giving the reader access to the hero's consciousness, late Tolstoy depicts consciousnesses that fail to see the "new" truth of undifferentiated others, and need to be taught a lesson. And the only person who can relate this is the author.

Love's Lessons

Love between author and hero in early Tolstoy was not merely an aesthetic feature, but a phenomenon with strong moral and pedagogic implications. Love accords with

Tolstoy's understanding of life and art at the time, namely that not only is love necessary for aesthetic creations, but that these creations "infect" us with love. By loving particular characters, we might come to love universally. Early Tolstoy embraced a Platonic epistemology in which loves begins with love for individuals; he believed that love of particular people led ultimately to the wisdom of universal love. Tolstoy's beloved Natasha Rostova, for example, is supposed to cause the reader to love the whole world and feel she is in touch with its reality. In such a configuration of love and knowledge, the author transmits his love of particular characters to the reader, and who in turn begins to ascend the ladder toward philosophic knowledge and eventually arrive at universal love.

In her essay "Steerforth's Arm: Love and the Moral Point of View," Martha Nussbaum points out that romantic love operates differently from other emotions that are depicted in fiction. For example, one can imagine how anger, depicted in a novel, might make me hate someone—Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* offers a cardinal example of learning to hate. Alternatively, an author's or a character's respect for the cause may cause the reader to respect that cause as well. We might consider how the reader is affected by the characters encountered by Jean Valjean in Hugo's *Les Misérables* or by Odysseus in *The Illiad*. The author's respect, or the respect from other characters depicted in the work, is meant to inspire the reader to respect that character or cause, as well (338).

A love story, on the other hand, is not supposed to make us love or desire its object, no matter how appealing. We surely do not fall in love with Anatole because Natasha does, nor do we feel attracted to Oblonsky's governess, even if we empathize with the character who experience love and desire. This seems to be the case both in life and in novels when it comes to love between characters.

That said, the love between author and *hero* functions differently from the love between two characters; it is meant to affect the reader. Surely Tolstoy expects us to love Natasha Rostova, Prince Andrey, Princess Marya, Pierre, and Kutuzov. Tolstoy takes great pains to bring this love about. We are *supposed* to be affected by this privileged knowledge and by the author's clear sympathy for these characters. This love, moreover, is supposed to make us better people. The novelistic world is arguably the only space in which love can be affective or contagious.

This love of particular people or characters leads to an individualist ethics that Tolstoy could not accept. It makes us *forgive* and forget others. We forgive Natasha Rostova's moral shortcoming, but the trajectory of her own character development demonstrates that her love of particular people does not lead to universal love: she nearly forgets her love for Sonya at the end and shows a shocking lack of understanding of her friend's virtues and unfair position. In this case, love does not lead to knowledge. Then perhaps we need to know to love and not vice versa? Perhaps Natasha's love, which is entirely based on attraction and particularity, does not work; it does not lead to universal love. On the other hand, Princess Marya's starting point is universal love, which does lead her to particular love with Nikolay. (Here, though, we cannot forget that even Marya is unjust toward Sonya). In *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy tries to test these possibilities by first showing how individualized love based on attraction and not grounded in familial or universal love fails. What is more, the novel also demonstrates that if we need to know to love, we still cannot arrive at universal love. Our love will be as limited as our knowledge.

Love for all becomes the main lesson of late Tolstoy. He claims that universal love is not the endpoint of the process of enlightenment, but rather the condition of its possibility. If

we realize that everyone shares the same human essence or universal sprit, this knowledge will allow us—and arguably *require* us—to love every living creature. Only this kind of universal love, claims Tolstoy, permits the possibility of loving particular people. But paradoxically, in late Tolstoy, productive love between author and hero all but disappears; the narrative voice becomes didactic and punitive. Tolstoy clearly loves Natasha Rostova, Pierre, Levin, and even Anna Karenina, but we cannot say the same about Nekhludov, Ivan Ilyich, Father Sergius, or even those faintly positive but thinly dramatized characters from his late fiction, such as Gerasim, Nikita, and Pashenka. How can we explain this disappearance of love between author and hero?

Instead of infecting the reader with love for the depicted hero, Tolstoy's late stories are about the *lack* of love. Tolstoy wants his reader to experience this absence, hoping thereby to push the reader out of the text, forcing her to close the book and actualize love in life. Tolstoy considers this actualization of love in life, prompted by his negative example, to be the purpose of art.

***

To trace this trajectory of the transformation of love's link with knowledge in Tolstoy's art and thought, we need to draw several distinctions and consider briefly the intellectual history of the cognitive value of love. First, we will survey the classical categories of love we have inherited from the Greeks. Then we will briefly consider representatives of the various philosophical positions on the cognitive value of love in the Western tradition: Plato, Rousseau, Aquinas, Augustine, Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer. Chapter One, "Love as Prerequisite for Knowledge," introduces the notion of the cognitive value of love in early Tolstoy. Chapter Two, "Knowledge as Prerequisite for Love,"

discusses the moral-epistemological Crisis in *Anna Karenina.* Chapter Three, "I know all; I love all," covers late Tolstoy's solution to the failure of the two previous models. Finally, to confirm the strangeness of Tolstoy's desire to start with universal love, the afterword turns to the classic categories of love in three great theorists of love in the Russian tradition: Soloviev, Rozanov, and Berdiaev.

A Typology of Love

The main theoretical framework we will use to discuss the notion of love between author and hero is that of Mikhail Bakhtin, who defines love as an attention-directing faculty, stripped of any sentimentality, nearly stripped of *eros*. In Bakhtin's philosophy, love is a cognitively productive creative attitude toward the world. His definition of love is not mainstream in the Western tradition, and is sufficiently unusual to require some contextualization.

The Greeks were among the earliest and most thorough taxonomers of everything, including love. (The Greeks and Tolstoy had a shared love of categorization and drawing distinctions.) The Greeks discriminated among seven kinds of love, differentiated by the kind of loving and the object being loved.

First is *storge*—familial love, or, as rendered by C.S. Lewis, simply "affection" (31). Given the centrality of family for Tolstoy—he embraced and romanticized it, but later rejected it—*storge* is a crucial kind of love. *Storge* is the affection parents feel for their children, and also the love children feel for parents. One is born into it and surrounded by it. Importantly, *storge* is unconditional, not based on merit, unlike *eros* (romantic love) and *philia* (friendship).

Although *storge* is least discriminating love, it is also one of the most exclusive of loves. It is a love entirely based on the distinction made by Richard Gustafson between "my own" people (*svoi*) and "others" (*chuzhie*) (8). *Storge* is essentially a habitual kind of love, reflecting daily experience. We love our family in part because our family is our context: family is *familiar*. We experience the world with these family members, so even their ugliest and most exasperating aspects come to be comfortable and endearing.

Even when *storge* extends to friends and others outside of the family circle, its foundation of likeness and kinship can hardly extend it beyond the nation or the race. This kind of love plays a prominent role in *War and Peace*, where it easily lapses into nationalism. By itself, *storge* not only does not often lead to universal love; indeed, it often prevents universal love.

Even more important than *storge* for analyzing Tolstoy is *philautia*—self-love. The Greeks and Tolstoy identified two types of self-love, a healthy and an unhealthy kind. The unhealthy variation is narcissistic and self-absorbed (for example, Father Sergius). The healthy variation leads to self-perfection, self-knowledge, and consequently to knowledge of the world at large, and enhances one's wider capacity to love. Think here, for instance, of Natasha's sophisticated self-awareness in the epilogue of *War and Peace*; as a mother and wife, she consciously sheds the very talents and behaviors that had made her so attractive to potential suitors earlier in the novel. The implication is that one's relationships with and duties toward others reflect one's relationship to oneself. Aristotle makes a similar argument in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, differentiating between "good" and "bad" self-love, and claiming that the man who truly loves himself in a good way will always "assign to himself what is noblest and best" and would work for the common good (34). Thus the sentiment

attributed to Aristotle: “All friendly feelings for others are an extension of a man’s feelings for himself” (243).

Equally important, but more problematic for Tolstoy, is the kind of love that is most frequently the topic of literature: *eros*. We often think of *eros* as the state of “being in love.” *Eros* is potentially both the most productive and the most distracting: it may lead to *agape*, universal love, but can also become manical, possessive, jealous, and disastrous.

Eros has always been tangled up with epistemology. It has often been considered an efficient “motor” for knowledge. If with *storge*, familiarity and knowledge of others matters, then *eros* itself leads to knowledge and enlightenment. In Platonic philosophy, *eros* is the foundation of wisdom, the first step up the “ladder.” Moreover, *eros* is permeable: it can incorporate other kinds of love. Ideally, it contains *philia* and develops into or incorporates *storge*, *agape*, and *pragma*.

Moreover, *eros* is playful love, often connected with *ludus*, a game. Playful *eros* and ludic love are at the heart of many childhood games, and this love is encoded into many scenes from *Childhood*. *Ludus* and *eros* are directly associated with young lovers, and we find instances of this playful attitude between Kitty and Levin and Pierre and Natasha. Importantly, ludic love has little role in Andrey and Natasha’s engagement, and increasingly less between Anna and Vronsky as their *eros* grows into a distrustful mania.

If erotic play or ludic love is expected from young lovers, the kind of love that more often defines a mature relationship is *pragma*. This kind of love achieves the deep understanding and comfort characteristic of long-married couples. *Eros* is about falling in love; *pragma* is about staying in love. *Eros* ideally contains *philia* and develops into both *storge* and *pragma*. We can find this kind of love between the Rostov parents, and we

imagine its growth between Pierre and Natasha and Kitty and Levin. We even see it between old Prince Vasiliy Kuragin and his wife, but Tolstoy clearly disapproves of their values. *Pragma* also exists between Anna and Karenin, but their problem is the initial absence of *eros* and *philia*. This point is one of the reasons why Anna's history before her marriage is absent from the novel.

Philia—friendship—is the kind of love most freely given. Partly for this reason, the ancients also considered it the noblest kind. For Aristotle, friendship happens between equals; it is a dispassionate affection that requires character and virtue to create and maintain. Friendship as virtue and loyalty can be—and often should be—extended to one's family and community. Nikolai Rostov's sense of loyalty to his regiment is based on this extension of *philia* to one's community.

Finally, the most important kind of love both for Tolstoy and the neo-Platonic Christian world, is *agape*—divine universal love. *Agape* is the unconditional love that God bears for people, and the same love that exists *in potentia* in them. *Agape* was for Thomas Aquinas (following Aristotle) the capacity "to will the good of another" (*Summa* I, 26, 4). One does not have to helplessly fall into love. One can be a positive agent in making the other good. Tolstoy's goal, throughout his life and works, was to prove to himself and the reader that *agape* was achievable, and achievable by all. Love is therefore more than merely pleasurable and spiritual: it becomes a project of education or enlightenment.

The Cognitive Value of Love in the Philosophical Tradition

Love is often considered a form of madness, a force that muddles one's reason. From Plato onward, however, love—specifically, erotic love—has also seen as the condition of

possibility for knowledge, paving a path that leads to *agape*. Similarly, when we use the phrase "cognitive value of love," we emphasize a link between love-for-other (and, arguably, love-for-self) and knowledge of the world. Such a link cannot be discussed without Plato. Additionally, in this section we will also discuss the cognitive value of love in Aquinas, Rousseau, Saint Augustine, Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer—each of whom shaped Tolstoy's own thinking.

Plato and the Ladder of Love

According to Plato, it is love—and love for a particular person—that stimulates us to apply our reason correctly, which is to say, to comprehend what is good, beautiful, and true. This topic most explicitly comes up in *Symposium,* but it arises as a subject in many other dialogues as well.

In *Symposium*, Socrates "repeats" the discourse on eros that he had learned from Diotima, a priestess who first taught him "the arts of loving" (201E–204C,). In this discourse, as related by Socrates, Diotima explains that love awakens the individual not only to the existence of another person, but to the existence of the world around her. She begins by explaining that love, both physical and "psychical," is tied directly to generation, production. The goal "of all the sexual passion and love of offspring which we see in the animal world" is immortality, to "secure a kind of perpetuity" (208B, 560). What is true for the body is likewise true for the soul, which also has offspring: the lover seeks a beautiful soul to generate such offspring as laws, inventions, and noble deeds. Like the actual, physical offspring, these offspring guarantee the immortality of the soul: uniting with another soul, ours will live forever. Woken up to love, we are woken up to life and beauty.

Diotima speaks of a final revelation, a sanctuary of Love, a moment, when universal beauty "dawns" upon the lover (211C, 562). There is only one way to this revelation::

> Starting from individual beauties, the quest for the universal beauty must find him ever mounting the heavenly ladder, stepping from rung to rung – that is, from one to two, anf from two to *every* lovely body, from bodily beauty to the beauty of institutions, from institutions to learning, and from learning in general to the special lore that pertains to nothing but the beautiful itself – until he comes to know what beauty is. (211C, 562-63)

This idea of the movement from a love of a person to love of life and science is Plato's ladder. Platonic enlightenment is predicated on an ascent from love of a particular person to love of ideas, to what is good, beautiful, and true. In this ascent of love, we move from *eros* to *agape*.

This trajectory is very significant for Tolstoy. Early in his career, notably in the trilogy *Childhood, Adolescence, Youth*, Tolstoy embraces the ascent from love of the individual to universal love; like Plato, he acknowledges a beloved object, another person, as the first and necessary step up the ladder to love of the "good, beautiful, and true." Later, in *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy tests and modifies the configuration between knowledge and love, arriving eventually at a radically different configuration that nonetheless still relies on the cognitive value of love.

In Plato, only through love of the other can we begin to appreciate beauty, and thus the goodness and truth required for the appreciation of the arts and sciences. According to Plato, love draws us out of ourselves. But there is a problem with this system for someone who, like Tolstoy, embraces a democratic, "populist," non-exclusionary access to "ultimate

truths." The ascent of love, out of the self, takes a long time and significant effort, and does not guarantee that one will finally arrive at divine love. Moreover, not everyone will be able to climb to the top of the ladder. There can be missteps.

Understanding Socrates's claim in *Symposium* that the only thing he knows "is the art of love" (ta erôtika) (177d8–9) requires an appreciation of the etymology of philology and philosophy—respectively, "love of *logos*" and "love of wisdom." The humanities are based on love in its cognitive capacity rather than love as sentiment. Platonic enlightenment is founded on love, which alone enables us to transcend circles of knowledge and achieve a sort of mystical understanding of truth that is more than the sum of its logical components. Through this love, we transcend our necessarily limited understanding (limited by time and place, by our cognitive abilities *per se*) and achieve instead a mystical sort of understanding. Only thus can the self be transcended.

Socrates's claim that all he knows is the art of love is facilitated by false etymology or punning: the noun *erôs* ("love") and the verb *erôtan* ("to ask questions") sound etymologically connected, as made explicit in *Cratylus* (398c5–e5). Socrates knows the art of love, because he knows how to ask questions and communicate elenctically: reprovingly, not directly, but through conversation and debate. As C.D.C. Reeve puts it, "the elenchus is important to love, then, because it creates a hunger for wisdom—a hunger which it cannot itself assuage."

Socrates makes the connection between knowledge and *eros* (in this case, sexual passion) even more explicit in *Theaetetus*. He compares the search for truth to the physical exercise of passionate love, *eros deinós*. Theodorus, one of Socrates' discussants, complains how difficult it is to "strip and wrestle" with Socrates in argument.

How important is the distinctiveness, the individuality of the object of love, in this ascent of love and knowledge? Does it matter to our enlightenment if we love a single individual or a few individuals in order to reach enlightenment, or should we love everyone indiscriminately? This question lies at the heart of this dissertation's inquiry into Tolstoy's notions of the cognitive value of love.

In *Platonic Studies*, Gregory Vlastos argues that there is no place for the value of the individual, merely a transient being, because the proper object of love is beauty that is perfect and permanent. He writes:

> What needs to be stressed most of all in this area is that Plato's theory is not, and is not meant to be, about personal love for persons — i.e., about the kind of love we can have only for persons and cannot have for things or abstractions. What it is really about is love for place-holders of the predicates "useful" and "beautiful" — of the former when it us only philia, if the latter, when it is eros. In this theory persons evoke eros if they have beautiful bodies, minds, or dispositions. But so do quote impersonal objects — social and political programs, literary compositions, scientific theories, philosophical systems and, best of all, the Idea of Beauty itself. (26)

In "Love and Knowledge in Plato," Rachael Woolf claims that for Diotima, the philosopher and priestess who taught Socrates "the philosophy of love," the problem is not with individuality but with mutability. She writes:

> Since embodied individuals are, as such, mutable, they are not proper objects of love. Why should their mutability have this consequence? Because Plato takes it as a requirement on genuine love that the object of love be known, and he takes it that

embodied individuals, because of their mutability, cannot be known. Individuals that are not susceptible to change are perfectly proper objects of love, in Plato's view. (2) And here we have an aspect that will be important in our second chapter: while love in Plato is necessary for knowledge, knowledge too becomes necessary for love.

Love and Saint Augustine

In Augustine love appears as craving. In *Eighty-three Different Questions,* Augustine writes that "to love is indeed nothing else than to crave something for its own sake;" it is "a kind of craving" (35). This craving comes from the body, but unlike hunger or even sexual desire, it is caused by an external object, not the body itself.

It it also directed toward an object: love is a "kind of motion, and all motion is toward something" (Ibid., 1). In her study of love in Augustine, Hannah Arendt points out that "what determines the motion of desire is always previously given. Our craving aims at a world we know; it does not discover anything new. The thing we know and desire is a 'good' (bonum), otherwise we would not seek it for its own sake" (9). She continues:

> The distinctive trait of this good that we desire is that we do not have it. Once we have the object our desire ends, unless we are threatened with its loss. In that case the desire to have (appetitus habendi) turns into a fear of losing (metus amittendi). As a quest for the particular good rather than for things at random, desire is a combination of 'aiming at' and 'referring back to.' It refers back to the individual who knows the world's good and evil and seeks to live happily (beate vivere). It is because we know happiness that we want to be happy, and since nothing

> is more certain than our wanting to be happy (beatum esse velle), our notion of happiness guides us in determining the respective goods that then became objects of our desire. Craving, or love, is a human being's possibility of gaining possession of the good that will make him happy, that is, of gaining possession of what is most his own. (9)

Like Plato, Augustine sees love as a path to happiness, to *eudaimonia*. What makes one happy is (fortunately) also what makes one a good person.

Aquinas and Reasoned Love

This combination of will and reason—*reasoned* love—is also at the foundation of the philosophy and worldview of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas insists that acts of knowing and acts of loving function together as the intellect and the will. Love, for Aquinas, constitutes the essence of the human soul—the intelligent will.

Love is the cause of every action and passion, the very *principle* of volitional movement and rest. Love is "the first movement of the will and of every appetitive faculty" toward an object that the intelligent will considers good and desires to possess (284). All the other passions and appetites originate from love. All other emotions—hate, sorrow, despair—manifest themselves in relation to love. The cognitive evaluation of something as good is also intrinsically connected to love.

Aquinas importantly distinguishes love from desire or delight, which are both effects rather than different kinds of a passion. Desire is the will's movement toward the object of love. The will is an appetite for the "good:" *good* means that which simply pleases the appetite. Desire is the movement of the will toward obtaining the object of love, which is

considered "good;" delight is the will's rest when the object is obtained.

Love helps us perceive something as good. It does so not through speculative thinking, but through something Aquinas calls the practical intellect, *synderesis,* an innate principle in the moral consciousness (I-II, 1, 1, *ad*.1). "In order that the will tend to anything," Aquinas says, "it is requisite not that this be good in very truth, but that it be apprehended as good" (I-II, 27, 4, *resp*.). This intellectual perception of something as good precedes love.

Aquinas names the human will the "efficient cause" of all exterior acts; thus, all actions have, in one way or another, love as their object. Love here is almost equivalent to "benign motivation." Love is then the cause of all internal and external actions. All actions have at their foundation some desired good toward which the will is moving: "The end, last in the order of execution, is first in the order of the agent's intention. And it is in this way that it is a cause" of human action (I-II, 1, 1, *ad*.1). Love is the will's proper act, and therefore "there is no other passion of the soul that does not presuppose love of some kind" (I-II, 27, 4, *resp*.).

Rousseau's *Amour de Soi*, *Amour-propre,* and *Pitié*

As Donna Orwin notes in *Tolstoy's Art and Thought 1847–1888*, Tolstoy was a voracious reader of Plato (in Victor Cousin's translation) and Rousseau. As a young officer in the Caucuses, he reread Plato, and "then turned to rereading of all of Rousseau" (39). He had read all of Rousseau's work as a young man and claimed that he wore a medallion of Rousseau around his neck at fifteen. Tolstoy also attributed his decision to left Kazan University and dedicate himself to self-education to Rosseau's influence. "All in all," Orwin says, "one can say of Rousseau as of no other writer that he helped form Tolstoy's soul" (37).

What most appealed to Tolstoy about Rosseau's treatise on education, *Émile*, was the role of the emotions in wisdom. As Orwin remarks, Rousseau's vicar "spins a whole 'theism or… natural religion' from the knowledge of the heart and the role of conscience" (41–42). The vicar argues that people naturally love themselves and one another:

> It is from the moral system formed by this double relation to oneself and to one's fellows that the impulse of conscience is born. To know the good is to love it; man does not have innate knowledge of it, but as soon as his reason makes him know it, his conscience leads him to love it. It is this sentiment that is innate. (290)

This part of Rousseau is central to Tolstoy's doctrine of self-perfectability. The duality will play a key role for late Tolstoy, who distinguishs between spiritual and animal natures. Animal nature leads one to self-love, while spiritual nature leads us to sacrifice self-interest out of love for others, which thus undergoes radical transformation. The self-love for Tolstoy will comprise the animal nature. As in Rousseau, the spiritual nature, which for Tolstoy takes the place of "sociality," is innate, as it can be accessed in anyone.[1]

What Tolstoy calls animal nature is for Rousseau *amour de soi* (self-love). *Amour de soi* is the basic need for self-preservation. The other essential impulse is that of *pitié* (compassion). Compassion draws our attention to others and their experiences. Rousseau considers these two passions as the origin of all other human passions. From the interaction of these two drives emerges another essential human drive: that of success in relation to others, which Rousseau calls *amour-propre* (love of self, pride or vanity). This can be seen as

[1] On love and knowledge. P. 44 too. P. 46. Top of 47. Top of P. 49.

a merely negative drive and the source of all evil, or a more complicated drive that can lead both to good and evil.

Amour-propre and *amour de soi* are both at the heart of what Tolstoy calls our "animal nature" in *On Life* (1887). *Amour de soi* is, interestingly, hermetic for Rousseau. It is what motivates our *personal* preservation; it is not at all inter-subjective. For Rousseau, we are essentially wild, lonely monads when we exercise exclusively our *amour de soi*. *Amour-propre*, on the other hand, resembles Socrates' (Diotima's) *eros* or Thomist reasoned love. *Amour-propre* is what forces us to get out of ourselves, to transcend our *amour de soi*. *Amour-propre*, for Rousseau at least, is necessary for our relationships with others. Without *amour-propre*, we would never discover one another, never seek recognition, and never create "culture" or knowledge. (In this sense, Rousseau's notion of *amour-propre* is proto-Hegelian.) *Amour-propre* is a drive that pushes us to create institutions and orders. It is essential to *arete*, the Greek notion of excellence: without *amour-propre*, without a need for the recognition of others or the need for recognition by others, we would never develop knowledge.

For Rousseau, *amour-propre* is not an exclusively negative sentiment. It is the root of all evil, and Rousseau is fascinated by how self-love lies behind every destructive tendency. But *amour-propre* is also "natural", a part of what it means to be human. It is only when amour-propre is taken to an extreme that it turns harmful and negative.

Here Tolstoy departs from Rousseau. For the late Tolstoy, all self-love is negative; there is, in effect, no distinction between *amour-propre* and *amour de soi*. In early Tolstoy, *amour-propre* is sometimes productive and life-creating, but later, it is only something to be overcome.

Amour de soi, *amour-propre*, and *pitié* are complemented for Rousseau by the notion of conscience. This concept receives detailed treatment in the *Lettres morales* and in sections of the *Confession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar*. *Pitié*, when directed toward others, operates on a mimetic and instinctual level and lacks the determinacy necessary for moral action. A truly moral action, for Rousseau, requires an application of reason. Similarly, for Tolstoy, "conscience, if he will only heed it, provides the individual with everything he needs for moral guidance" (Orwin 42). Conscience for Rousseau is the application of reason to human activity, and it is grounded in these three different forms of love and their interaction—*amour de soi*, *amour-propre* and *pitié.* All three will play important roles in Tolstoy's thinking. Both Kant and Tolstoy held Rousseau in high regard; they both meticulously studied Rousseau and tried to modify his philosophy.

Kant and Respect instead of Love

The feeling most associated with Kant's philosophy is respect, not love. In Kant's moral system, love is a feeling, and as such, it cannot ground moral acts. Feelings belong to the empirical realm, to the realm of experience, and because experience varies, it is not universalizable as a *necessary* ground for moral action. Respect, on the other hand, emanates from rational and generalizable rules, offering a surer footing for morality. Thus, respect plays a central role in Kantian ethics; in many ways, it takes the place of Christian love in his philosophy.

Love finds a place, however, in Kant's moral system. Both in *Metaphysics of Morals* and in the *Groundwork for Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant distinguishes between "pathological love" and "practical love" (*Metaphysics* 6:401; *Groundwork* 4:399). "Pathological love" is

entirely a matter of feeling and belongs to the empirical domain. But "practical love" is "a rational disposition to unselfish beneficence in response to a command of duty" (*Metaphysics* 6:401; *Groundwork* 4:399). Pathological love belongs to the realm of experience, not to reason, and therefore the feeling cannot be considered a duty. Thus it has a nugatory or perhaps negative role in Kant's deontological system.

Practical love, as a duty, belongs instead to the domain of rationality: it emanates from pure reason. As Allen Wood explains: "'Practical love' or 'love of good will' is the policy of benefitting others on moral principle from the motive of duty. Only this kind can be direct duty" (270).

In *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant lists four feelings that "lie at the ground of morality as subjective conditions of receptiveness to the concept of duty." These include respect, "moral feeling" ("pleasure or displeasure merely from being aware that our actions are consistent with or contrary to the law of duty"), "conscience" (judgment about the moral feeling), and "love of human beings" (*Menschenliebe*) or "philanthropy" (6:399). In *Kant's Ethical Thought*, Wood argues for the particular importance of "love of human beings" for Kant's system. Wood does not consider this kind of love to be practical love, but instead categorizes it as a feeling. Yet he claims that this feeling is the very foundation of morality for Kant. Many misinterpret Kant's discussion of beneficence in the first section of the *Groundwork*, Wood claims, by not considering Kant's comments on love in the *Metaphysics of Morals*.

Kant does not intend, Wood argues, "that beneficent actions done from duty are done in the absence of feeling of love for those to whom one is beneficent" (39). Rather, "the very

possibility of the man's having a duty to be beneficent presupposes his rational predisposition to *feeling of love* for them:"

> Philanthropy is not the only kind of love we feel for others. We can love people for other perfections besides the dignity of their rational nature, which gives us our basic moral reason to love them. Other forms of love are grounded on empirical inclinations and have nothing to do with morality or moral motivation. Presumably, there is no way to tell which sort of love we are feeling just by feeling it. This is one reason why actions done from duty are difficult to distinguish from those done from an immediate inclination. (39–40).

Love thus finds a place in Kant's system in the form of the "impartial love" inherent in *Menschenliebe*. As a duty, rather than a feeling or inclination, it can serve as sufficient grounds for moral choice.

But *Menschenliebe* inevitably triggers yet another kind of love—the kind that presented problems for Tolstoy. "Our self-love," Kant writes, "cannot be separated from our need to be loved (helped in case of need) by others" and therefore "we make ourselves an end for others, and the only way this maxim can be binding is through its qualifications as a universal law" *(Metaphysics* 393). Part of being human is having ends or goals that require the participation of others. Our self-love requires us to (paradoxically) make ourselves available as ends for others. The interdependency of human life means that we can be both used both negatively and positively by others; we can be exploited as ends, but we can also be used by others in order to achieve our own goals. Thus, through self-love, love enters the Kantian ethical system as a ground for ethical choice.

This self-love as a paradoxical basis for community resonates with the earlier discussion of the "communal" utility of *amour-propre* in Rousseau's ethical system. Both Kantian self-love and Rousseau's *amour-propre* come from within the individual and are therefore liable to become destructive rather than creative forces, but both can also actuate communities out of otherwise unconnected others. Kant's self-love leads to *Menschenliebe*, just as Rousseau's *amour-propre* requires a community for its full expression. Tolstoy will vehemently resist both conclusions.

Kant and *Eros*

Kant's view on *eros* is strangely (or perhaps not so strangely) similar to thate of late Tolstoy. For both, sexual love leads away from universal love. In his *Lectures on Ethics*, Kant argues that sex as degrading to humanity:

> Because sexuality is not an inclination which one human being has for another as such but is an inclination for the sex of another, it is a principle of the degradation of humanity, a source of the preference of one sex to the other and of dishonoring it so as to satisfy an inclination. The inclination a man has for a female is not directed to her as to a human being; rather, for the man the humanity of the female is indifferent and only her sex is the object of his inclination. (*Lectures* 27: 385)

Kant holds that the sex act "reduces both man and woman to the status of things;" it makes them into means to an end, and is therefore iimmoral. As such, sex is destructive and degrading for the self as well as the other:

> In the (sex act) a human being makes himself into a thing, which conflicts with the right of humanity in its own person. There is only one condition under which this is possible: that while one person is acquired by the other *as if she were a thing*, the one who is acquired acquires the other in turn; for in this way each reclaims herself and restores her personality. (*Metaphysics* 6:278)

Kant describes sexual love as a struggle of wills, "in which each employs weapons against which the other is defenseless" (Wood 257). Marriage holds little recourse, since at best marriage ensures that the mutual instrumentalizing of the other is "at least mutual and voluntary." "In marriage the loss of one's personality in the sex act is compensated for by the fact that one acquires the other's personality in turn" (Wood 258).

Kant: Love as Inclination and Feeling

Both Kant and Tolstoy identify humans' predisposition to animality and believe it must be either overcome or subjugated to reason for us to be moral agents. Kant sees love as an inclination as part of that animality. These natural inclinations are necessary, to be sure, and "purposive for the life of both the individual and the species" (Wood 270). But if they "manifest a good will," they can be also purposive for morality. Wood's interpretation of the role of love in this correct use of our animality closely resembles Tolstoy's claim in *On Life* that it is by means of love that we can subjugate our animal nature to the spiritual one. Wood writes:

> Since we have a duty make the happiness of others our end, we have moral reasons to value these inclinations and even a duty to cultivate them. At times

> Kant goes so far as to suggest that our imperfect wills may not succeed in doing duty consistently without the presence of love to assist the incentives of reason. Despite their usefulness to morality, however, the amiable inclinations still stand entirely outside it and are not to be trusted. (270)

Kant also provides a crucial notion for this study—"aesthetic love." "Aesthetic love" or the "love of well-pleasedness" (*Wohhlgefallens*) is the experience of pleasure (intellectual or sensual) due to the perfections of another. Explaining the link between the two, Wood writes: "The two are connected because taking pleasure in another (or in another's perfections) is closely associated with taking pleasure in the representation of the other's happiness, which is the same as having a desire for it" (271). Thus, in Kant (as in Bakhtin, as we shall see, albeit in a much more latent form), love plays a role in aesthetic creations.

Hegel and Love as Dialectic

It is not love that we associate with Hegel and his dialectic, but mutual recognition. But some commentators, such as Stephen Crites, claim that the notion of love is always implied in Hegel's model of mutual-recognition. Crites asserts that even though Hegel does not invoke love in his exposition of the development of the self, it is an obvious (and implied) requirement for mutual recognition (346). More problematic is that in Hegel's mature system, mutual recognition never fully takes place. Its break is what propels the dialectic in the first place. What is necessary for our discussion, however, is that Hegel's very notion of the dialectic develops from his early consideration of the topic of love.

In an early piece titled "Love" (1797), Hegel still believes in the possibility of mutual recognition. He does not use the term. But Hegel's concept of mutual recognition in his early

Christian writings is simply called “love,” while his main concept of Spirit in early Christian writings is simply “life.”

Kant talks about the necessary absence of rivalry for love; Hegel, on the other hand, talks about love’s ability to destroy all opposition. Hegel sees human beings as naturally striving for domination, which makes the separation between subject and object unbridgeable and all interaction as with a dead object. Love transcends this gap:

> True union, or love proper exists only between living beings who are alike in power and thus in one another’s eyes living beings from every point of view; in no respect is either dead for the other. This genuine love excludes all opposition. It is not the understanding, whose relations always leave the manifold of related terms as a manifold and whose unity is always a unity of opposites [left as opposites]. It is not reason either, because reason sharply opposes its determining power to what is determined. Love neither restricts nor is restricted; it is not finite at all. In love, life is present as a duplicate of itself and as a single and unified self. Here life has run through the circle of development from an immature to a completely mature unity: when the unity was immature, there still stood over against it the world and the possibility of a cleavage between itself and the world; as development proceeded, reflection produced more and more oppositions [unified by satisfied impulses] until it set the whole of man’s life in opposition [to objectivity]; finally, love completely destroys objectivity and thereby annuls and transcends reflection, deprives man’s opposite of all foreign character, and discovers life itself without any further defect. In love the separate does still remain, but as something united and no longer as something separate; life [in the subject] senses life [in the object]. . .

> …Love is indignant if part of the individual is severed and held back as a private property. This raging of love against (exclusive) individuality is shame. A pure heart is not ashamed of love; but it is ashamed if its love is incomplete; it upbraids itself if there is some hostile power which hinders love's culmination. (306)

In his early writings, Hegel believes that love can make people abandon power dynamics and see each other as equals—that is, mutually recognize each other as living beings. Love breaks down the opposition of "I" and "the other." Love does more than either reason or understanding can do: it creates a unity between subject and object for life itself takes both of those places: "life [in the subject] senses life [in the object]." Understanding cannot do this, for understanding perceives life in all of its complexities. It does not try to reduce life's manifold nature or reconcile opposites: it *understands* it as it is. Reason cannot perform love's task both, for reason imposes its categories and makes its objects *dead* and determined. But love, by duplicating life, creates a unity; it makes one feel "at home" in the world.

This description, we can already recognize Hegel's dialectic. The common understanding is that the dialectic moves from thesis to antithesis and synthesis. Hegel, of course, never uses these terms. In his own formulation, the dialectic moves from unity to alienation back to a self-conscious unity. And it is in these terms that Hegel discusses love in this early piece. Here, he calls the first stage an "immature unity." Since this unity is not fully cognized, it contains the possibility of alienation. The second stage actualizes this possibility and, by reflection on the lost unity, creates opposites; the subject no longer feels at home for reflection, and experience destroys the initial unity. Love then performs the so-called synthesis: it "annuls and transcends reflection," "deprives man's opposite of all foreign

character" and makes him feel at home again. This new unity is a unity regained, cognized and recognized, and thus a duplicate of life itself.

In "Love," love's ability to annul any distinction between lovers is both metaphysical and physical. Hegel here sees procreation as the manifestation of the metaphysical structure: "The mortal element, the body, has lost the character of separability, and a living child, a seed of immortality, of the eternally self-developing and self-generating (race), has come into existence. What has been united (in the child) is not divided again; (in love and through love) God has acted and created" (307).

In this piece, Hegel is optimistic about love's power to destroy all opposition. Here, it sounds like as if simply by falling in love and being in a true union, we can feel at home in the world and remain in that state (until death, at least). Later, Hegel will make this process more dynamic and never-ending: the very possibility of love or mutual recognition propels the dialectic, but it never stops; each unity will go through the same process of alienation and regained unity.

Schopenhauer and "Metaphysics of Love"

The procreative aspect of love is the most important aspect of love for Schopenhauer. In a characteristically pessimistic and gloomy manner, his essay "Metaphysics of Love" claims that all love springs "entirely from the instinct of sex" (227). It is a wholely negative force, adversely affecting "the most serious of affairs" and "deranges" everyone, even the greatest intellects (228). Yet, for all its disruptiveness, "it is not a trifle one is dealing with; the importance of love is absolutely in keeping with the seriousness and zeal with which it is

prosecuted" (228). For Schopenhauer, love is the way we are fooled into procreation: "Love determines nothing less than the establishment of the next generation" (228).

Schopenhauer begins the essay by claiming that love is the most distracting of emotions. It drives people to madness and suicide, and not only in fiction, but in real life:

> A man, in order to have his love gratified, will unhesitatingly risk his life; in fact, if his love is absolutely rejected, he will sacrifice his life into the bargain. The Werthers and Jacopo Ortis do not only exist in romances; Europe produces every year at least half-a-dozen like them. . . Love drives a still greater number of people into the lunatic asylum. (225)

Schopenhauer thinks that Plato's views on love are derived from and applicable only within the sphere of myth, fable, and raillery. Moreover, he claims that these views apply for the most part to the love of a mature man for a Greek youth. He also criticizes the views of Rousseau, Kant, and Spinoza:

> The little that Rousseau says in his *Discours sur l'inégalité* is neither true nor satisfactory. Kant's disquisition on love in the third part of his treatise, (*Beobachtungen*) über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen, is very superficial; it shows that he has not thoroughly gone into the subject, and therefore it is somewhat untrue. Finally, Platner's treatment of it in his Anthropology will be found by every one to be insipid and shallow. To amuse the reader, on the other hand, Spinoza's definition deserves to be quoted because of its exuberant naïveté: 'Amor est titillatio, concomitante idea causae externae.' (227)

Schopenhauer refuses to engage with these views at any level beyond caricature and resolves instead to discuss the topic "objectively." In this "objective" view, "love, however ethereal it may seem to be, springs entirely from the instinct of sex," but in a more individualized form. Love for Schopenhauer is the manifestation of the will to live as "a definitely determined individual." We do fall in love with particular people; love "wears the mask of objective admiration" (239). However, love is "a subjective necessity, and is, thereby, deceptive" (230). In other words, though we think we are falling in love with a particular person for particular reasons, in fact "Nature" uses us as means for her own ends:

> As the being, the existentia of these future people is conditioned by our instinct of sex in general, so is the nature, the essentia, of these same people conditioned by the selection that the individual makes for his satisfaction, that is to say, by love, and is thereby in every respect irrevocably established. This is the key of the problem. In applying it, we shall understand it more fully if we analyze the various degrees of love, from the most fleeting sensation to the most ardent passion; we shall then see that the difference arises from the degree of individualization of the choice.
>
> Love is of such high import, because it has nothing to do with the weal or woe of the present individual, as every other matter has; it has to secure the existence and special nature of the human race in future times; hence the will of the individual appears in a higher aspect as the will of the species; and this it is that gives a pathetic and sublime import to love-affairs, and makes their raptures and troubles

> transcendent, emotions which poets for centuries have not tired of depicting in a variety of ways. (267)

Schopenhauer derives two main conclusions from this "objective" view of love. First, humans are immortal because we identify immediately with our progeny. Since love is so "active" and "zealous" in its action on us, this proves for Schopenhauer that we see a continuity between ourselves and our progeny. Love would not be so strong a force for an individual if our "race" (our offspring) were "really and totally different" that merely "succeeded" us. Second, love indicates our essentially social nature, our link to our "species." A person sets aside what is best for him or her, and instead "lives more directly in the interest of the species than in that of the individual." Love, for Schopenhauer, is the "immortal" part of each of us that yearns for another and for immortality. All other will is "mortal." Love, furthermore, is the truly universal force that unites us all, it "is in reality identical and the same in all individuals, whether they exist at the same or at different times" (270).

Schopenhauer, characteristically, finds this "immortal" yearning to be an entirely negative force; it is to be resisted; love is what causes the "turmoil of life" (270). The denial of the will to live is, for Schopenhauer, what allows the individual to "break away from the stem of the species:"

> And yet, amid all this turmoil we see a pair of lovers exchanging longing glances — yet why so secretly, timidly, and stealthily? Because these lovers are traitors secretly striving to perpetuate all this misery and turmoil that otherwise would come to a timely end. (270)

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Tolstoy was exceptionally well-read in the Western and Eastern philosophical traditions, and we know from letters and diary entries that he frequently consulted primary and secondary sources for each of these seven thinkers: Plato, Augustine, Aquinas, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer. In particular, he was a devoted and lifelong reader of Plato, Rousseau, Kant, and Schopenhauer. And although he professed to detest Hegel, it is clear that Tolstoy was also very familiar with him, as any educated nineteenth-century thinker would be.

Importantly, all seven thinkers make explicit the connection between loving and knowing, acknowledging the cognitive value of love. For each thinker, love allows or forces the subject to overcome solipsism, to project himself or herself out into the world, make a connection to another individual. Love stimulates us to apply our reason correctly, to start to seek knowledge of the outside world through the other. Love is "motion," as Augustine put it, away from the self and into the world.

In considering the cognitive value of love, each thinker encounters the philosophical problem of self-love, which lacks access to the world outside the self but seems ineluctable. Though each thinker resolves the problem differently, self-love becomes the impulse that, paradoxically, leads us to love for the other. Self-love is thus divided or categorized into "good" and "bad" self-loves. Kant, for instance, sees self-love requiring us to make ourselves available as ends for others, and thus opening us up to participation in community, and from there the collaborative work of knowledge creation. Again, though each philosopher deals with the problem of self-love in different ways, self-love becomes a means or impetus for the individual to participate in the collective.

This connection between different loves (for self, for other) and the search for knowledge becomes a concatenating force that unifies Tolstoy's oeuvre. As Gustafson argues, in Tolstoy's fiction and thought, "there is only one plot event: all works embody and reveal the way to love" (205).

CHAPTER 1: EARLY TOLSTOY AS A PLATONIST: LOVE AS A PREREQUISITE FOR KNOWLEDGE

When Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy proposed to Sofya Andreyevna Behrs on August 29, 1862 he did not, as most people do, pronounce: "Will you marry me?" Instead, the thirty-four-year-old Tolstoy thrust a letter into the eighteen-year old Sofya Andreyevna's hand and ran away. He had decided to marry her after putting her to a test—a guessing game. In the summer of 1862, Tolstoy had often visited the Behrs family, but it was not clear which one of the Behrs sisters he was courting. Tolstoy's past infatuation with Lyubov Alexandrovna, the mother of the family who had inspired the character of Lyubochka in *Childhood*, further complicated the picture. "There was a curious confluence of memory and desire, life and art," writes A. N. Wilson in his biography of Tolstoy (192). This connection to Tolstoy's art was at work both retrospectively and prospectively. While the mother was reenacting the nostalgia of *Childhood*, the daughters Liza and Tatyana were inspiring characters that would populate the pages of *War and Peace*. The Rostov family presents a lively literary combination of Tolstoy's own family and the Behrs. Natasha and Vera Rostova are reincarnations of Tatyana and Liza Behrs. One can easily understand why Tolstoy would at all costs avoid marrying a "Vera." But did he not marry "Natasha"?

Tolstoy chose neither Tatyana's vivacity (which came to characterize many of his favorite heroines) nor Liza's melancholy and prudence. He chose the intellectual collaboration that the middle sister Sofya promised both with her name and her actions. He saw in Sofya a confidante, a follow seeker of truth. During the sleepless night Tolstoy spent after handing the letter to Sofya Andreyevna, he told his second cousin's husband and close

friend Vasily S. Perfilyev: “There won’t be any secrets for me alone; but secrets for two; she will read everything” (Wilson 196). After this, Tolstoy obliged Sofya Andreyevna to read his diary, in order to secure this shared knowledge. (Something similar occurs between Levin and Kitty in *Anna Karenina*.) Sofya Andreyevna read Tolstoy’s diaries on her name day and wept. This desire to be known from within—known and understood—became an important motivation for Tolstoy’s art and thought.

Before revealing his consciousness to Sofya Andreevna via his diary to find out whether she could carry the heavy burden of knowledge, Tolstoy tested her cognitive abilities as a proof of love. Here is how Sofya Andreyevna describes their first romantic encounter in her own diaries. The scene takes place at the close of a party:

> Just as I was going to the door, Lev Nikolayevich called to me.
>
> “Wait a moment, Sofya Andreyevna.”
>
> “What is it?”
>
> “Will you read what I’m going to write?”
>
> “Very well.”
>
> “I’m only going to write the initials. You must guess the words.”
>
> “How can I do that? It’s impossible! Oh, well, go on.”
>
> He brushed the games scores off the card table, took a piece of chalk and began writing. We were both very serious and excited. I followed his big red hand, and could feel all my powers of concentration and feeling focus on that bit chalk and the hand that held it. We said nothing.
>
> “y.y.& n.f.h.t.v.r.m.o.m.a. & i.f.h.”

"Your youth and need for happiness too vividly remind me of my age and incapacity for happiness," I read out. My heart was pounding, my temples were throbbing, my face was flushed – I was beyond all sense of time and reality; at that moment I felt capable of anything, of understanding everything, imagining the unimaginable.

"Well, let's go on," said Lev Nikolayevich and began to write once more.

"y.f.h.t.w.i.a.m. & y.s.L.y. & y.s.T.m.p.m."

"Your family has the wrong idea about me and your sister Liza. You and your sister Tanechka must protect me." I read the initials rapidly and without a second's hesitation.

Lev Nikolayevich wasn't even surprised; it all seemed quite natural somehow. Our elation was such that we soared high above the world and nothing could possibly surprise us.

Then we heard Maman crossly summoning me to bed. We hurriedly said goodnight, extinguished the candles and went out. Behind my cupboard upstairs I lighted the stump of a candle, sat down on the floor, put my notebook on the wooden chair and began to write my diary. I wrote down the words to which Lev Nikolayevich had given me the initials and grew vaguely aware that something of great significance had occurred between us – something we were now unable to stop. (Wilson, 192-93)

Wilson points out the impossibility of this scene: "The story about the initials and the chalk—which both Tolstoy and his wife came to believe—cannot possibly be true, if you think about it. No crossword-puzzle solver or expert in cryptograms was ever so telepathic as Sofya Andreyevna claims to have been" (194). Wilson ascribes this to Sofya Andryevna's lack of reflection: "as so often in her diaries, she lets us see what is going on without seeing it herself" (194). But perhaps, as Tolstoy often does, Sofya Andreyevna is sacrificing accuracy for dramatic effect. Perhaps Tolstoy did not simply write the initials but moved his hand, without writing, in the shape of all the letters. Guessing this would have still been impressive. But what is most important here is that Tolstoy and Sofya Andreyevna had to persuade themselves that true love is connected with true cognition.

Transcending Language

Tolstoy's test rests on the implication that if Sofya Andreyevna loved him, she would gain access to his consciousness. She would be able to read his mind. This kind of dialogue, where the message is not sufficiently expressed in language but is fully understood, abounds in *War and Peace*. In fact, this kind of communication is the true sign of intimacy for early Tolstoy. As Vinogradov has demonstrates in his study of the language of *War and Peace*, if one removes the narrator's explanations from some of the intimate family interactions, the dialogue often becomes incomprehensible (117–120). Love as true intimacy makes language obsolete. And when too much attention is paid to language, scenes in Tolstoy become tense and indicate loss of connection between the participants. Language is successful when it is transcended. In this act of overcoming language, art proves a vector that connects people and unites souls regardless of obstacles. In *War and Peace*, the French teach songs to the

incomprehending Russians, and the stars seem to sing. When language becomes an end in itself ("words words words" as Hamlet complains) as with Bilibin in *War and Peace* or the interactions between Pierre and Helen, it fails miserably. Language succeeds when it forgets itself. This matters because the dialectic between language and signification in Tolstoy works only when love transcends the merely given, gesturing toward something both outside and inside the utterance as well as the subject, thereby constituting what is a privileged knowledge, fundamental both for art and life.

This form of communication is "communion," suggests Henry W. Pickford in his *Thinking with Tolstoy and Wittgenstein: Expression, Emotion, and Art*. He writes: "Tolstoy's preferred term for the immediate understanding of another's mental state (feelings or thoughts) is "communion" (obshenie), and the verb describing the act of such immediate (that is, non-interpreted, non-inferential), involuntary understanding is "to communicate itself" (soobshchat'sia)" (40).

Before *War and Peace*, and before his proposal to Sofia Andreyevna, Tolstoy expresses a similar notion of love as communication as communion in *Family Happiness* (1859): love is that which gives access to the consciousness of another. Here is how Masha describes falling in love with Sergey Mikhaylych, which serves as a sort of draft for what goes on between Natasha and Pierre:

> And I was surprised at my own quickness in guessing what was good and worthy of love, when I certainly did not know then what was good and worthy to be loved. Most of my former tastes and habits did not please him; and a mere look of his, or a twitch of his eyebrow was enough to show that he did not like what I was trying to say; and I felt

> at once that my own standard was changed and I no longer loved what I had loved before. Sometimes, when he was about to give me a piece of advice, I seemed to know before hand what he would say. When he looked in my face and asked me a question, his very look would draw out of me the answer he wanted. All my thoughts and feelings of that time were not really mine: they were his thoughts and feelings, which had suddenly become mine and passed into my life and lighted it up. Quite unconsciously I began to look at everything with different eyes—at Katya and the servants and Sonya and myself and my occupations. (11)

Masha becomes so attentive to the minutest moves and gestures of Sergey Mikhaylych that she begins to anticipate his utterances and opinions. She seems to be able to read his mind. Moreover, she begins to look at the world from his perspective, with his eyes. This dislocation of consciousness, the overcoming the boundaries of individualized consciousness through love is the reason many philosophers see love as the birth moment of self-consciousness. Desiring to be desired by the other, the person in love begins viewing herself not as a subject but as an object. Paradoxically, this does not lead to a self-centered attitude but dissolves the self by focusing attention on the desires and feelings of the other. It becomes difficult to disentangle epistemology and love. The process moves from attention to anticipation and produces something akin to mind reading.

The importance of this kenotic quality of love to empty cognitive attention by refocusing from the self to the other is further emphasized in *Family Happiness* by the counterexample—Masha's "mistake." When Masha is lured by glamorous society life, her

attention is entirely on her own self. Here is how she describes her success in high Petersburg society:

> It seemed to me, more than ever, that I was the center round which everything revolved, that for my sake alone this great room was lighted up and the band played, and that this crowd of people had assembled to admire me. From the hairdresser and the lady's maid to my partners and the old gentlemen promenading the ball room, all alike seemed to make it plain that they were in love with me. (44)

She no longer considers Sergey Mikhaylych's perspective. His desires no longer constitute a priority for her:

> But a time came when he was evidently bored and wearied by the life we were leading. I was too busy, however, to think about that. Even if I sometimes noticed his eyes fixed questioningly on me with a serious attentive gaze, I did not realize its meaning. I was utterly blinded by this sudden affection, which I seemed to evoke in all our new acquaintances, and confused by the unfamiliar atmosphere of luxury, refinement, and novelty. (44)

Masha is not guilty of lust or wantonness. Rather, her mistake is misguided attention, which completely changes the nature of her relationship with Sergey Mikhaylych. The child presents the solution: by focusing their attentive love on the child, Masha and Sergey Mikhaylych save their marriage. Characteristically, Tolstoy later hated the story.

In Love's or the Other's Eyes

This ability to read another's mind, to be able to see the world through his or her eyes, is important not only for marriage (as illustrated both by *Family Happiness* and Tolstoy's own test of Sofia Andreyevna) but also for artistic representation. Tolstoy's *Childhood* (1852) marks his transition from non-fictional self-narration of diaries and letters to fiction. The first-person narration of *Childhood*, however, makes it formally closer to self-narration than a traditional third-person nineteenth-century novel: internally, it represents only one consciousness, that of the narrator. While the narrator is depicted in his attempts to understand and interpret other consciousnesses, his is the only consciousness represented from within. Throughout the late 1850s and early 1860s, while writing "Lucerne*"* (1857), Family *Happiness* (1859), *The Cossacks* (1863) and his Sevastopol war sketches, Tolstoy struggled with devices to narrate the other from within.

In "Lucerne," a short story first written as a letter to Tolstoy's friend Botkin, the impossibility of knowing the content of other consciousnesses is expressed in narrator's unexpected epistemological despair, which concludes the story. Having spent the entire story passionately arguing for his opinions, the first-person narrator Count Nekhludov suddenly exclaims:

> "No," something involuntarily said to me, "you have no right to commiserate with the little man, or to blame the lord for his well-being. Who can weigh the inner happiness, which is found in the soul of each of these men? There he stands somewhere in the muddy road, and gazes at the brilliant moonlit sky, and gaily sings amid the smiling, fragrant night; in his soul there is no reproach, no anger, no regret.

> And who knows what is transpiring now in the hearts of all these men within those opulent, brilliant rooms? Who knows if they all have as much unencumbered, sweet delight in life, and as much satisfaction with the world, as dwells in the soul of that little man? (117)

The problem Nekhludov faces in relation to his objects of narration, the poor musician and the society of Lucerne, is the same problem Tolstoy faces in relation to his characters, a problem that handily encapsulates the connected problems of knowing world outside the thinker's mind, the related problems of solipsism and Idealism and Bakhtinian intersubjectivity. On the one hand, depicting another's consciousness might be the most solipsistic thing imaginable, since it could imply that only the author's "self" is real, and everything else is merely projection. On the other hand, depicting another's consciousness might be a form of Diotima's *eros*: the transcending of the self and recognition of the other is for her (and Socrates and Plato) the initiatory act of love and the first step up the ladder toward true knowledge. But if this depiction is to be the latter—the successful overcoming of the self and solipsism and the gaining of access to the other—then which consciousnesses does one represent from within, and how does the author gain accurate or fair access to the other's consciousness?

Love as Attention: Early Tolstoy and Early Bakhtin

In Tolstoy's *Childhood* (1852), Sofya Andreyevna's mother appears as Lyubochka, in a highly symbolic scene in the chapter titled "Something Like First Love." Following a chapter on the importance of imagination for life and play, this chapter demonstrates the intensity of loving attention. It opens with a description of Lyubochka "pretending" or

"imagining" [представляя] to be picking fruit from exotic "American" trees as the ten- to twelve-year-olds continue to play (34). When Lyubochka accidentally discovers a gigantic worm, she jumps back in fright and the game stops. Katenka reacts differently: she tries to help the worm on its way: "I watched over Katenka's shoulder as she tried to lift up the worm on a leaf by placing it in its path" (34). Nikolenka watches Katenka, noticing the minutest details of her gestures, her neck and shoulders. He is filled with love, unable to resist kissing Katenka's shoulder and prompting the "rationalistic" Volodya's contempt: "What tenderness!" (34) But Nikolenka is filled with tears of joy: "I couldn't stop looking at Katenka. I had been used to her fresh, fair little face and had always been fond of it. But now I began to look at it more closely and to like it even more" (34) [Я не спускал глаз с Катеньки. Я давно уже привык к ее свеженькому белокуренькому личику и всегда любил его; но теперь я внимательнее стал всматриваться в него и полюбил еще больше (PSS I:37)]. Universality exists at the moment of mutual recognition. Two joined consciousnesses comprise the universal, which is achieved by art. This is an eschatological process for Tolstoy, the end of the self. But it is also the moment where art begins.

The careful attention with which Nikolenka watches Katenka is similar to the attention with which he had watched a butterfly during their hunt in a previous chapter. Hiding under a tree, Nikolenka first watches the different manners in which ants react to an obstacle he places in front of them. But then, he says, "I was diverted from these interesting observations by an exceptionally attractive butterfly with yellow wings hovering in front of me. […] I don't know if it was sunning itself or drawing nectar from the clover; all that was clear was that it was happy. It moved its wings from time to time, pressing itself against the floweret, and then became completely still. I rested my head on my arms and watched it with

pleasure" (31)[От этих интересных наблюдений я был отвлечен бабочкой с желтыми крылышками, которая чрезвычайно заманчиво вилась передо мною. […] Не знаю, солнышко ли ее пригрело, или она брала сок из этой травки,— только видно было, что ей очень хорошо. Она изредка взмахивала крылышками и прижималась к цветку, наконец, совсем замерла. Я положил голову на обе руки и с удовольствием смотрел на нее (PSS I:34)]. Nikolenka's imagination makes him perceive reality with a special kind of attention. This intensification of the senses gives him an aesthetic experience. Intently watching the butterfly, Nikolenka begins to project emotions and intentions, as if gaining access to the butterfly's inner world.

For Tolstoy in *Childhood*, imagination is the source for games (art), and it is also the source for love. This connection is clearly shown in the parallel between the scene with the butterfly and the scene with Katenka. Nikolenka's intense attention to both of these objects of his contemplation reveal them in a particular aesthetic light and give Nikolenka an insight inaccessible to others. Not only does he observe the butterfly and Katenka externally, but through empathy, he tries to access their internality. This kind of attention yields privileged knowledge, unavailable to his brother, the rationalistic Volodya.

This notion that love is prerequisite for knowledge underlies the early Tolstoy's philosophy of love and cognition as well as his aesthetics. For early Tolstoy, love as sustained intensified attention yields privileged, internal knowledge. Recall the role of attention in Sofya Andreyevna's description: "I followed his big red hand, and could feel all my powers of concentration and feeling focus on that bit chalk and the hand that held it." Similarly, love for early Tolstoy is an attention-directing faculty, which miraculously gives access to another's interiority. Imagination, empowered by love, plays a key role. Like Sofya

Andreyevna, many of Tolstoy's characters in love feel "capable of anything, of understanding everything, imagining the unimaginable." Love appears as an epistemological miracle both for early Tolstoy's characters as well as for Tolstoy himself when dealing with those characters as aesthetic objects.

Loving Perception

This connection between loving, seeing, and knowing—that is, the connection between aesthetics and love—is an important topic in Bakhtin's early 1920s essays "Author and Hero" and "Toward a Philosophy of the Act." For Bakhtin, an aesthetic act requires a particular kind of seeing that cannot be achieved without love. "Lovelessness, indifference, will never be able to generate sufficient power to slow down and *linger intently* over an object, to hold and sculpt every detail and particular in it, however minute," he writes in "Toward a Philosophy of the Act," "Only love is capable of being aesthetically productive" (64).)[Безлюбость, равнодушие никогда не разовьют достаточно сил, чтобы напряженно замедлить над предметом, закрепить, вылепить каждую мельчайшую подробность и деталь его. Только любовь может быть эстетически продуктивной. (SS I:59)].Only love can be aesthetically productive because love, as understood by Bakhtin, directs and holds one's attention and reveals details about the object otherwise undetected.

In this act of loving contemplation, the object is created as an aesthetic entity. Its properties are not changed, however, but revealed. Bakhtin explains that loving contemplation is not "a biased, subjective distortion of seeing," and aesthetic seeing "does not affect the content/sense aspect of the event" (62).

In this way, Bakhtin tells us, "one could speak of objective aesthetic love as constituting the principle of aesthetic seeing" (62). This kind of love, however, should not be mistaken for either sentimental or psychologically subjective kinds of love. It is objective, as it resides with the beloved object rather than the loving subject. Aesthetic love allows the object to reveal itself while at the same time sustaining the attention of the observing/loving subject. This affects the surveying consciousness as well. When we see something correctly, it might not change the object (although in the realm of aesthetics or true dialogue, it does), but this act changes us. Love results in the creation of art, and art affects the observer, which changes the world. Art becomes an embracing, the touching of souls, a grasping force, an almost manual labor that fixes the world and cleans the dust. As Bakhtin puts it: "The valued manifoldness of Being as human can present itself only to a loving contemplation. […] Only lovingly interested attention is capable of generating a sufficiently intent power to encompass and retain the concrete manifoldness of Being, without impoverishing and schematizing it" (62). [Ценностное многообразие бытия как человеческого (соотнесенного с человеком) может быть дано только любовному […] только любовно заинтересованное внимание может развить достаточно напряженную силу, чтобы охватить и удержать конкретное многообразие бытия, не обеднив и не схематизировав его. (SS I:59)].

This aesthetic seeing not only "sculpt[s] every detail and particular in (the object of love), however minute," but also, through an act of empathy, gains access to its inner world. In "Author and Hero," Bakhtin describes this internal view of another as one of the two necessary steps of an artistic creation. As Caryl Emerson explains: "An event becomes 'aesthetic,' in Bakhtin's world, if there is an outside consciousness looking in on the event and, as it were, embracing it, able to bestow on the scenario a sense of the 'whole'" (*First*

136). In order to do so, this creative outside consciousness has to first project itself from within the consciousness of its object: to gain emotional literacy, the author must try to see the world with the eyes of the character he is creating. He cannot, however, remain within the consciousness of the other; he must return to his position and frame the image of the other with this internal knowledge (as well as with the realization of its limitations) in mind. "Acts of contemplation," says Emerson, "flowing from this surplus of my outer and inner seeing of the other person, are purely aesthetic actions" ("Shklovsky's" 642).

As love is an attention directing faculty and we possess a limited amount of time and mental capability, we cannot treat everything with this kind of love. "Aesthetic vision also knows, of course, 'principles of selection,'" writes Bakhtin (64). This principle of selection is based on love (intense contemplation of the object) or unlove, which "seeks to pass over the object in all its manifoldness, to ignore it or to overcome it" (64). Unlove impoverishes and schematizes its object. It is, however, necessary, since intense loving contemplation of every object over time is simply impossible. In Tolstoy's *Childhood*, this is already clearly shown in Nikolenka's loving contemplation of Katenka and the butterfly and Volodya's inability to see in the same light.

Bakhtin's Theory of Cognition

We might consider aesthetic seeing as an approach to the creation of characters not as things, but as personalities. Bakhtin draws this distinction as a distinction between modes of cognition, between perceiving "mere" things, objects, versus perceiving personalities in "On the Philosophical Foundations of the Human Sciences."

The cognition of a "thing" strives for complete understanding, final definitions and "mastering" (*ovladenie*) of its object; the perceiving gaze wants to "examine exhaustively." This approach, as Irina M. Denischenko puts it, restricts its object, "arrests it, creating the impression of stasis" (256). The perceiving subject seeks to fully know *things*, while cognition directed at a "personality," by contrast, calls for "free self-revelation" of the cognized object, the personality (CW 5:7). There is an expectation for the cognized personality to speak for itself, for dynamism and the capacity for change.

Rather than "precision" in observing an object, the criterion for cognizing a personality is "the depth of penetrating understanding" (CW 5:7). "Personality cognition" takes into account not only the object's "surroundings" (*okruzhenie*), but also its "horizon" (*krugozor*) and its "inconsumable core" (CW 5:7).

Personality cognition implies at attempt to see the world from the perspective of the perceived subject. "In contrast to thing cognition's show of mastery, personality cognition is an exercise of dialogic understanding that requires "a preservation of distance" vis-à-vis the object and an attitude of "pure selflessness" (CW 5:8,9)" (Denischenko, 257). This attitide is what is required of aesthetic seeing and knowling.

Whatever the object of perception, Bakhtin's model of cognition is based on cognitive humility: not only personalities, but things cannot ever be fully known. As Denischenko explains, "These limits can only be asymptotically approached. Put otherwise, any individual act of cognition can be directed at the limits, but can never coincide with them" (257). In either case, things and personalities are more than ontological categories: What we can know about personalities and things are the *limits* of our knowledge, too.

In any case, it is important to understand that "thing cognition" is the default way of approaching an object:

> Even when the cognized object is another human subject—be it a real human being or a fictional hero—the gravitational forces of "thing cognition" are at work. […] Only through conscious labor and practice can one cognize an object in its becoming. If "thing cognition" is the rule, "personality cognition" is the exception, an overcoming of the force of gravity that requires a dialogic effort. (Denischenko 259)

"Personality cognition" is not perhaps always practical or morally necessary; for instance, when the type of cognition under consideration is abstract, scientific, or positivist. But it is a requirment for artistic cognition, which needs to tend toward the "personality limit." However, approaching the personality limit is not always simple or even possible when we consider historical poetics and the ways that representation restrains ways of knowing:

> The historicity of violent artistic cognition complicates the choice between thing and personality cognition by restricting historically mediated forms of representation. In other words, choosing between personality and thing becomes a question not only of the cognizer's ethic, but also of the possibility of realizing that ethic within available forms of representation. (Denischenko 260)

Let me restate this in terms that will make the connection with Tolstoy explicit: A sort of "artistic violence" is done when an object of perception is miscategorized, when it is seen not as a personality but as an ohject. Artistic cognition or its failure is simultaneously a moral act. Appropriate forms of representation, however, are required to perceive and

therefore to depict an object as a personality, as "freely self-revealing." Artistic forms are themselves determined by historical circumstances, they are "historically mediated." Historical poetics helps us to see how depiction is delimted by historical context. It is not always possible to perceive an object artistically, to perceive the "personality limit," because lacking appropriate artistic devices, a thing can only be perceived in "object" mode.

But this idea of ethical/artistic seeing and its dependence on modes of representation opens the possibility that new modes of depiction will allow the reader new ways of seeing, new objects of perception that might be seen aesthetically. Creating new narrative techniques, modes of representation, becomes an act with historical ramifications. Art shapes and is shaped by history.

We find here, in this observation that forms of representation necessarily operate upon modes of cognition, a moment of commonality with Tolstoy's own aesthetic and pedagogical project throughout his career, the very subject of this dissertation. Tolstoy's search for devices that would allow him to narrate the other from within, his constant refiguring of the relationship between cognition and love, between "loving" and "unloving" perception, parallels Bakhtin's distinction between "thing" and "object" cognition. In Bakhtin's configuration, the proper aesthetic act is a laborious act of overcoming one's own cognitive position and tendencies, and approaching objects as personalities: dynamic, changing, never fully defined.

When Eikhenbaum calls Tolstoy the "canonizer of crisis" and claims that his artisitic project was the "destruction" of artistic means (109), we need to understand this as creative destruction: Tolstoy sought new ways to depict the other as "self revealing" personalities, and his tested and rejected existing means as insufficient.

For Tolstoy, the question resolves to one about love, and how love affects perception. The proper configuration of love and knowledge, love's cognitive function, is to slow down perception and overcome the viewer's solipsistic tendencies, his or her tendency to see the world as static objects. But which objects were entitled to this Bakhtinian "personhood"? As I explore in the following chapters, Tolstoy's career could be seen as an exploration of "right objects" for loving, "artistic" contemplation. He tests new narrative means and what they revealed about objects in the world, but whatever the ontological case, the *telos* remained the same: How to lead the reader to artistic contemplation of humanity itself, universal brotherhood?

Early Tolstoy and Early Bakhtin

Bakhtin loved and admired Dostoevsky; he had nearly as much "unlove" for Dostoevsky's eternal rival in literature, Tolstoy.[2] In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin treats Tolstoy as a strawman; Dostoevsky stands for everything "good" in art ("openness," "unfinalizability," "dialogue," "freedom"), and Tolstoy stands for everything "bad" ("self-inclosedness," "finalization," "monologue," "authoritativeness," "self-love," lack of freedom). But though Bakhtin was not a sympathetic reader of Tolstoy, in one area, the two were in agreement: that aesthetics was closely linked to a philosophy of love, and that both were based more on cognition (acts of knowing) than on *eros* (acts of desiring).

[2] For the best discussion of the complicated Bakhtin-Tolstoy relation and Bakhtin's use/misuse of Tolstoy, see "Rehabilitating Bakhtin's Tolstoy: The Politics of the Utterance" by David Sloane (TSJ, 2001).

Bakhtin's first published work, "Art and Answerability" (1919), already exhibits a methodology that Bakhtin will masterfully exploit throughout his intellectual career: he applies ontological and epistemological categories to aesthetics, thereby linking it with ethics. In this essay, Bakhtin turns the Kantian notion of the "unity of apperception" into his own aesthetic notion of "the unity of answerability" (1). Humans, he argues, cannot split themselves up into two selves, one to operate in life and for the other in art. If an individual person cannot be divided and neither can art and life. A single consciousness unites them into a single locus of perception and action. To deny this unity, for Bakhtin, is to flee responsibility. "I have to answer with my own life for what I have experienced and understood in art, so that everything I have experienced and understood would not remain ineffectual in my life" (1) [За то, что я пережил и понял в искусстве, я должен отвечать своею жизнью, чтобы все пережитое и понятое не осталось бездейственным в ней (I:5)]. The word translated here as "ineffectual" is "бездейственный"—literally, "inactive." The rootword is "action" and can be read in two ways: действовать (to act) and действовать на кого-то (to act upon someone, to affect). In other words, art "goes in" (affects the readers) and "comes out" (impels them to action).

This acting on the other is already beginning to sound a lot like Tolstoy's later theory of "infectious" art, but it places as much responsibility on the reader as on the creator. What is important for our purposes here, however, is that one of the very earliest philosophical claims Bakhtin made is this strong connection between aesthetics and ethics, "mutual answerability that art and life must assume"—at its core, a Tolstoyan idea (1).

Bakhtin's is, in some respects, a Kantian project. Like Kant, Bakhtin sees the aesthetic realm as the meeting point of theoretical and practical philosophies. Unlike Kant,

however, Bakhtin does not see art as detached from utility and worldly function. For the early Bakhtin, disinterested apprehension contradicts the very function of art to create a space for ethics. Bakhtin also rejects the impersonality of Kantian philosophy; for Bakhtin, ethics is a personal enterprise, it has a face and can be determined only in the context of its particularity. The work of art creates a space for a combination of this ethical particularity with ontological universality and both its creation and consumption should be an ethical act of love.

Narrating Universal Experiences, or "Who is interested in the history of *my* childhood?"

One of Tolstoy's main philosophical points of his first published work *Childhood* (1852) is very similar to Bakhtin's in "Art and Answerability." Even though the work's autobiographical nature and its focus on self-scrutiny seem to represent everything Bakhtin will later condemn as self-love, Tolstoy sees himself as revealing universal structures of experience through the process of self-scrutiny. For Tolstoy, the particularity of the individual experience is the only gateway to universal ontology: I have to know myself to know the world. This is quite apparent from his reaction to the editor's decision to change the title of the work from *Childhood* to *The History of My Childhood*. Furious, Tolstoy wrote to Nikolay Nekrasov, the editor of *The Contemporary*, where the work first appeared:

> Dear Sir, I was extremely displeased to read in *The Contemporary* Number IX a story entitled *A History of My Childhood* and to recognize it as the novel *Childhood* which I sent to you. . . . The title *A History of My Childhood* contradicts the idea of the work. Who is interested in the history of *my* childhood?" (Wilson 97)

The new title, in other words, contradicts the idea that artistic representation one's life story is no longer merely a personal history but a work of art where the particular reveals the universal.

Tolstoy's *Childhood* would perhaps be more aptly called *Childhood of a Writer*. It does not merely represent the emergence of a child's consciousness, but traces the development of the intense observation skills—introspection and perception—necessary for aesthetic (and specifically novelistic) activity. *Childhood* is Tolstoy's own *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Nikolenka explores the powers and dangers of imagination. He observes his own psychic processes and the role they play in perception. He perceives himself perceiving others as well others perceiving himself and each other. He learns to interpret psychic states based on their external manifestations and with brutal honestly demonstrates the role the subject's attitudes (love or the lack thereof) play in such interpretations. He begins to make generalizations based on particular observations. We can infer a number of theoretical claims about the nature of artistic activity from Nikolenka's interaction with the world. Here we can also perceive a corollary to Tolstoy's astonishing love affair with his own perceiving self. Perhaps justifying his own arguably excessive *philantia* is to go as far as to claim that all childhoods are childhoods of writers.

The Responsibility of Articulated Imagination

One of the first philosophical claims that Tolstoy makes in *Childhood* is the connection between aesthetics and ethics: the responsibility of the articulated imagination. In the opening of the novel, Nikolenka, the protagonist as well as the narrator, is woken up by his teacher Karl Ivanich. The clumsy manner with which Karl Ivanich wakes up the little boy

infuriates Nikolenka, who begins to think what a "disgusting person" [противный человек] his teacher is (5; PSS I:11). His hostility, however, quickly turns into shame. Overwhelmed by the unfairness of his hostile thoughts toward the teacher, who is "so kind" and "loves" [Какой он добрый и как нас любит, а я мог так дурно о нем думать] him so much, Nikolenka begins to cry (6; PSS I:12). To explain his tears, Nikolenka comes up with a lie: he had seen a nightmare, in which his mother had died. Not only does the boy himself begin to believe his own lie, but his imagined dream also proves to be prophetic. His mother does indeed die by the end of the novel.

Nikolenka's imagined yet prophetic dream suggests that we should be careful with our imagination, which affects reality. Nikolenka's imagination did not, of course, cause the death of his mother. It did cause, however, the immense feeling of guilt, which is very much real for the experiencing subject. This exposition of the power (and danger) of imagination anticipates Tolstoy's later claim in "What is Art" (1897) that an artist should depict only what he has personally experienced and understood. Connected to the discussion of imagination in *Childhood*, however, this claim raises an important question: can an act of imagination be understood as a personal experience in its own right? In *Childhood*, at least, Tolstoy's answer seems to be yes.

Another experience of imagination and its effects on reality are described in chapter VII of *Childhood*, "The Hunt." Nikolenka's experience of the hunt is described as an example of his imagination transporting him away from reality: "As invariably happens in such situations, my imagination far outstripped reality. When only the first hound was giving tongue in the wood, I imagined that I was already on my third hare" (30). [Воображение мое, как всегда бывает в подобных случаях, ушло далеко вперед действительности: я

воображал себе, что травлю уже третьего зайца, в то время как отозвалась в лесу первая гончая (PSS I:33)]. On the one hand, Nikolen'ka's imagination makes him fantasize about rabbits; on the other, it makes him perceive reality with a special kind of attention. It seems to suggest the following: start with fantacy and then you become more real. As an experience, it becomes more real. ("A History of Yesterday" is another perfect illustration of this point.) While this intensification of the senses gives him an aesthetic experience, it also proves to be distracting. He gets so engaged watching a butterfly and trying to guess its feelings and intentions (he imagines that the butterfly is very happy and pleasantly presses itself against the flower) that he misses the opportunity to catch the rabbit that appears in front of him. This can be read as an act of aesthetic empathy, but it also shows Nikolenka's inability to cross the threshold between imagination (art) and reality (life)—a theme that will be further developed in the following chapters. Nikolenka becomes utterly ashamed for this inability when he realizes that someone has witnessed his inability to catch the rabbit. Here, Tolstoy depicts the danger of excessive imagination unable to step back into real life.

Imagination itself depicted not only as an experience, but a necessary condition for any meaningful experiences. The next chapter of *Childhood*, "Games/Play" (Игры) further develops the theme of imagination by laying out two philosophical points of view: idealistic and empirical—the former represented by Nikolenka himself, the latter by his older brother Volodya. When the children propose playing a game of make-believe called "Robinson" (based on *The Swiss Family Robinson*, which they have just read), Volodya refuses. Instead, he proposes doing something "real:" building a gazebo (беседка). Nikolenka comments: "Or maybe it was because he had too much common sense and too little power of imagination to enjoy the game of Robinson completely" (32) [Может быть, и то, что у него уже было

слишком много здравого смысла и слишком мало силы воображения, чтобы вполне наслождаться игрою в Робинсона. Игра эта состояла в представлении сцен из “Robinson Suisse,” которго мы читали незадолго пред этим (PSS I:35)]. Volodya finally condescends to play the game, but constantly draws attention to its falsity. This ruins the game for everyone; it was impossible, Nikolenka tells us, not to acknowledge the reasonableness of Volodya’s claim: “I myself knew that the stick not only wouldn’t kill birds, but wouldn’t even shoot. It was a game. If you were to look at it like that, then you couldn’t ride chairs either… If you’re going to judge by what’s real, there can be no play at all. And if there’s no play, what’s left?” (33) [Я сам знаю, что из палки не только что убить птицу, да и выстрелить никак нельзя. Это игра. Коли так рассуждать, то и на стульях ездить нельзя Ежели судить по-настоящему, то игры никакой не будет. А игры не будет, что ж тогда остается? (PSS I:36)].

Ideas and ideals affect reality. Without the power of imagination there would be no games, no art, and no love—nothing meaningful in life to which human beings could devote their energy. Play, of course, is a traditional metaphor for both life and love. It is quite significant that the game the children are playing is based on a literary work. Here, Tolstoy makes the same claim as Bakhtin does in “Art and Responsibility:” that not only does life affect art (*Childhood* is after all a semi-autobiographical novel, for all that Tolstoy denied it to his publisher), but art affects life, and is necessary in order to live and love. Nikolenka knows the game is not “real,” but understands its vital importance.

Ludic Love and Watching Gamely

Tolstoy clearly links the power of imagination not only with art and play, but also with love. The chapter "Games" is immediately followed by the already discussed chapter "Something like First Love," which continues to explore the role and power of imagination. As we recall, the chapter opens with a description of Lyubochka (whose name means "love") pretendingto be picking fruit from exotic American trees. When she accidentally discovers a gigantic worm, she jumps back in fright. Katenka (whose name means "purity") reacts differently: she tries to help the worm on its way. Nikolenka watches Katenka and is filled with love. Here, much like in Bakhtin's "Author and Hero," there is a connection between love and attention that is triggered by imagination. Love directs attention, focuses it, and makes the beloved object more known. There is yet another claim made here. This short description of a seemingly simple scene of children at play anticipates other important philosophical ideas Tolstoy that will continue to develop. In this scene, Nikolenka is faced with a choice: it is significant that his attention is drawn to Katenka rather than to Lyubochka. Katenka is able to successfully cross the divide between art and life: she willingly participates in the game and is also able to immediately move to "practical" action when her help is needed. Lyubochka, on the other hand, cannot step out of her imagined world to face reality; rather, the threshold between art and life shocks her into inaction.

Nikolenka is not drawn to Lyubochka's fright and inability to deal with the intrusion of reality into her play of imagination (i.e., the worm). What appeals to him is involvement required at that crossroad when art yields to life (Katenka's immediate rush to help the worm get "back on its way"). Nikolenka's sympathy and attention (he even looks at her in the same way he looks at the butterfly) remains with Katenka, who unites the antipodic worldviews represented by Volodya and Lyubochka. Games should not be devoid of worldly utility—that

is, idealism should not be devoid of realism and aesthetics should not be devoid of ethics. But realism should not be devoid of idealism either, or there would be no aesthetics, no games, and no love.

This discussion of the role of imagination is another iteration of the connection between aesthetics and ethics that we saw in the story with the imagined dream about the death of the mother. One of the main claims of these depictions of the role of imagination in *Childhood* is that imagination is necessary and therefore dangerous. It should be treated with care. Nikolenka's imagination runs ahead of him and makes him miss the actual experience of the hunt. But Tolstoy makes sure we do not view imagination's role as only detrimental: we must allow it its proper place in order to enjoy games of art and love. We cannot accept views such as Volodya's, which only serve to disenchant the world and thus ruin our experiences. To do so would be to disregard art and love. Volodya, after all, expresses his disregard for games as well as for love: it is hardly surprising that when Volodya sees Nikolenka kiss Katenka's shoulder, he sarcastically remarks: "What's with the tenderness?"

In *Childhood*, imagination is the source for games (art), and it is also the source for love. This connection is clearly shown in the parallel between the butterfly scene and the scene with Katenka. Nikolenka's intense attention to both of these objects of his contemplation reveals them in a particular aesthetic light and gives Nikolenka a creative insight inaccessible to others. He observes the butterfly and Katenka externally, but he also tries empathetically to access their internality. This kind of attention yields privileged knowledge, unavailable to Volodya. Since Tolstoy is writing the "childhood of a writer," this knowledge now becomes accessable also to us, his readers.

Perceiving Perceiving Perception

Let us now return to the opening scene of the novella and take a closer look at the source and interchange of Nikolenka's emotions. Abruptly and clumsily woken up by Karl Ivanich, Nikolenka looks at him "with angry eyes." Meanwhile, Karl Ivanich acts as if nothing out of place has happened. Very upset, Nikolenka assumes that Karl Ivanich must surely know he was inappropriately woken up and frightened, and that his teacher is only pretending that not to notice Nikolenka's mood: "He saw very well that he woke and started me, but he acts as if he didn't" (5). Moreover, he extends this projection to claim that it is Karl Ivanich's goal in life to upset Nikolenka: "all he's thought about his whole life is doing nasty things to me" (5). This assumption of Karl Ivanich's bad intentions makes Nikolenka perceive his teacher's appearance with disgust: "What a horrible man he is! And his dressing gown and cap and tassel are horrible too!" (5) Here Nikolenka moves from assuming a mental state to observing external features, which are distorted in the light of his negative projections.

Karl Ivanich, however, is "in the best of moods" (5). Now more awake and observing Karl Ivanich, Nikolenka moves his thoughts in the opposite direction: from external observations to internal projections. Karl Ivanich's cheerful disposition, his "kind German voice" and playful tickling of Nikolenka make the latter diametrically change his evaluation of Karl Ivanich's moral character (5). A minute earlier Nikolenka was claiming that the sole purpose of Karl Ivanich's existence is to vex him; now, he proclaims to himself: "What a kind person he is and how fond of us, and yet I could think such bad things about him!" (6) This thought is immediately followed by remorse: "how could I think such bad things about him!" (6). And step by step, the previous chain of thought is taken apart. Nikolenka (with the

vigorous self-centeredness of children and of Tolstoy's favorite characters) had assumed that Karl Ivanich knew he was upset and did not care, but Karl Ivanich himself begins anxiously inquiring what has so upset the boy. This only intensifies Nikolenka's feeling of remorse: "His kindly German face and the concern with which he tried to guess the reason for my tears made them flow even faster" (6). Moving from perceiving Karl Ivanich's voice and face as kindly and noticing his concern, Nikolenka begins to see his appearance differently as well: "I could have disliked Karl Ivanich and found his gown and cap and tassel so horrible, for now on the contrary they all seemed extraordinarily nice to me, and even the tassel struck me as clear proof of his goodness" (6). There is an interesting two-way interaction here between goodness and beauty: late Tolstoy will challenge the assumption that beauty is goodness, but here, he equates goodness with beauty—or, at least, thinks that we see beauty where we assume goodness.

"I had the strangest notions about beauty," Nikolenka says later, in chapter seventeen, "[I] even considered Karl Ivanich the handsomest man in the world. But I knew quite well that I wasn't good-looking myself, and wasn't at all mistaken about it, and therefore every hint about my appearance was a painful affront" (65). This insecurity stems from a comment from his mother:

> I remember very well how once at dinner—I was six at the time—they were talking about my looks and maman was trying to find something good in my face, and said that I had clever eyes and a pleasant smile, but yielding in the end to my father's arguments and her own eyesight, she was forced to admit I was homely. Afterwards, as I was thanking her for dinner, she stroked my check and said, "Remember, Nikolenka, no one will love you for your face, so

> you must try to be a good and clever boy." Those words convinced me not only that I was no beauty, but also that I would certainly be a good and clever. Boy." (65–6)

This assumed connection between beauty and goodness will become a source of fury for late Tolstoy, expressed in his treatise *What is Art?* We can already see its seeds in *Childhood*. But the idea that goodness is what makes people truly beautiful is an ongoing motif throughout Tolstoy's writing. His classically beautiful characters are often villains from the start or simply dislikable. It is sufficient to recall Helen Bezukhova, her brother Anatole, or even the little princess from *War and Peace*. Characters Tolstoy loves might seem even ugly at first sight (Princess Marya, Natasha, or our Karl Ivanich), but something internal illuminates them and makes them beautiful. More importantly, it is love on the part of the perceiver that allows this beauty to emerge. In Chilean Spanish, the phrase "I love you" is literally translated as "I see your light." More commonly, we say "beauty is in the eyes of the beholder." How love can illuminate perception is one of the first lessons Nikolenka learns in *Childhood*.

In his celebrated review of Tolstoy's *Childhood*, Nikolay Chernyshevsky wrote that Tolstoy's attention was turned above all to the way in which one complex of thought-feelings derives from another. Tolstoy as an artist is interested in observing how an emotion, arising spontaneously from a given situation or impression, undergoes an influence from memories, succumbs to them, and with similar thoughts supplied by the imagination, merges into other thought-feelings, returns again to its point of departure and wanders on and on along the entire chain of recollections; how a primary sensation becomes a thought-feeling by the process of augmentation: it generates thoughts that carry it on and on, collecting on the way and fusing with dreams, past experiences, anticipating of the future, and reflections of the

present. “Tolstoy is interested most in the psychic process itself, its forms, its laws, the dialectics of the soul,” writes Chernyshevsky (39).[3]

What I would like to add to Chernyshevsky’s insightful and apt description is that Tolstoy not only observes these internal psychic processes, but also specifically examines the role love plays in these processes. Love affects the perception of others and the psychic processes we assume behind the external expressions. When analyzing the character of his father, Nikolenka notes that his father could tell the same story in two completely different ways: “he could speak of one and the same action as the sweetest mischief or low villainy” (37). In a way, throughout *Childhood,* Nikolenka is doing the same thing, albeit with a higher degree of honesty: within the confines of first-person narration, he is showing us how the same situation can not only be told but genuinely experienced in two different ways. The opening scene with Karl Ivanich is one such example, but others abound.

The same image of Karl Ivanich reading on his chair produces vastly different interpretations in Nikolenka’s mind dependeding on his own attitude. First, Nikolenka describes creeping up to the classroom and peeping at Karl Ivanich, who has no idea he is being watched:

> Karl Ivanich would be sitting alone in his armchair reading one of his favorite books with an expression of calm majesty. Sometimes I would catch him when he wasn’t reading, his spectacles resting on the tip of his long aquiline nose, his blue, half-closed eyes gazing with a special sort of expression, and a wistful smile on his lips. . . He wouldn’t notice me, and I would stand in the

[3] See Irina Paperno’s 1988 book *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism*

> doorway and think, “Poor, poor old man! There are many of us, we play and have fun, but he’s completely by himself with no one to be affectionate to him. He’s right when he says he’s an orphan. And the story of his life is such an awful one!. . . And you would become so sad that you would go over and take his hand and say, “Lieber Karl Ivanich!” He liked it when I talked to him that way and always petted me and was clearly moved. (8)

Observation with or without love yields completely different interpretations. The same image leads to empathy or vilification, depending on the observer’s position. If in playful a disposition, Nikolenka observes Karl Ivanich on his chair as majestically calm and pensively lonely; when angry at him for a punishment in the corner, Karl Ivanich appears cold, indifferent, and cruel:

> You would kneel in the corner until your knees and back started to ache and think, “Karl Ivanich has forgotten all about me. He’s probably sitting in his soft armchair reading his hydrostatics, but what about me?” And to remind him, you would quietly start to open and close the vent or peel the plaster from the wall. But if too large a piece suddenly fell to the floor with a thud, the fright alone really would be worse than any punishment. You would glace back at Karl Ivanich, but he would be sitting there with a book in his hand as if he hadn’t noticed anything. (9)

Noticing or not noticing that someone is watching you, or pretending not to notice another’s demands for attention, is yet another way of exploring the act of perceiving perception. Nikolenka’s meltdown during the opening scene and his seemingly unstoppable tears stop immediately when the servant Nikolai enters. Nikolenka does not want to be

perceived as sentimental by this serious and respectful man: “I would have been ashamed to cry in front of Nikolai” (6) [При нем мне было бы совестно плакать (PSS TK)]. This awareness of another’s perception along with the morning sun completely cheers Nikolenka up.

It is Karl Ivanich’s unawareness of Nikolenka’s presence that allows the latter to freely follow his flight of empathy, without interruption. But the intentional withdrawal of attention seems to be cruelest of acts for Nikolenka. Both in the opening scene and in the scene with Nikolenka in the corner and Karl Ivanich in his chair, Nikolenka is devastated and feels unloved. Of course, whether Karl Ivanich in fact notices and hides his awareness, or whether his mind is occupied by other matters, is a whole other question. But for Nikolenka, denial of attention indicates a lack of love. It is possible to observe another lovingly, but “unloving perception” is also a moral and aesthetic problem in Tolstoy’s works.

From Childhood to Youth: Looking Like an Adult

Having experienced a profound loss at the end of *Childhood*, Nikolenka feels reinvigorated in the beginning of *Boyhood*, because his gaze is directed forward to what awaits him rather than back toward what he is leaving behind. If genuine empathy flourishes when it is observed, mourning requires a special kind of presence, which to a certain degree incorporates absence.

In *Childhood*, Nikolenka’s gaze is more present, observing and analyzing what is happening around him gradually acquiring notes of retroactivity. In *Boyhood*, the narration tips over into a grown-up narrator recounting those events and so becomes more prospective (looking forward and projecting desire), reaching the apogee of forward projection in *Youth*.

Nikolenka is, once again, woken up, this time by the newly hired personal serf Vasily, but his reaction is different. Instead of trying to prolong his sleep, he jumps, up looking forward to what the new day has to offer. His relation to the new attendant differs as well; instead of assessing every detail of the interaction, as with beloved Karl Ivanich, he quickly evaluates the character and behavior of Vasily and moves on to new experiences. His attention is redirected from those who are near to far away and unknown figures, widening the sphere of observation, inevitably weakening its immediate experiential base. The loving, careful and penetrating attention remains a constant, however. From the familiar he moves to the unfamiliar, but with the same desire to mentally penetrate, understand, and embody what he sees. When Nikolenka sees pilgrims along the road, he notices every detail about their attire: the dirty kerchiefs, the birch-bark knapsacks on their backs, the dirty, ragged footcloths on their shoes. From external details, he moves to internal motivations and begins to wonder where they are going and why. He becomes so engaged in his observations that it seems strange to him "that those faces have nothing in common (with him) and that (he) may never see them again" (122) Next he notices a coachmen and once again gets so engaged in his observations that soon it seems to him that there is nothing happier than to be that coachmen. What is outstanding here is Nikolenka's ability to feel he can embody others, to see and feel life from their perspective, forgetting himself. Returning to his own position, he yearns to interact with his surroundings and struggles to understand social barriers: "Who lives in that house? Are there children, a father, a mother and a tutor? Why shouldn't we drive over there and make their acquaintance?" (122).

Nikolenka's desire to know is followed by a desire to be known. Dislocating his consciousness, he projects his own curiosity and notes its absence. When they encounter

another carriage and a man with a ruddy face and a ginger beard "glances at them with indifferent contempt," Nikolenka begins to think that "those carters have no idea who [they] are or where [they've] come from or where [they] are going" (122). Perhaps if they knew they would not be indifferent? Or would they only want to know if there were not indifferent? In any case, Nikolenka at once seems to perceive a difference between his own way of interacting with the world and that of others, measuring the difference by his way of seeing.

The idea that these stories are not simply about past experiences but about ways of seeing is confirmed by the title of the third chapter of Boyhood: "A New View," or more literally "A New way of Seeing" (the word *vzglyad* in Russian is specifically located in the observer and not in the act of observation like the English word "view"). This new way of seeing is once again connected to Nikolenka's first love object—Katenka—and realized through his careful attention to her. Nikolenka notices a new expression on her face: "I gazed at her silently, surprised by the expression of grown-up sadness that I was seeing on her rosy face for the first time" (130). He set out to find out the reasons of this sadness and is led to one of the most important revelations of this stage of his life:

> I clearly realized for the first time that we – that is, our family – weren't the only ones in the world, that not all interests revolved around us, that another life existed of people who had nothing in common with us, who didn't care about us and who had no idea we even existed. Certainly, I had known all that previously, but I didn't know it the way I came to know it then: I wasn't conscious of it and I didn't feel it. (133)

This statement is all the more emphasized by the previous paragraph, addressed to the reader:

> Has it ever happened to you, reader, suddenly to realize at a certain time in your life that your view of things was undergoing a complete change, as if everything you had known before had suddenly turned a different, unknown side toward you? That kind of mental change took place in me for the first time during our trip, which I also consider the beginning of my boyhood. (133)

In *Childhood*, it was Katenka (or rather Nikolenka's love for her) that taught him the value and intensity of affectionate attention; now, in *Boyhood*, the same attention widens his horizon. This enlightenment is not an obvious one. Why should love direct one's attention not only to its object but also and often generously to the world at large? By drawing intense attention to itself , the object of attention does not distract from and deprive of attention from what it is not, but instead opens up its subject's eyes to wider perpectives, which are experienced more intensely and more intently. The classically Platonic manner love of a particular person leads to love of the world full of images and ideas. *Childhood* demonstrated the intensity of such attention directed both toward Katenka and the butterfly; *Boyhood* shows how this attention leads the narrator to understanding inequality existing in the world, its unfairness, and causes profound curiosity about what seems to be newly discovered world. Nikolenka's gaze is now directed outwards. From love of a particular person, he is moved to a larger dimension that his desire helps him discover. Love brings out his consciousness and extends his attention.

This expansion of consciousness marks the beginning of boyhood for Nikolenka. Through the intensity of loving attention, he now sees the world with new eyes. What marks the beginning of youth is a new idea, that of self-perfection. This prospective resolution

implies a belief in progress that late Tolstoy will condemn in his *Confession* (1882). This realization is achieved through a different kind of love—not *eros*, but *philia*. Nikolenka's friendship with Dmitri Nekhludov, who will return later as the protagonist of *Resurrection*, leads him to commit to a project of self-creation based on the belief of infinite self-perfection and progress: "I said that my friendship with Dmitry revealed to me a new view of life and its purpose and relations. The essence of that view was the conviction that it is the goal of each to strive for moral improvement, and that such improvement is easy, possible and lasting" (213). From here the narrator moves to develop a theme began in *Childhood*—namely, the connection between goodness and beauty. First, Nikolenka notes that his views on his own appearance have not changed: he still thinks he is ugly. Then he goes on to describe an ecstatic experience of joy that makes him think that happiness, beauty, and goodness are not only related but identical:

> A new, exceptionally strong and pleasurable feeling suddenly filled my soul. . . . all spoke clearly and distinctly to me of something new and wonderful that I am unable to convey as it expressed itself to me then, although I'll try to do so as I perceived it. It spoke to me of beauty, happiness and virtue, saying that each was possible and easy for me, that none could exist without the others, and that beauty, happiness and virtue were even the same thing "How could I have failed to realize that? How bad I was before, and how good and happy I could have been and might be in the future!" I said to myself. "I must hurry, hurry, and this very minute become a different person and start to live differently." (217)

Of course, this project of self-improvement is based on a rejection of his past self. It is animated by a degree of regret and condemnation, by the urge "to become someone else."

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In all three parts of *Childhood, Adolescence, Youth*, love plays a revealing role and performs a cognitive function—that is, it yields privileged knowledge. It is through love for his mother that Nikolenka comprehends the responsibility of articulated imagination. Then through Katenka he learns to perceive his surroundings with a particular loving intense attention. And through Katenka again, Nikolenka learns about inequality and recognizes a larger world that he does not know but wants to know. Finally, in *Youth*, it is through friendship that Nikolenka commits to self-improvement. In all three parts of the trilogy, love moves in a Platonic manner from love for a particular person to something larger, in scale or idea.

Love Between Author and Hero

Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1868) follows the precise structure of the creative process described by Bakhtin in "Author and Hero." The way in which the narrator penetrates the consciousnesses of his characters and returns to his position to provide a fuller outside view made wiser by this internality easily maps onto the two steps that, for Bakhtin, comprise a purely aesthetic action. In addition, the way in which Tolstoy distributes his narrative attention among characters suggests a similar understanding of love as that which leads to a more intense study of objects and yields a special kind of knowledge.

Early Bakhtin sees the aesthetic process of specifically novelistic form as a two-step process. First, the novelist needs to look at the world from the perspective of his hero. This

step requires love and empathy. But this "landing" of the author's consciousness to the hero is not enough. Certain axiological excess is needed. The author needs to come back to his perspective, see the hero from without, from the outside to aesthetically frame him or her. It is the dynamic between these perspectives that comprises a novelistic world. For the dynamic to work there has to be a selection process: not every object can be approached with this loving attention: there needs to be "unlove," which passes over objects, depicting them only externally.

For later Tolstoy, love can only result from knowledge. But in *Childhood* and *War and Peace*, the relationship Tolstoy demonstrates between love and knowledge is extremely close to that of Bakhtin as articulated in "Author and Hero." In *War and Peace*, Tolstoy's narrator, with very few exceptions (such as Napoleon), penetrates only the consciousnesses of the characters he already loves and passes over the ones that he cannot treat with loving attention that would reveal them from within. Thus, knowledge follows love and not vice versa, as in later Tolstoy. As an example, consider the way the novel treats Hélène Bezukhova. The narrator focuses on her appearances and only guesses what she might be thinking; he never mentions what she actually thinks or feels: she only *seems* to feel or think something. The reader knows only her surface, and is encouraged to think that Hélène herself cares only about her surface and this causes antipathy. Natasha Rostova, on the other hand, is fully revealed to us from within. We know what people think of her, how she appears, but also what she herself thinks and feels.

Here is how Tolstoy describes Hélène at Anna Pavlovna's:

> The princess Hélène smiled. She rose with the same unchanging smile with which she had first entered the room—the smile of a perfectly beautiful woman. Hélène was so

> lovely that not only did she not show any trace of coquetry, but on the contrary she even appeared shy of her unquestionable and all too victorious beauty. She seemed to wish, but to be unable, to diminish its effect. (12)

The focalization in this passage places the reader along with the narrator among the crowd watching Hélène. Her feeling, her desire to hide her beauty, can only guessed from her appearances. The narrator always maintains this distance when describing Hélène. "As if" and "seemed" are frequent in descriptions of her, which always remain on the surface. They only suggest something, which we suspect is not true. Yet what is true we do not know. Here is another description of Hélène, when she is flirting with Boris: "It *seemed* as if from some words Boris had spoken that evening about the Prussian army, Hélène had suddenly found it necessary to see him. She *seemed* to promise to explain that necessity to him when he came on Tuesday" (394) [Казалось, что в этот вечер из каких-то слов, сказанных Борисом о прусском войске, Элен вдруг открыла необходимость видеть его. Она как будто обещала ему, что, когда он приедет во вторник, она объяснит ему эту необходимость (523)]. We always learn of Hélène only what her gestures and actions suggest, but we never know the real content of her thoughts. She is usually defined through some form of negation. Here is another example: "When conversation turned on her husband Hélène assumed a dignified *expression*, which, with characteristic tact, she had acquired though she did not understand its significance. This expression *suggested* that she had resolved to endure her troubles uncomplainingly and that her husband was a cross laid upon her by God" (389). Helen is "cheated" of an inner life by Tolstoy. There is also Vera Rostova, who is cheated of an inner life by her sister Natasha. She is never given her own story. Like Hélène, Vera and Berg are almost entirely externally depicted (in their case, from Natasha's perspective).

In contrast, here is how Tolstoy describes Natasha's involvement with Boris:

> Boris paused in the middle of the room, looked round, brushed a little dust from the sleeve of his uniform, and going up to a mirror examined his handsome face. Natasha, very still, peered out from her ambush, waiting to see what he would do. . . . Natasha was about to call him but changed her mind. "Let him look for me," thought she. . . . Natasha checked her first impulse to run out to her [Sonya], and remained in her hiding place, watching—as under an invisible cap—to see what went on in the world. She was experiencing a new and peculiar pleasure. (46)

Here the reader and the narrator are attached to Natasha's perspective, presented from within. We know not only of her actions but intentions and emotions as well. We have positive knowledge of her. Hélène Bezukhova is described mainly though negation (we know what she is not, that she is not what she appears); Natasha as a character has positive content both from within and from the outside. Even when Natasha is pretending and acting as coquettishly and irresponsibly as Hélène, we know precisely what her motives are. Here is how the narrator describes her awareness that Anatole Kuragin is interested in her:

> During the whole of that entr'acte Kuragin stood with Dolokhov in front of the orchestra partition, looking at the Rostovs' box. Natasha knew he was talking about her and this afforded her pleasure. She even turned so that he should see her profile in what she thought was its most becoming aspect.

Moreover, we know precisely why she is craving attention. Rejected by Andrey's father and sister after faithfully waiting for him with very little communication, Natasha is desperately in need of the feeling of being loved.

Conclusion: Seeing Through Love

War and Peace and the *Childhood* trilogy separate their characters into categories. There are those who are loved by the author—heroes like Natasha—and who are therefore seen from within. They are endowed by their creator with emotions and motivations. They have will; they are capable of change; they are described in terms of what they are and what they want. Alongside those loved characters are protagonists whose subjectivity is withheld from the reader. We have no access to Hélène's inner world. She is incapable of change; she is objectified, described in terms of what she is not.

The loving gaze is the means by which we overcome our solipsism, in precisely the way that *eros* is described by Diotima. The lover exceeds her own subjectivity in the search for a beautiful soul to "generate" eternal knowledge. The soul, just like the body, seeks immortality through *eros*. To achieve this immortality involves overcoming the self and melding with the other. This overcoming is the first step up Plato's knowledge ladder.

This loving gaze, what Emerson describes as the "flowing from this surplus of my outer and inner seeing of the other [beloved] person," is an explicitly aesthetic gaze. When Nikolenka gazes at Katenka's shoulders and the butterfly, his gaze is slowed down, complicated, an effect that Bakhtin both describes as explicitluy aesthetic: "The valued manifoldness of Being as human can present itself only to a loving contemplation" (63).

In *Childhood* especially, Tolstoy explicitly links loving seeing with the artist's gaze. The novel is a *Kunstlerroman,* and Nikolenka is a future artist. As I have argued, Tolstoy's trilogy is the story of an artist's growing, ever-more-encompassing knowledge of the world through love.

But love, and the affectionate attention it enables, is always, by definition, selective. What starts as a question of love becomes, as with Diotima, a question of knowledge of the world and of intersubjectivity. Love, with the exception of *agape*, is always immediately a question of selection. Who shall we love? Who deserves the loving attention that reveals to the lover the "manifoldness of being" of the beloved object? Natasha, yes! Hélène, no!

This question of "whose consciousnesses" the artist should access, who deserves to be known from within, becomes both an epistemological and an aesthetic problem. Whose consciousness to reveal becomes itself a question of art. In *Childhood*, we, the reader, watch the artist Tolstoy watching the artist Nikolenka. We, the reader, observe as Tolstoy observes Nikolenka observing Katenka. Each of these acts of observing is aesthetic, each act is epistemological, and each of them is a conscious decision, a sort of "illumination" of the object's subjecthood. It is as though consciousness itself is revealed through this act of perceiving the perception of the other as she perceives.

This act of selective, slowed-down perception, the artist observing the artist, gets repeated in the conclusion to "Lucerne." Nekhlyudov interrogates the possibility of knowing the internal world of the other, wondering whether he has the right to "weigh the inner happiness" of the itinerant singer who "gazes at the brilliant moonlit sky, and gaily sings amid the peaceful, fragrant night" (122). Nekhlyudov wonders whether the rich men who had earlier snubbed the musician and were now "sitting in their well-lit, calm rooms" and discussing world affairs, are as happy as the impoverished singer. (Natasha herself is, of all the characters in *War and Peace*, the closest to an artist. Consider, for instance, the many scenes of her singing and dancing, and more to the point, the scenes of others watching her as she sings and dances.)

War and Peace accepts this selective love of some but not others, this aesthetic revealing of the internality of the other, as if not inevitable, then at least desirable, just as it is in Diotima's ladder of knowing. Ideally, this love of some leads up the ladder toward universal love. In the *Childhood* novels, "Lucerne," and *War and Peace*, we find ourselves in Nussbaum's world of falling in love with some characters because the author loves that character. We are, like Nikolenka and Nekhlyudov, observing with loving attention some subject, some other who is worthy of love. But more importantly, we are actually observing Tolstoy's loving gaze as it slowly reveals the internality, the subjectivity, of the artist as the artist observes a beloved object.

But the question of how we know who we love remains to be solved. Starting with selective love, how do we end up with universal love? That is the conundrum of *Anna Karenina*.

CHAPTER 2: THE MORAL-EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRISIS IN *ANNA KARENINA*: KNOWLEDGE AS A PREREQUISITE FOR LOVE

> "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." (3)

> "There must be as many kinds of love as there are hearts." (140)

Anna's assertion that "there must be as many loves as there are hearts" contradicts novel's famous opening line; if there all happy families really are alike, then there is only one way to love—and Anna must be wrong. The epigraph "Vengeance is mine; I will repay," then, passes judgment on the failure of love in the novel. In Anna's case, love fails because of excessive desire and excessive individuation, which leads to a failure of perception. A typology of love is traditionally created based on the object of love, be it a lover, a child, a parent or a friend, but Anna claims that the typology depends on the subject instead.

Anna's claim that there are as many kinds of love as there are hearts appears to be a pluralist and diverse notion of love. The classical eight categories of love might appear restricting as a model, while Anna's "typology" might seem more democratic. But beneath the surface, her claim reveals a singular monolithic approach: each heart can love only one way, disregarding the object of love. The multiplicity of loves proposed by the Greeks, which vary depended on the object of love rather than the subject, become irrelevant. This approach

is encoded in Anna's remark, and animated and dramatized in the trajectory of her failing perception of self and others. For her, *eros* and *storge*, for example, compete. Instead of leading to *agape*, *eros* leads Anna to mania and pessimism. Possessive *eros* seems to gobble up all other forms of love.

In *Tolstoy: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Jeff Love proposes that "*War and Peace* exhausts itself in *Anna Karenina*" because the latter focuses "on the overwhelming miseries of individuation, the impossibility of reconciliation between individual and totality:"

> It is hardly accidental that this questioning of reconciliation takes place within the narrative having as its principal theme a violent breach of harmony brought about by what can only truly belong to the individual and which always threatens any social fabric: lust, the fervid desire for carnal pleasure that affirms the primacy of the body. *Anna Karenina* is thus, as all narrative both an exploration and representation of desire. And perhaps the most profound shift in emphasis between the two great novels consists in their different attitudes toward desire. If *War and Peace* offers the possibility that desire may be overcome, that we are not wholly trapped in the interestedness that desire expresses, our animal being, *Anna Karenina* stresses the reverse: that desire may not be overcome, that the animal will out no matter how we may wish to conceal that fact from ourselves. (64)

It is this triumph of the animal self that determines Anna's doom, not her betrayal of her husband and her disloyalty to him. Anna's crime is less socio-ethical and more epistemological; it concerns her soul and the ability to perceive and know. But of course, any crime a soul can commit will concern sociality, the subject's relation to others. Katyusha

Maslova in *Resurrection*, is not condemned for prostitution, so why then should Anna be condemned for "cheating?" She is not. She is condemned for something much more complex: a form of solipsism that counts as a sin even in Bakhtinian individualistic ethics. The triumph of the animal self is an epistemological issue because it prevents the overcoming of solipsism, and this failure closes us off from the reality of the other and thus the potential ascent up the Platonic ladder. If we only love the self and others who we believe will benefit the self, we deny human relatedness and comprehend the world incorrectly. Our perception will subsequently fail, since it is built around incorrect presuppositions. If we fail to follow the lead of love out of ourselves, if we fail to acknowledge the subjectivity of the other that love demands, how are we to understand the world?

> Immediately before throwing herself beneath the train, Anna thinks:
>
> And hatred begins where love ends. I don't know these streets at all. Some hills or other and houses, endless houses… And in the houses people, endless people. . . . No end to how many of them are, and they all hate each other. (766)

Hatred makes Anna blind. Love, in its proper application, may lead to enlightenment; hatred, on the other hand, only leads to solipsism and dissociation apparent even on the level on senses. Anna's is a failure of perception, a failure to recognize or exploit the cognitive value of love. Instead of leading to a fuller understanding of life and revealing the essence of human relatedness, Anna's love seals off her perception, a process which culminates in the notion that life is grounded in mutual and universal hatred.

As Anna begins to lose her sense of inner freedom and agency, her consciousness becomes increasingly sealed off and impermeable even to Vronsky. She begins to fail to see (she squints, as Dolly notices) and hear (Vronsky despairs at his own inability to get her to

hear and understand his perspective). It is Dolly who comments on Anna's new habit of "narrowing her eyes" or "squinting" (shchuritsia). Along with Dolly, the readers conceive of this habit as a physical expression of her attitude, as an attempt "not to see" her life (628, 619).

The failure of communication between Anna and Vronsky results in Anna's final delusional state of solipsism and vengeance. Vladimir E. Alexandrov, in his study *Limits to Interpretation: The Meanings of Anna Karenina*, traces this process; commenting on the failure of communication between Anna and Vronsky, Alexandrov writes:

> It is paradoxical that once Anna's affair with Vronsky actually begins and she is drawn, or rushes, progressively deeper into it, descriptions of her private perceptions and of her differences and distance from Vronsky occupy more of the narrator's attention and, consequently, more textual space than do portrayals of the lovers' physical or emotional closeness. (179).

Anna's possessive love for Vronsky not only dissociates her from others and become an obstacle for her love for her son or her frienships, but also dissociates her from Vronsky himself.

When we first meet Anna, she is the exact opposite of a sealed off, solipsist; she is, on the contrary, on a mission to reconcile a married couple and save a family. She seems to embody both empathy and reason. Her intuitive empathy with the children is indicative of this, but this too disappears right after she falls in love with Vronsky. Her compassion to Dolly in the opening chapters, Alexandrov argues, "suggests that Anna is capable of entering into another's frame of mind, at least at times and to some extent" (172). Before encountering distracting *eros*, here Anna seems the very embodiment of *storge*, *pragma*, and

agape. She is still able to think clearly and kindly because she has not yet fallen under the sway of *eros*. With *eros*, falsehood enters her life and distorts her perceptions. Anna's perception fails because of dissociation with those near and dear; *eros* fails her because instead of incorporating other kinds of love, it fights and takes over. Do we forgive Anna because we come to know this process from within? Is this internal knowledge the product of Tolstoy's aesthetic loving attention, as in early Tolstoy and *War and Peace*, or is it meant to result in love? Can it produce enough love to forgive Anna? And what would this forgiveness look like in a fictional text?

Who Knows More? Dolly's Forgiveness

The connection between love, knowledge, and forgiveness, one of the main themes of the novel, is dramatized in the early scene between Anna and Dolly in which Anna tries to convince Dolly to forgive Stiva (Part One, Chapter 19). Anna's entire argument is based on the connection between love and knowledge and her rhetoric is to transform the dynamic between love and knowledge. Dolly is devastated: she thought that she knew her husband, and that she was the only women he knew intimately, but it turns out that her knowledge was very limited and Stiva's is significantly wider. Love, knowledge, and forgiveness are thus united. One might think, as Stiva does, that Dolly is suffering from the unnecessary pain of knowing, but in fact she is suffering from lack of knowledge. The fact that she did not know was almost worse than the fact of infidelity. That is, lack of knowledge leads to lack of trust and thus to loneliness. It is instructive that Dolly's concerns are not just about her own and her husband's sphere of knowledge, but also about the knowledge that her husband's mistress had as well: "They must have talked about me, or even worse, didn't say anything—you

understand?" (71) Dolly's despair is about who has privileged knowledge. She seems to ask: do Stiva's lovers know me, or, maybe worse, do they not know me? Not to say anything is a type of negative knowledge. They ignore her real presence. Dolly's concerns are a microcosm of the novel's themes: self-knowledge and knowledge of the other, love, belonging and not belonging to groups, forgiveness. Gustafson's way of looking at the Tolstoyan cosmos, as built entirely on the categories of *svoi* ("resident") and *chuzhoi* ("stranger"), helps us to understand the categories that the novel proposes for knowing and loving. Dolly is concerned that she does not know her husband, that he is *chuzhoi*; she is also simultaneously concerned that it is she who is in fact not known, she who is *chuzhoi* ("or even worse, they didn't say anything").

Anna flips and detoxifies Dolly's concerns about knowledge and love. She insists: "We both know him" [Мы его обе знаем]; he is ours, *svoi* [свой человек] (71). Anna then uses Dolly's concerns about knowing and loving to extract what Anna wants from Dolly, for her to forgive Stiva. She claims Dolly is the one in possession of privileged knowledge"

> Although I completely understand what you are going through, there is one thing I don't know: I don't know. . . I don't know how much love there still is for him in your soul. Only you know whether there is enough to allow you to forgive. If there is, then forgive him! (72)

She claims that inclusive knowledge is more important that exclusive love. The irony is that the real reason it is a bad marriage has to do with Oblonsky's shallow amiable, pleasure-loving nature. Here, Anna makes the case for Dolly to forgive the Rousseauian "natural man" in Oblonsky—free, pleasure-seeking, at home in his natural habitat, which is high society with its loose morals.

In turn, Dolly appeals to the power of knowledge and its connection to love, when she tries to convince Levin to give Kitty another chance. She begins her appeal by linking her love with knowledge: "If I did not love you. . . if I did not know you as I do" (my translation) [– Если б я вас не любила. . . если б я вас не знала, как я вас знаю]. Dolly uses on Levin the same tactics that Anna had used on her, reasserting the vital connection between love, knowledge, and forgiveness.

Eros and Eating

Tolstoy continues to explore what we might call the deontology of love in a scene where Stiva Oblonsky and Levin discuss love and desire over dinner, often referred to as "the symposium." The link to Plato is explicit: the two friends discuss the possibility of desiring or loving two women simultaneously. But this topic shapes and controls the form of the discussion as well. Just as in Platonic dialogues, the form of the discussion comments upon and extends the content of the discussion.

In this "symposium" scene, the friends' divergent worldviews are first expressed through their relation to food. In the classical literary symposium, the diners' views on love and women are reflected self-consciously in their ways of eating. So too in *Anna Karenina*. The very ordering of the food delights Oblonsky, who repeatedly asks Levin what food or drink he *loves*: "Do you **love** (champagne) with the white seal?" [Ты любишь с белою печатью?] (PSS VIII:44); "Can I order or Parmesan or do you **love** another kind?" [Или ты другой любишь? (PSS TK)]; "You don't **love** oysters?" [А ты не очень любишь устрицы?

(PSS VIII:44)].[4] Levin refuses to play along, insisting that "[i]t's all the same to me!" [Нет, мне все равно.(PSS VIII:44)] repeatedly insists. Finally unable to contain himself, Levin expresses the source of his dismay: "I find it peculiar now that whereas we country-people try appease our hunger quickly so we can get on with our work, you are I are trying to spin it out as long as possible, and that's why we are eating oysters" (38).

Oblonsky and Levin's attitudes toward food are also their attitudes toward love. When Oblonsky asks Levin to imagine being married and loving his wife but being attracted to another woman, Levin refuses, comparing it stealing a bun right after a good meal: "I'm sorry, but I really do not understand this, it's as if… like I would not understand it if I now went past a bakery after having had a good meal and stole a roll" (42). "But why not?" asks Oblonsky, surprised: "sometimes rolls smell so good you can't resist" (43).

The difference between the two men is the difference between two structures of desire. For Levin, any urge, be it hunger or desire, is a state of lack, and thus needs to be satisfied quickly, sufficiently, and efficiently. If not eliminated, desire should be at least *resolved* and managed. Oblonsky, on the other hand, delights in the state of desiring itself. He tries to prolong it, to recreate it as often as possible. He likes to eat buns, even when he's full. Levin is at base a stoic; Oblonsky a hedonist.

Appetites are, of course, one way we talk about food, and one way we talk about erotic desire. When talking about food, Levin and Stiva are also talking about erotic desire

[4] These transations are mine to emphasize that Oblonsky uses the word "love" in relation to food over and over again. Understandably, for stylistic reasons, English transations use the word "like."

and its "consummation." But there is irony here that reveals Tolstoy's conflicted and ultimately confused conception of erotic love and desire. What Tolstoy is attempting to convey in Oblonsky's attitude toward women is the latter's animalistic nature: Oblonsky loves women as he loves food, they both feed him. He feeds them too. Oblonsky brings pleasure to men and women, whereas Levin makes everyone feel uncomfortable. We should never forget that with Levin Tolstoy is playing his own case. Not only does Tolstoy disapprove of Oblonsky's pleasure, he also does not want anyone to receive pleasure either. This is what Nikolai Grot criticizes as Tolstoy's rejection of the binary nature of incarnation, that the spiritual and the animal are fused. But despite Tolstoy's escalating moral agenda based on a separation of this binary, he still reflects the complexity and paradox of the human position: though his urges are animalistic, Oblonsky still radiates love and brings pleasure to others

In response to his co-diner's attitudes, Levin summons Plato, albeit in oversimplified and perhaps misunderstood form, to help him proclaim that his own love is more lofty and spiritual. In response to his friend's censure, Oblonsky asks Levin to suspend judgment and consider the drama of his situation:

> "We have two women here: one insists only on her rights, and these rights are your love, which you cannot give her; while the other sacrifices everything for you, and asks for nothing. What are you to do? How should you behave? It's a terrible drama."
>
> [Levin replied:] "If you want my frank opinion about this, then I have to tell you that I do not believe there is any drama going on at all. And here is why. As far as I see it, love. . . both kinds of love, which you remember Plato

> defines in his Symposium—both loves serve as a touchstone for people. Some people understand only the first kind, and others only the second. And those who only understand non-Platonic love should not be talking about drama. There cannot be any drama with this kind of love. 'Thanking you humbly for the pleasure, my compliments,' and that is all the drama. And there cannot be any drama in Platonic love, because in that kind of love everything is clear and pure because…' At that moment Levin remembered his own misdemeanors, and the inner struggle he had gone through. And he added unexpectedly:
>
> 'However, maybe you are right. Maybe indeed… But I don't know, I really don't know" (44).

Levin struggles here. What really irritates Tolstoy about Oblonsky is not vice but the lack of struggle against it. Love cannot turn into knowledge without some struggle, resistence, self-criticism. Oblonsky's perspective is very distant from Platonic love, since it is self-serving. As for Levin, seeing Platonic love as non-erotic is ironic enough. The conventional understanding of Platonic love is that it is non-erotic and perhaps Levin is simply expressing here this general widespread attitude about Platonic love. But there is also a philosophical perspective from which eroticism, which seeks to prolong and rekindle desire—understood as process, curiousity, quest—is what makes us human, as opposed to the animal instinct to satisfy desire as quickly and completely as possible. This perspective too is Platonic at its core.

Commenting on this distinction between kinds of erotic love, Mikhail Epstein differentiates between sexology and erotology. In so doing he draws on *ludus* or playful non-possesive non-morbid love. "There is," he says,

> no commonly accepted distinction between the terms "sexual" and "erotic," but the first more often refers to the natural reproductive aspects and behavior of organisms, while the second refers to conventionally cultural, artistic, and playful forms of sexual relations, the goal of which is not procreation but pleasure, psychological recharging, creative inspiration and so on. (33)

If we look at Oblonsky's and Levin's perspectives from within Epstein's framework, a possibility arises that most likely would enrage Tolstoy: that Oblonsky's eroticism is more human, while Levin's is the domain of animal and biological simplicity and the sphere of "sexual thirst and hunger" that demands the quickest satisfaction. For Tolstoy, the problem lies in what Oblonsky does with his humanity—namely that he is not curious. He is shallow, not interested in self-perfection, in Plato's ladder, and the self-perfection is key for Tolstoy.

This paradox—that erotic, physical love is both spiritually human and physically animal—is directly addressed when Oblonsky remarks on Levin's interest in the long nails of one of Oblonsky's colleagues, Grinevich. Levin calls the long nails "дико"—literally "wild," but here, "odd." In the countryside, as with consuming food, everything is done with an eye for practicality. Thus long nails that prevent "honest (that is, manual) work" seem strange. Levin goes on to remark that the lingering over their meal, like Grinevich's long nails, is a mark of how removed people are from the real, functional purpose of food and work.

Oblonsky relishes the irony. Levin calls the nails wild, while for Oblonsky, the long nails are signs of Grinevich's "education" and station. Oblonsky responds that "the point of

education (образование)" is to "make everything a pleasure" (38). Levin responds that he would rather be "wild" (диким), to which Oblonsky responds, "Yes, indeed, you are wild. All you Levins [your family] as wild" [Ты и так дик. Вы все, Левины, дики.(PSS VIII:45)]. Levin is "wild" because he rejects what, for Oblonsky, makes us human: our ability to enjoy things removed from their actual utility. (This is as true of wives as it is true of buns.)

Yet, dialectically speaking, Levin's rejection of desire becomes its suppression as well as its mastering. His version of eroticism turns out to be almost a form of asceticism—the opposite of eroticism. But this sublimation also turns Levin to manual labor—the surest route to spiritual awakening for Tolstoy. Stiva ends up being the slave of his desires, thus his body and animal nature. His eroticism ends up enslaving him—he cannot resist those buns! Yet, even the concept of "enslavement" is a moral one, and Oblonsky lacks that dimension. It is only from a different perspective, a character's or the author's, that we can recognize the potential enslavement to appetite. Levin struggles, but Oblonsky does not know how to struggle, is not interested in struggle.

The form of Levin and Stiva's conversation, this symposium, *extends* the content, enriches it, because the form comments upon the content. Levin and Oblonsky are looking for truth, for satisfaction, for justice, for knowledge through love. Love here is presented as a modus, a relationship with knowledge. It is a means of coming-to-know another. Their attitude toward food and pleasure is both on display in their table manners and attitudes as well as in their dialogue. Our model of knowing is always also a model of love and a learning experience.

The symposium neatly encapsulates the novel's themes of love and knowing, "repeats" the themes, the form, but also the hybrid genre of the novel. There's a

philosophical discussion, a genre level of this "repetition" going on, too. Here the "telling of the truth, the coming-to-the-truth, and the truth" are all mirrored in one another. The method, content, and telling (повествование) are all distilled in the conversation between Levin and Oblonsky. Bakhtin could not be more wrong about Tolstoy's narrative being "monolithically monologic."

Love's Effect on Perception

Arguably, Anna's ability to be so clear headed, reasonable, and pragmatic in the early scenes with Dolly and Stiva is explained by the absence of *eros* from her life. All this begins to shift once she begins entertaining thoughts of intimacy with Vronsky. The shift is apparent even from the way Dolly's children begin to treat Anna differently, losing their initial excessive affection.

Most conspicuously, the change in Anna's perception is illustrated when she returns to Saint Petersburg and sees her husband for the first time after meeting Vronsky. In one of the most discussed scenes in literature, Anna notices that Karenin's ears are sticking out. This is clearly due to a change in perception, for surely Karenin's ears have not grown. The question that we should be asking is whether this new perception is or is not the truer one. Does *eros* help Anna see things clearer, or does it muddle her reason? To restate our initial question of inquiry: does love present an epistemological miracle or an obstacle?

Anna's growing dissatisfaction with her husband is coupled with growing dissatisfaction with herself. The narrator comments on Anna's dissatisfaction with herself by saying that "this was an old, familiar feeling, similar to that state of pretense she experienced in her relations with her husband; but previously she had not noticed it, while now she was

clearly and painfully aware of it" (104). Alexandrov asks if Anna is deluded and correctly concludes that her new perception is presented as more accurate and fuller than her (importantly unspecified) old perception. Has she simply fallen in love with someone else and out of love with Karenin? Gary Saul Morson suggests that Anna is subconsciously trying to not love her husband, to detach (84). But we can also read her disappointment with her husband more charitably. Perhaps only the arrival of love in its most curious, demanding, and energetic form, *eros*, can make her conscious of how absent it was in her marriage? Perhaps her falling in love has opened her eyes to her situation?

Anna's dissatisfaction with her husband and herself was a moment of lucidity, but it is short lived. Even at this very moment, there are alarming aspects to Anna's sobriety upon her return to Saint-Petersburg when we turn to Anna's similar attitude toward her son: "And the son, just like the husband, produced in Anna a feeling akin to disappointment. She had imagined him better than he was in reality. She had to descend into reality to enjoy him as he was" (107). Anna now sees reality clearer, but this reality is a painful one. The fact that Anna's love for her own son seems to diminish as a consequence of her encounter with Vronsky already suggests several pathologies. That her infatuation with Vronsky will diminish her love or tolerance of her husband is understandable. But why should this love affect her perception and love of her son? *Eros* and *storge* should not be competing here, but they do. Moreover, the right kind of erotic love will expand the general sphere of love (remember Levin's state in love or the narrator's love-state in "After the Ball"). Anna, Tolstoy seems to suggest from the very beginning of the novel, is already experiencing pathological love, one that instead of expanding the scope of love, focuses it only on a single individual in the expanses of love for others, even her own children. *Eros* is where Plato says

everything must start. The problem with Anna is that she cannot move from it, cannot rise on the ladder. This might even be the problem of the novel: that the characters fail to understand the author's point that there are different kinds of love and accept, as Morson provactively puts it, "romantic love as the only kind" (76).

Anna is on a quest—but a pathological one. Why is her quest pathological? One possible explanation is that the trajectory of her love is reversed and thus becomes perverted: she had *pragma* (with Karenin) before *eros* (with Vronsky). This is the insight Oblonsky tells her at his most lucid moment in the novel: "You married a man twenty years older than yourself. You married without love or not knowing what love is. That was a mistake, let's assume"(427). Having arrived too late, *eros* induces Anna to ignore *storge* and quickly grows into a mania, a possessive and jealous love that distorts her perception. This distortion is well illustrated on the eve of the horse race when we are told Anna holds Karenin "guilty for everything bad she could find in him and forgives him nothing, on account of the terrible fault for which she stood guilty before him" (189). This is an extraordinary psychological insight similar to Anna's reaction to Karenin at the train station. But at the train station, there seems to be more of a consonance between the narrator's and Anna's perspectives (she too seems painfully aware of the change in her perspective); here, however, Anna seems more unaware of her transference. The dissonance of perspectives is growing not only between Anna and Vronsky, but also between Anna and the narrator.

The lack of understanding between Anna and Vronsky is all the more intensified by Anna's withdrawal from him of any information about her son. She insists that her grief must remain private and, moreover, that Vronsky would not understand her:

> She could not and did not want to share it with Vronsky. She knew that for

> him, though he was the chief cause of her unhappiness, the question of her meeting her son would be a most unimportant thing. She knew that he would never be able to understand all the depth of her suffering. (531)

As she is the one concealing her emotional turmoil about her son, we have no way of knowing whether Vronsky would have failed to understand her.

Not only does understanding between Anna and Karenin become impossible, but communication between Anna and Vronsky also increasingly fails. After Vronsky runs into Karenin, the narrator says that Anna was again "bringing together her imaginary idea of him (an incomparably better one, impossible in reality) with him as he was" (357). Commenting on this remark, Alexandrov writes: "We can try to imagine in what ways Vronsky differs from what Anna thinks he is, but since the narrator's generalization is vague, no anchor for his judgment emerges, and all the reader can infer is that Anna cannot get out of her projections" (178). We do not know what Vronsky really is (even to the extend we can know a fictional character from within), but what is important is Anna's inability to perceive living beings as dynamic, changing, and unfinalizable. In this scene with Vronsky, she is trying to see him as she saw Karenin at the train station: disappointing and *not* worthy of her love.

This failure to sufficiently differentiate between objects of love culminates in Anna's attempt (minor and unrealized, but an attempt nonetheless) to attract Levin, who, she thinks, looks like Vronsky. Discussing Levin's visit, Alexandrov writes: "The narrator explains that this is the way she has unconsciously begun to treat all young men, which implies that during her meeting with Levin she was interested more in her own power to awaken love in a chance caller—and thus, presumably, to test by proxy her power to keep Vronsky—than anything intrinsic to Levin himself" (192). It is a crucial stage in the progressive failure of

Anna's perception, when she seems to illustrate her own claim that each heart has one way of loving, instead of different ways of loving different people. Alexandrov sees Anna's thinking that Levin looks like Vronsky as a sighn that she likes him, but it seems more plausible that she is no longer able to perceive differences.

Love as Transgression

Karenin is caricatured, presented as naturally spiritually handicapped; Vronsky is not. Even when we do not have access to his internality, by the second half of the novel, we do not doubt either his spiritual depth or his love for Anna. In fact, it is his genuine love that seems to be the problem – not the affair itself. An affair with a married woman is almost expected of a young officer and encoded into the fabric of society, but Vronsky truly falls in love, and therein lies his transgression. We are presented with this view from the perspective of Vronsky's mother:

> Vronsky's mother was initially happy when she heard about his liaison, both because, in her view, nothing gave the finishing touch to a brilliant young man quite like a high-society liaison, and also because it turned out that Karenina, whom she had liked so much, and who had talked so much about her son, was, in the view of Countess Vronskaya, just like every other beautiful and respectable woman after all. But she had recently found out that her son had turned down a position offered to him which was important for his career, just so he could stay in his regiment and be able to see Karenina, and she found out that his superiors were displeased with him about that, so she changed her

> mind. She also did not like the fact that, from what she could gather about this liaison, it was not a brilliant, stylish society liaison, such as she would have approved, but a kind of Werther-like, desperate passion, so she was told, which might well lead him into doing something foolish. (177)

Love for Anna changes Vronsky. "Vronsky's life falls into two unequal parts," writes Alexandrov. "Initially, he is entirely a creature of his St. Petersburg set's codes of behavior, so that his perspectives are really functions of their values. But the latter part of his affair with Anna forces him to change" (215). It is important to keep this change in mind, when we read, for example, about Vronsky's views on marriage. But we must also acknowledge Vronsky's own agency in bring about this change. He wants to change and chooses to change.

Vronsky's relationship with Anna exceeds any of his preconceived notions. His love for her is not based on idealization of marriage and family, as is Levin's love for Kitty, nor on society's expectations of a liaison with a married woman. Thus, it is unpredictable and potentially dangerous. But for that reason it is all the more genuine.

To better grasp the two core developing "loves" in the novel, Vronsky's and Levin's, let us compare their different attitudes toward marriage. The narrator comments about each man's relation to his past. First, Levin:

> They [his parents] had lived a life which to Levin seemed the acme of perfection, and which he dreamed of reviving with his own wife and his family. Levin could hardly remember his mother. The idea of her was a sacred memory for him, and in his imagination his future wife had to be

> the replica of that enchanting, holy ideal of womanhood, which his mother had been for him. Not only could he not imagine loving a woman outside marriage, but first and foremost imagined having a family, and only then the woman who would give him a family. His ideas about marriage were therefore not like those of the majority of his acquaintances, for whom marriage was one of many routine undertakings; for Levin it was the main undertaking in life, on which depended all happiness. (97)

Compare this to Vronsky:

> Vronsky had never known family life. In her youth his mother had been a brilliant society woman who had a great many affairs during her marriage, and particularly after it, which all of society knew about. He barely remembered his father, and had been educated in the Corps of Pages. Marriage had never seemed a possibility to him. He not only did not like family life, but in keeping with the general outlook of the bachelor world in which he lived, he saw something alien, hostile, and above all ridiculous in families, and particularly husbands" (59).

What is striking about this contrast is that both Levin and Vronsky did not have a traditional family life, but they formed completely opposing views on marriage. Alexandrov notes that Anna's life too is "marked by the absence of a normal family structure:" "In the same way that Levin's pursuit of marriage, family, and country life are presented as a trajectory that begins in his childhood recollections of his parents' lives, Anna's openness to "an affair of the heart" seems rooted in her past" (193, 192). Yet we know almost nothing about Anna's

past. Why should she, an orphan like Levin, not idealize family life, as Levin, does, and instead be open to "an affair of the heart?" It is important to keep Vronsky in mind as well when discussing this connection between one's past and their attitudes toward family life, for his is an attitude that changes and breaks this assumed causal chain.

Vronsky's views on marriage in the above quoted statement are *before* the advent of Anna in his life. Although Alexandrov points out many instances when Vronsky still acts according to codes, his love for Anna exceeds any codes, and he is willing to give up both codes as well as his male ego to be with Anna. Vronsky changes his life as well as his views. If Anna's doom is determined by her failing perception, Vronsky's transgression seems to be love itself.

Universal or Individual Ethics: Kant and Bakhtin

In an argument with Vronsky in part Seven, chapter 24, with their relationship already in a catastrophic shape, Anna reproaches Vronsky for referring to notions of respect when discussing their relationship with his mother. "Respect was invented to cover the empty place where love should be," says Anna (746) [Уважение выдумали для того, чтобы скрывать пустое место, где должна быть любовь (PSS VIII:337)].

It is difficult to read this claim about respect taking the place of love and not think of the Kantian project of constructing a universally applicable practical moral philosophy. Love finds a small place in the Kantian system, both because love individuates and because it belongs to the domain of the empirical. In the transcendental Kantian system, respect takes its place. Unlike love, respect is a rational cognitive faculty, and so taps into universal

features of humanity. Respect for human rationality allows Kant to stress the universality of the categorical imperative.

Later philosophers have made fun of the abstractness of the Kantian categorical imperative. The parodied critique usually takes a form of a logic problem along these lines: if we imagine that a man's wife is drowning, according to the Kantian system, the man is supposed to pause himself and ask questions like: "Am I saving this person simply because she is my wife?" And only after having decided that he is saving her out of respect for her rational humanity, and thus acting according to the moral law, does the man save her. Of course, the wife drowns in the meantime.

In *Toward a Philosophy of an Act*, Mikhail Bakhtin comes up with a different scenario to challenge formal Kantian ethics. He asks us to imagine the humiliation of a justly punished person and the reaction of the watching public. While for most the spectators this might be a demonstration of law and justice, the reception will differ markedly for an audience member who loves the transgressor. As Bakhtin observes:

> formal ethics provides no approach to a living act performed in the real world. The primacy of practical reason is in reality the primacy of one theoretical domain over all the others, and that only because it is a domain of the emptiest and least productive form of what is universal. The law of conformity-to-the-law is an empty formula of pure theoreticism. What a practical reason of this kind is least capable of doing is providing a foundation for a first philosophy. The principle of formal ethics is not the principle of an actually performed act at all, but is rather the principle of the possible generalization of already

> performed acts in a theoretical transcription of them. Formal ethics itself is not productive. . . (27)

Bakhtin, problematizing Kant's moral law, claims that love makes one forget objective criteria. Love, for Bakhtin, has two interlocking functions: it distinguishes the beloved object from the loving subject, but it simultaneously distinguishes the beloved object from other objects, even in the areas of moral responsibility. Bakhtin asks us to consider how one feels witnessing the deserved shaming and punishment of a beloved object. Even if the punishment is wholly deserved and we know it, the one who loves cannot, according to Bakhtin, watch with indifference and think the punishment just. There is nothing immoral in this, as love makes us treat objects differently. Bakhtin's modification of Kantian ethics involves his doing away with the way it abstracts a framework divorced from actual acts, divorces the ethical from the personal and "unrepeatable" act. Abstracting from acts is permissible and unavoidable, if we are not paying attention: "Thus knowledge of [*znanie*] the content of the object-in-itself becomes a knowledge of it *for me*—becomes a cognition [*uznanie*, probably better translated as a coming-to-knowledge] *that answerably obligates me*" (49). This is explained precisely by love's cognitive value: we know why a loved person acts as she does and thus are slow to judge. We might deplore and detest the action. But loving the person makes the punishment problematic. The act does not affect the love. Just because I know something does not mean I will always excuse it. We forgive because we love the person, not because we condone the act. We might deplore and detest the action, but our deep, even habitual knowledge of the person enables us to understand why the action occurred. Punishment might still be appropriate, but withdrawal of love is problematic.

In this context of moral law and self-love, Bakhtin discusses the Christian maxim of loving one's neighbor as oneself, as well as its later reinterpretation—the Kantian categorical imperative. Bakhtin, as someone who rejects the productive aspects of self-love, likewise rejects the notion that one has to love the neighbor as oneself. One should not love oneself, but one *should* love the other, and do so with the acknowledgment of difference: "I love another but I cannot love myself, another loves me but cannot love himself, each is right in his own place. . . Another occupies his place in my consciousness (only) to the extent that I love him as another, and not as myself" (46).

Since Bakhtin rejects the productive aspects and moral rightness of self-love, of the implied "identity love" ("I love you because you are like me"), late Tolstoy becomes an easy target for Bakhtin's criticism. Inasmuch as for Tolstoy, work on the self, self-knowledge, and leads to love for all, the subjectivity (intersubjectivity) of love involves self-knowledge. Of course, the argument is both too simple and too complicated, because self-knowledge is always for Tolstoy a path toward the destruction of a false image of the self. It is always a path toward the destruction of individual desires and even a dismantling of the self per se. This ties directly to Tolstoy's own philosophical project of *On Life*, the ultimate purpose of which is to convince the reader of the irreality of the self, which is here the "animal self." The true self is the "human" self, the spiritual and non-material, which is realized by a dissolution of the self into an equally undifferentiated other. The entire message of *On Life* is that this individual life is not the real life; only the life of love is real.

But for Bakhtin, the ethical is a realm of particularity, and love's discrimination must remain wholly welcome within it. As Caryl Emerson explains, Bakhtin's reasons here "have to do with the relationship he draws between love and knowledge. The difference between

our acceptance of the shaming of strangers and our resistance to the shaming of our beloved is, for him, an aesthetic difference" (665).

Anna's rejection to accept respect as the glue of society and family might appear as a rejection of formal, universal ethics, in favor of the individuation and discrimination of love. On the other hand, Anna has made it impossible for Vronsky to love her by this point (although he still does love her) through her jealousy, her refusal of a divorce, her insistence on displaying herself at the opera.

Vengeance, Forgiveness, and the Lack of a Story

In light of Bakhtin's claim that the means by which love makes a difference for ethical judgments is aesthetic and narrative in nature (that is, a question of attention, attitude, perspective), it becomes all the more interesting that Anna is not only allowed to fall out of the narrative after her suicide, but is given no backstory. After her suicide Anna is abandoned; she is denied any salvation through recollection. She falls out of the narrative. This aspect has fascinated and enraged critics and readers alike. What is not as easy to notice is that she has no story to begin with. We know nothing about her childhood, and very little about her courtship by Karenin. Anna's story begins only when Vronsky falls in love with her. But neither Vronsky's nor Tolstoy's love saves her. *Eros* here is not productive and not for salvation, but for present tense experience.

Why does Tolstoy's love for his characters demonstrate redeeming features in *War and Peace* but fail to "save" Anna? In *War and Peace*, there is a clearer emphasis on being loved: Natasha and Nikolay, and the Rostovs more generally, need to be loved. Being loved in *War and Peace* is not so much about vanity, as will become the case in late Tolstoy; it is,

rather, a moral compass, a mirror, which, if used correctly, can lead to growth and moral perfection. Being loved is thus linked with our relation to God.

Being loved has no redeeming qualities in *Anna Karenina*. It is basically a story about loving. No matter how loved we are, without the ability to love—and love properly—we will ourselves determine our own downfall. Then no one's love, not even God's or Tolstoy's, can save us. The Kingdom of God is within you, Tolstoy already seems to say, but in this case the logic is: fail to love rightly, and the Kingdom of Hell is within you. *Anna Karenina* is a story of corrosion, of a failure to love properly. In that work Tolstoy tests his notions of animal and spiritual selves that he will articulate in *On Life* in 1887. *Anna Karenina* contains within it a glimpse of *On Life*. It is a laboratory for the ideal later articulated and developed in this philosophical treatise, which is entirely built on the division of animal and spiritual selves and on the assumption that only love is able to subjugate the animal self to reasonable consciousness. Anna's conclusion about hating one another is the sort of final judgment that only the animal self in us would conclude.

But most importantly, Anna's increasingly failing perception and growing solipsism lead her to her most outrageous mistake: she assumes the position of God. This is Alexandrov's crucial insight:

> One of Anna's motivations in committing suicide is to avenge herself on Vronsky for what she believes she has suffered because of him, which means that she usurps a divine prerogative, according to the novel's epigraph. This is important, because Anna is the only major character to act vengefully and, therefore, egotistically in the novel. . . . Anna's sin may be not just that she commits suicide but that she does this in order to hurt Vronsky. (189)

Love, Knowledge, and Forgiveness: To Know Is To Forgive

As we saw earlier, Bakhtin reveals a connection between love, knowledge, and forgiveness. Our knowledge of the beloved object differentiates that object from other, unloved objects; it makes what is unjust seem just and vice versa. The difference is a difference in seeing, in perception, and therefore, according to Bakhtin, distinctly aesthetic. It lies in the narrative: beloved objects have stories that we know. This leads us to a different kind of seeing of the beloved object, as it were an aesthetic witnessing, and that aesthetic experience leads to forgiveness. Bakhtin rejects formal Kantian ethics on this ground: Kant does not acknowledge the importance of story or history. And it is the story of the beloved object that makes us uncomfortable with formal frameworks for ethical decision-making. Hegel's critique of Kant is similar; narrative and history are the main players here and within the domain of Spirit. When dealing with literary genres, Hegel ascribes forgiveness to the novelistic form. It is this link between sustained narrative and forgiveness that Bakhtin reveals and expands.

That this rejection of formal ethics is based on the relationship between love and knowledge is crucial. In early Tolstoy, the internal, privileged knowledge of the characters that is shared with the reader leads the reader (and the author) to look kindly on the weaknesses and crimes of the character, no matter how misguided these actions might be. It is more or less obvious that in *War and Peace*, Tolstoy is less judgmental and more forgiving of human flaws, at least in the characters that he loves; he is much more optimistic about their redemption than he is in later works. How would one forgive Ivan Ilyich or Pozdnyshev?

Considering Tolstoy's strong proclivity for generalization and universal law, especially when it comes to morality, it is surprising how much his treatment of the characters he loves—at least in earlier works like *War and Peace* and the *Childhood* trilogy—reminds one of Bakhtin's observation about love and forgiveness from *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Love, argues Bakhtin, makes one forget the objective standards of punishment. In this respect at least, Tolstoy rejects Kant's "theoretical domain" and "law of conformity-to-the-law" and embraces instead Bakhtin's demand for particularity and demand for "recognition" of the "object for me."

Bakhtin himself in his early lectures on Russian literature delivered in Leningrad in 1924 places Tolstoy in the framework of his early dual structure for self: "I for myself" and "I for the other." When discussing Tolstoy's *Childhood* trilogy, Bakhtin makes the following pregnant comment:

> Nikolenka's friendship with Nekliudov is an attempt to escape his disharmony and if only in communion with one person, to remain himself, to unite him by means of his own deep "I." But the grief of the matter was that definition in the opinion of others destroys the "I for myself," destroys this natural unity. Throughout the remainder of Tolstoy's creative work Tolstoy will distribute the world along two categories, while "I for others" becomes all of culture, and "I for myself" is solitary.

Considering these structural and philosophical similarities of the creative process as well as love's cognitive value, it is somewhat surprising that by the time of *Dostoevsky's Creative Work*, Bakhtin rejects this structure, associated with Tolstoy, in favor of Dostoevsky's

method of a minimal axiological "excess of seeing." One potential explanation for this is that, like Tolstoy's own theories, Bakhtin's theories develop; Tolstoy's model of love and cognition changes markedly from *Childhood* and *War and Peace* to *Resurrection*; likewise, Bakhtin's views change from "Art and Answerability" and "Author and Hero" to *Dostoevsky's Creative Work*. Both thinkers move from descriptive theories to prescriptive ones.

Bakhtin: Author and God

When discussing God's relation to his creation, we speak about the extent of his involvement in the causality of created beings. Ultimately, the question becomes one of the free will of the created subjects.

Late scholastic philosophy distinguished three competing theories of divine causation, which were debated in the modern period: occasionalism, mere conservationism, and general concurrence (TK).[5] This presents the trifold scheme for God's involvement in human affairs.

According to the occasionalism model, God is the only true cause, solely responsible for all effects in nature. This model views God's involvement as primary. God needs an *occasion* to act, but he is the only one who is truly *acting*, while the material and corporal "objects" merely enact divine will. The second model is that of "mere" conservationism, in

[5] Hogan, D. (forthcoming) "Kant's Theory of Divine and Secondary Causation", in B. Look, Leibniz and Kant, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

which God's interaction with the created world is limited to divine conservation of created beings—God maintains the essentialness of created subjects. These conserved beings produce effects through their own choices without divine aid or involvement. In the third theory, the model of general concurrence, God acts as a secondary causer of all effects; he cooperates, as it were, with his created subjects' effects on the world. Unlike occasionalism, concurrentism does not grant divine action to every effect: God's impact is there, just not as much as the occasionalist believes. However, the cumulative impact of divine will in concurrentism is far greater than in a world envisioned by what is often termed "mere" conservationism.

In *Christianity in Bakhtin: God and the Exiled Author*, Ruth Coates discusses the religious and specifically Christian motifs that organize Bakhtin's discourse on aesthetics. Working with her insights and the categories of divine relations with the world (occasionalism, concurrentism, and conservationism), we can see how both Bakhtin (in his criticism) and Tolstoy (in his writing) model various theological positions. As we shall see, the relationship between author and hero maps neatly onto the realm of secondary divine causation, the philosophical proposition all material objects, including humans, were created by God with inherent qualities, but tonce created, are free to develop according to the laws of nature. (This is essentially Kant's theory of God's relation to will as exercised by created beings. It is secondary in the sense that God's creative act is first, and the world created then develops according to its own rules.)

In his early works, writes Coates, Bakhtin establishes a parallel between God and the author: both are "conceived as personal, transcendent, active-creative, and good" (153). Bakhtin's aesthetics (and ethics) derive from an "understanding of being as a relational event,

or interaction of consciousnesses" (153). The balance of power between character (and for that matter, human subject) and God/the author, according to Coates, is asymmetrical. God/the author "initiates, determines and sustains the relation" (153).

The author exists in a superior dimension to the hero and envelops his or her consciousness within his or her own. Though the aesthetic act is an interaction of consciousnesses, a productive and creative relation, it is nonetheless one-sided: the author gives the gift of form, which for Bakhtin is the ultimate gift, quite God-like.

If in "Art and Answerability," Bakhtin uses ontological and epistemological categories to talk about art; in "Author and Hero" he uses ontological and theological categories. The move from the structure of "Author and Hero" to *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* is a move from an occasionalist theology to one verging on conservationism, in which the creator merely maintains the created beings in existence. In any case, God's involvement in the created world seems, over time, to diminish for Bakhtin, which is fully understandable given that he had to adjust his writings to the officially atheist culture of the Soviet Union.

For example, Bakhtin's model of a monologic author corresponds to the occasionalist model, while the dialogic author followsthe model of general concurrence. More radically, Dostoevskian polyphony is closer to the model of mere conservationism, in which the author/God plays a diminished role.

Bakhtin's ideas about the scope of the author's involvement and presence in his creation changed throughout his life. This change is grounded in his understanding of the goodness of the creator, or the creator's love for the created beings. When tracing this

trajectory, Coates notes the importance of Bakhtin's understanding of the creative act as an act of grace and love:

> In this lies the goodness of the Creator, whose creative and redemptive act is an act of love, requiring sacrifice (a self-emptying of the creator as he or she goes forth from him- or herself in the creative act, together with the self-effacement involved in withdrawing from being in order to affirm it from a position of outsidedness), and performed without any prospect of requital, that is to say, unselfishly, as an act of grace. (154)

That the creative act is an act of grace is important here; the author's love for his heroes can never be returned. This act is redemptive as it gives the gift of form, an affirmation from without that is God-like.

Here the invisible and implicit strings of divine causation, discussed above, can be made explicit. Bakhtin's "Author and Hero" presents a harmonious, graceful and loving picture of authorial engagement. "Content, Material and Form," as Coates points out, continues to see the aesthetic creation as the product of "free" and "loving" authorial activity ('Content, Material and Form', 70). But *Dostoevsky's Creative Work*

> shows evidence of serious tensions and even contradictions around the question of the author, whose role Bakhtin is resolved upon recasting in such a way as to release the hero from his or her hitherto passive role and redefine authorial activity as participatory, or dialogic. (Coates 154)

In other words, Bakhtin seems to move from the occasionalist model of secondary divine causation to general concurrence.

By the time Bakhtin revised his Dostoevsky book into *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* in 1963, the author appears only participatory rather than creative and redemptive. But aesthetic love remains a crucial notion, an ideal "to be striven for" and something present in the "greatest works of art." At the same time, however, Bakhtin open up the possibility of creation where authorial "goodness" is no longer a given, where "a space is opened up for tyrannical, 'monologic' authorial activity" (Coates 154).

Coates uses Bakhtin's understanding of prose to divine his views on God. In later works like "Discourse in the Novel," "Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse," and "Epic and Novel," authorship for Bakhtin becomes more diffused and hidden. Coates notes the resulting logical parallel, observing that these works "may be said to mark a nadir for the concept of God, since authorial transcendence and personhood are undermined in these essays by the privileging of language over consciousness," as well as the inevitable diminishment of the transcendental dimension of creation/authoring given "Bakhtin's new geographical and historical reach" (155).

Coates points out that Bakhtin begins to see the author as hidden behind language, Mentions of authorial goodness in his work become scarcer, which she attributes to self-censorship, citing several examples from his "Exercise Books" of the 1930s and 1940s: "And several years later in the same notebooks he writes: 'Such is the relationship of the artist to his hero, he lives both within him and outside of him, combining these two aspects in the higher unity of the image'" (161).

If Bakhtin's approach to Dostoevsky's works might suggest that he complies more with the model of mere conservationism for authorial secondary causation, the "Exercise Books" make it clear that he has moved from the occasionalism model to the model of

general concurrence, which is more participatory, and "posits a more intimate and extensive divine involvement," albeit one invisible in life and thus more concealed in art (according to late Bakhtin).

If the author is the image of the divine creator, consciousness itself for Bakhtin is the image of authorship. The asymmetry/imbalance of the author/hero relation makes mutual recognition almost impossible and asks for self-determination, which still pivots on interaction of consciousnesses. What changes is that "in the late essays the role of the other is played by the conversation partner, the reader, the receiver of texts, who, unlike the hero, is not epistemologically disadvantaged" (Coates 160). This shift from a focus on the created world of literature and its heroes, to a focus, in the late essays, on the social sphere, reflects Bakhtin's seeking of God "specifically in the world of human culture, that is, the world of personalities, at the point where consciousness comes into contact with consciousness, on the borders where meeting takes place and understanding occurs" (Coates 162).

Tolstoy as God

Both for aesthetic acts and meaningful communication, love is a condition of possibility. Love for Bakhtin expresses affirmation and acceptance, and it is the prerequisite for all creative activity. Creative activity is unique in that it "incorporates the whole of its object into the artwork, giving it the 'gift' of form" (Coates, 173). This act of form-giving, according to Bakhtin, is an act of love, something Bakhtin makes clear in his essay "Content, Material, and Form," looking at form as an expression of love and affirmation.

In this shift over time, Tolstoy moves from along Bakhtin's axis. But like Bakhtin, the act of love between the author and hero remains continuous: for Tolstoy, the

author/creator's involvement in the fates of the created beings remains strong, but it changes its nature from development (*Childhood, War and Peace*) to corrosion (*Anna Karenina*) to correction (*Resurrection*, and all of late Tolstoy).

In earlier works, Tolstoy's love for his characters is an exculpatory force. Such a relationship between creator and created would be nearest, in theological terms, to occasionalism, in which the creator is the only true cause. In later works such as *Kreutzer Sonata*, his characters are no longer deserving of his love. He no longer forgives them their flaws, even though their fates and ability to love are still of vital importance to him. In other words, the connection remains, but its valence changes. The best theological proposition for this relationship between creator and created would be conservationism, or perhaps Kant's theory of secondary divine causation.

Love, Redemption, and Aesthetics from *War and Peace* to *Anna Karenina*

Tolstoy's justification of the characters he loves in *War and Peace* seems to be of a similar sort to early Bakhtin's view of redeeming and affirmative authorship. The aesthetic knowledge that love yields makes Tolstoy more forgiving and the reader more sympathetic toward their flaws. We forgive Natasha for her (quite deliberate) dalliance with Anatole, and certainly so does Tolstoy. Much the same could be said of Tolstoy's portrayal of old Prince Bolkonsky, whose very weaknesses are depicted as noble, enabling, understandable, and forgivable. He is shown through Princess Marya's eyes, and her love bestows forgiveness on him. In his early works, Tolstoy portrays characters he loves lovingly and forgivingly, regardless of their flaws. This love reveals the character from within, as we have discussed in chapter one. It also forgives.

What does it mean to forgive a fictional character, we might ask? To forgive, after all, is not to forget, but rather to allow a character or person to continue acting and redefining themselves. It is to allow the person to remain open. Not to forgive would mean to remove the person from our field of vision and define them, for ourselves, with the single act we cannot forgive and that they cannot recontextualize and dilute. The interdependent concepts of love and knowledge are now refigured as forgetting, a form of not-knowing. We can think of this in narrative terms: Hélène Bezukhova's death, for example, is just such a removal of a character from our field of vision. Long before her death, Tolstoy hates Hélène. Tolstoyan hate is a particular thing. It is savage parody, an understatement (for internality) and an overstatement (for externality), and mostly it is a removal of all the perspectival rights of the subject. Helen never speaks from within her own zone, with her own motivation. Natasha Rostova, in contrast, not only gets a chance to redefine herself and achieve a sort of a happy ending, but becomes the very embodiment of happiness.

In *The Republic*, Plato uses the city and soul analogy to discuss the perfect *polis* as well as the perfect subject. In *War and Peace,* Tolstoy goes a step further. He draws parallels between subjectivity and the philosophy of history. He additionally uses the household (displacing Plato's impersonal *polis*) to represent emblematically his understanding of subjectivity and inter-subjectivity. The domestic sphere offers a space to figure the relationship and configuration between necessity and freedom. *War and Peace* returns repeatedly to the problem of a foreground of freedom (a character's sense and actual use of his or her freedom) against the background of necessity (the impersonal force of history.) Natasha and Pierre's household in the first epilogue represents the very structure—necessity on the level of form and externality, which coexists simultaneously with freedom on the level

of content and internality—that Tolstoy discusses in the second epilogue. In other words, what is analyzed in the second epilogue (freedom and necessity) is embodied in the household that Tolstoy depicts in the first epilogue.

In *War and Peace*, the author's love has deep redemptive features. First, by revealing a surplus of knowledge of the character from within, this love makes us forgive mistakes and appreciate flaws. As Princess Marya states: "To understand everything is to forgive everything." As we understand the characters Tolstoy treats with loving aesthetic attention, we too are inclined to forgive them along with the author. But Tolstoy could not be comfortable with such ethical particularity for long. His next major novelistic project is not to forgive, but to narrate the prosecution of a beloved object, denying it any salvation and proclaiming its fate just.

Love and Forgiveness versus Love and Punishment

This tendency to see moral worth in beloved objects, a tendency that shapes the ethical world of *War and Peace*, is already present in *Childhood*. The tendency is later subverted in *Anna Karenina*. Young Tolstoy as a creator is mostly kind to the characters he loves. He will punish Sonya for being unable to change, even if her permanence lies in love. Even her best friend Natasha is allowed a cruel, unfair remark—calling Sonya "barren" ("пустоцвет")—while Sonya herself has no opportunity to demonstrate either fertility or barrenness. Tolstoy allows Natasha to punish her with such cruelty, but he forgives Natasha herself. He rewards Natasha and Pierre, and to some extent Marya and Nikolay Rostov, despite their mistakes.

Anna Karenina marks a turning point, a rejection of this relationship between aesthetics, love, and knowledge. As Bakhtin shows, when love for the other marks a difference between object of love and loving subject, as well as between the object of love and other objects, this loving of the other "bleeds" into the ethical and aesthetic. A loving subject wittingly ignores flaws. This combination of loving speculation and the flawed, loved object leads the subject into what is an essentially aesthetic experience, in the sense that the subject, viewing the "scene of punishment" of the beloved, is affected or infected and experiences the scene emotionally. Aesthetics is essentially perception, and perception is always imbued with emotions provoked by beauty. Bakhtin's point is that this loving witnessing of the punishment must be understood as an aesthetic experience. It is emotional perception, co-suffering (for Bakhtin, this is always the highest moral experience). This dialectic—for it is a dialectic—is essentially where we find Tolstoy's thought when he is writing *War and Peace*. He believes in the redemptive value of love, that loving the individual object will allow us to accept the moral flaws of the individual and eventually lead us to universal love. That is Princess Marya's point: know all, forgive all, love all. This, Tolstoy suggests, is divine perspective. Tolstoy's love of a character absolves that character of rightness and wrongness.

This position changes with *Anna Karenina*, in which Tolstoy's ethics begin to shift toward a Kantian ethics of non-particularity, toward what Bakhtin dismisses as "the law of conformity-to-the-law." The main purpose of this novel is to depict a consciousness that takes passions too far, but this process is shown internally, from within. *Anna Karenina* depicts a consciousness—Anna Karenina's—that takes passions too far. This process is shown internally. Tolstoy focuses his authorial attention on this consciousness gone astray

and his own consciousness, as the author, now becomes tangled up in Anna's own consciousness. In this sense, they have exited the realm of Kantian theoreticism (Bakhtin's dismissive term) and entered the realm of the aesthetic. Tolstoy's "recognition" of Anna concomitantly "obligates" him (again, Bakhtin's term, his rejection of Kantian formalism). Tolstoy comes to hate his own inextricable presence in Anna, his identification with her.

What makes the project difficult—and what explains Tolstoy's crisis when finishing the novel—is that Tolstoy is in the bad habit of loving. This was his default position from *War and Peace*; Tolstoy did not want to make Anna into a Hélène, someone demonized through complete externalization. Tolstoy had to depict Anna from within, but at the same time deny her salvation and demonstrate her psychic corrosion from within. But the genre of the adultery novel does not have many options for this; *Anna Karenina*'s project—the study of an attractive villain—is essentially modern. Anna in a way is the reincarnation of Natasha Rostova, who performs her fall on a larger scale, more tragically, and is not rescued by Pierre or Tolstoy. Consider the similarities between Natasha's and Anna's appearances and characters: their black eyes, their excess of energy, their vanity. Kitty is another reincarnation of Natasha, but in a more "healthy" variation; Kitty is the Natasha of the epilogue, while Anna is Natasha trapped at the opera.

Bakhtin's theory of love's aesthetic function—which is narrative in nature—holds that it is the knowledge of the beloved object's past and his or her internal motives that induce us not judge him or her according to objective standards. But Anna has almost no backstory; what little we know of her courtship is tucked into a portion of Karenin's biography. Anna's story begins when Vronsky starts to love her and ends with her suicide.

Having established a strong connection among aesthetics, loving, and knowing in *War and Peace*, Tolstoy shows in *Anna Karenina* how, having both love and knowledge, one can spoil it all by the sin of excessive desire and individuation. In *Anna Karenina* we have the love (the author's love for Anna) and knowledge (the narrator's insight into her consciousness); the problem here is the excess of desire (both on Tolstoy's and Anna's part). Anna's crime and her ultimate vengeance are mirrored in Tolstoy's own love and hate for his hero.

The appetite of possessive desire here is the crime, but the question remains whether the knowledge we have of Anna's story and the author's access to her internality leads to novelistic forgiveness. Or perhaps Tolstoy's removal of her from the narrative at the end of the novel is a denial of forgiveness. Donna Orwin points out that in *War and Peace* "happiness and morality can coincide," but in *Anna Karenina* this link between personal happiness and morality is challenged (171).

In her recent study Anna Karenina *and Others: Tolstoy's Labyrinth of Plots*, Liza Knapp identifies this tension between knowledge, compassion and potential forgivingness within *Anna Karenina*:

> One of the questions posed in this multiplot novel, at times directly and at times indirectly, is whether Anna Karenina, who is guilty—and for whom bad mother, unfaithful wife, sex fiend, drug addict, and jealous shrew all could apply—still evokes compassion. In Anna Karenina, society and individual hearts often seem to operate on the principle that compassion should be felt and acted on only when the sufferer is regarded as innocent, but Tolstoy shows a range of models of compassion that includes more spontaneous and

> radical models of compassion that includes more spontaneous and radical forms that make no distinction about guilt or innocence. (8)

Most importantly for us, *Anna Karenina* alters the relationship between love and knowledge. In *War and Peace*, love preceded knowledge, but in *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy begins to test different configurations between knowledge and love. Along the Bakhtinian line of thought, in *War and* Peace, the subject (the reader, the author) comes to know the object by loving him or her, and that way of knowing, since it is imbued with love, is essentially aesthetic. The loving subject experiences the crimes, sins, shortcomings, and moral problems of the beloved object not as the sins of a stranger, but as the moral lapses of a subject who has a *story*, with a past and a future. These crimes or sins are understood not as totalizing or essential, not as defining the object's consciousness or its potentials, but as proceeding *from* the beloved object's consciousness. It is in this sense that in *War and* Peace love is primary, and knowledge is secondary, although often they appear to be spontaneous and simultaneous. "As Anna Karenina moves from the messy intermingling of people in the Oblonsky house to Levin's affirmation of the 'wall between the holy of holies of (his) soul and other people, even (his) wife,' Tolstoy examines all manner of human relations," says Knapp. When writing *Anna Karenina*, she argues, Tolstoy was occupied not so much with the "family idea" as integrating idea as with questions of faith and loving one's neighbor:

> Tolstoy, responding to other texts, used the content and, especially, the multiplot form of *Anna Karenina* to ask how lives connect—whether loving one's neighbor can ever be done, or whether, as Anna sees it in her most desperate moment, "we are all thrown into the world only in order to hate each other." (3–4)

Anna says this because she hates and disrespects herself. This utter loss of *philautia* is connected to the failure of perception, as we discussed above. Thanks to Tolstoy's forgiveness, Natasha becomes the very embodiment of happiness (and the body is important here). Why then, does not Tolstoy forgive Anna? Perhaps the form of the adulteress novel did not permit it?

Anna's Inability To Be Contained, or The Genre of the Adultery Novel

"It was as if a surplus of something so overflowed her being that it expressed itself beyond her will" (61). Just as Anna's energy seems unable to be contained in her body, so her character resists being contained in the genre of the adultery novel. When asking if Anna could have redefined herself, Alexandrov makes some insightful points about the impossibility of such a transformation:

> After all, *Anna Karenina* is not a novel by Dostoevsky, in which a female character who is at rope's end can throw herself on the mercy of a virtual stranger or become a prostitute. Neither are there any signs that Anna could try to redefine herself and become an "emancipated woman" a la Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?* It seems quite impossible that a woman with Anna's background could seek any kind of employment in her world, despite her dabbling at writing a book for children. It is also implausible that she could change enough to repent her adultery, embrace selfless Christianity, and ask her husband for mercy or disappear into a religious life. Events like this fall outside the realm of possible behavior in

Tolstoy's fictional worlds at this stage in his career. (190)

Genre questions are also questions of authorial access. When Tolstoy is in Anna's head, he loves her, if by loving we mean he knows why she acts the way she acts. By the end this becomes a deadening experience; she is denied any possibility of learning. In Anna's final internal monologue, Tolstoy is inside her consciousness, but denies any possibility of change. To not be free within is horrifying in a Tolstoyan universe, where consciousness is the very locus of freedom. This is perhaps the most important conclusion of *War and Peace*: although externally we are not free, we must feel free inside for life to be possible at all. To show a person from within but not as free was a herculean task that even Tolstoy was unable to pull off without the utmost difficulty.

Tolstoy was hampered by the possibilities of the adultery novel. As Inessa Medzhibovskaya points out, Tolstoy's crisis was not only a crisis of religion, but of genre; his creativity exploded into genre exploration, rewriting fairy tales and the gospels, redefining the genre of confessions as well as of the novel. He takes children's literature, parables, fables, and changes them in a way as to let literature perform different tasks from the ones he and most of literate society believed before. In many ways, Medzhibovskaya emphasizes, Tolstoy's was a genre-driven quest. He did not only want to change people, but to enlarge literature, to enable it to accomplish different things.

Tolstoy's final novel, *Resurrection,* becomes a viable solution: it's "anti-family plot" presents a viable trajectory for a female character to not confirm, but to create her own plot. Maslova is another fallen women like Anna. But she is different, of course, because of Anna's status and because Anna is an adulteress, not "a fallen woman" but an ashamed woman. Is Tolstoy going to get inside of Maslova's consciousness and let her change as in

War and Peace? Or will he access her consciousness and *not* let her change, as in *Anna Karenina*? But Tolstoy does something else this time: he does not get inside her consciousness, and yet allows her to change.

Late Tolstoy's "heroes" are non-erotic, desexualized, but they nonetheless know how to love. What Maslova has is an intuitive sense of what she lives for. Maslova as a fallen woman can do what Anna could not: change. She is transported to a different kind of plot. Why is Maslova allowed a resurrection and Anna is not? Maslova is cleansed of sexual energy and allowed a new type of love that Tolstoy himself struggled throughout his post crisis life: *pragma*. This desexualization is reflected not only in the heroine's own plot, but also author's approach to internal representation.

Maslova achieves *pragma*, having suffered from *eros* in her youth, but for Anna, *pragma* came before *eros*. It is even possible to say that Anna was not "fully" married to Karenin. She was resigned and content, but unignited. The Greeks, we recall, consider *eros* to be an illness and madness, and yet a necessary step on the ladder to wisdom and more inclusive and reasonable forms of love. *Eros* is supposed to grow into *storge* and *Pragma*, but Anna and Karenin have only had *pragma*. In his creative reasoning here, Tolstoy is being Platonic.

The writing of *Anna Karenina* coincides with a critical juncture in the evolution of Tolstoy's theory of love. As Anna is falling prey to *eros* that came to her too late, Tolstoy is trying to kill off *eros*. His disgust with the novel after its publication is in part due to his insistence on getting rid of excessive desire; *Anna Karenina* might figuratively be seen as Tolstoy's hopeless, desperate act of self-castration, similar to Father Sergius' symbolic act of cutting off his finger.

Tolstoy, then, becomes increasingly critical of his previous modes of representation, representation fueled by sexual appetite and exploitation. His triumphant solution is Katyusha Maslova, the desexualized heroine who is not presented from within but allowed to change on her own terms. Maslova rejects every pre-given plot—not only the conventional familial plot, but also the old cliché dating back to Mary Magdalene that a prostitute needs to seek forgiveness. The alternative plot that Tolstoy comes up with is the Siberian exile-revolutionary plot—remarkable for a thinker who on all other planes rejected revolution.

Tolstoy had trouble escaping the old bifurcation of victim/victimizer in his fictive male-female relations. In his writerly impotence he simply killed women off (Anna Karenina) or let them drop off the plot (we never find what happens to the merchant's half-witted daughter in *Father Sergius* after the seduction). It was not easy for Tolstoy to perform the task he considered necessary: to rid the body (and the text!) of its seductive particulars to get rid of the wrong sorts of love and so achieve divine universal love.

The prison-Siberian exile-revolutionary plot allows Tolstoy to create a female character who can change. Interestingly, this change is not depicted from within. As the female heroine is de-sexualized, so is the author's relationship to his hero. Tolstoy does not penetrate Katusha Maslova's inner world to the degree that he penetrates the inner worlds of Natasha Rostova and Anna Karenina. His authorial attention is outside of her, yet she is not demonized and emptied out of value, as are Hélène Bezukhova and Vera Rostova Berg. Early Tolstoy hates what he does not know and understand from within; late Tolstoy hates what he knows and understands. This contrast becomes apparent when we consider the authorial attention and the accompanying emotion in Tolstoy's treatment of Hélène Bezukhova and

Katyusha Maslova (external depiction) and Natasha Rostova and Nekhlyudov (internal perspective).

In his preface to *Resurrection*, Bakhtin comments on the lack of internal perspective for Maslova. But according to Shklovsky, "Katiusha Maslova's perception of the world is the pivot of the plot" (550). Both of these claims, as contradictory as they might seem, are true. Maslova's perception of the world is the most important perspective of the novel, yet we are not allowed to enter it. But this resistance to penetration, resistance to narration and genre constrains does not obliterate Maslova's inner world or agency as it does with Hélène Bezukhova. Maslova's inner world is allowed to be and be unknown. It is allowed to exceed the narrative and to not be known from within, yet remain valid and authentic on its own terms. One famous precedent for this —importantly, also de-eroticized—is Varenka in *Anna Karenia*, who progresses to *agape* and *pragma*.

Storge as the Delimitation of Both Levin's and Kitty's Love

In *Anna Karenina*, Kitty, like Levin, is concerned with questions of divine love and how far it can extend. How do I know whom I love? Kitty's brief flirtation with philanthropy is another way Tolstoy dramatizes this question.

As Knapp points out, "Levin and Kitty both appear to have been rid of sexual desire and, in separate but parallel activity, they pursue other forms of love that are neither romantic nor strictly familial" (132). Heartbroken after losing both Levin and Vronsky, Kitty, under the influence of Varenka in the spa at Soden, decides to practice Christian love and live for others. She reads the gospels, takes care of an ill compatriot, and dreams of working in

prisons. But her attempt ultimately fails, and Kitty wonders why she ever cared for someone unrelated to her, an alien (*chuzhoi*) person.

Kitty's father shatters her illusions about Christian love when he insists that Varenka's benefactor, Madame Stahl, is fake, and that real good can only be good that is accomplished unnoticed. This is a strong claim, and the father is not to be wholly trusted. But Kitty now thinks that her way of life in Soden was "all a sham because it was all done on purpose, and not from the heart," that she had "wanted to seem better to people, to God, to herself". "What Kitty concludes," Knapp says, "is in keeping with the message Tolstoy laces throughout *Anna Karenina*, that there needs to be a personal connection for acts of neighborly love to work well" (148). When Kitty's philanthropic project fails, she asks Varenka and herself: "What business did I have with some stranger?" [какого мне дело было до чужого человека]. Kitty's sphere of love, as Tolstoy depicts it, only extends to the family and the neighbor in a very literal sense. "Tolstoy's model of loving your neighbor, at least for Kitty, is not that of the Samaritan of the parable who responds to the misery of the stranger," writes Knapp (149).

As Kitty returns to Dolly and her children, Tolstoy shows us that she "succeeded as a sister of mercy within the family, where she belongs" (Knapp 151). Kitty's care for Levin's brother, her most important act of mercy, is still within the bounds of immediate relations. She must "keep her nursing skills—and neighborly love—strictly within the bounds of family," writes Knapp (151).

Levin comes to the same conclusions. He cares only about those literally near to him. As Knapp points out, "Levin justifies his lack of interest in peasant schools on the grounds that he will not be sending his children to them" (152). This sentiment achieves its apogee

when the war in the Balkans is declared. “Levin goes on to deny feeling any love for his Slavic brethren and in co-religionists,” Knapp says. “This is what prompted Dostoevsky to ask of Tolstoy: How near does the neighbor have to be for compassion to register?” (123)

We might also consider Tolstoy’s position here in light of the most probing of contemporary reviews: Dostoevsky’s. In *A Writer’s Diary* for July–August 1877, in an entry titled “Dissociation Again. Part Eight of Anna Karenina,” Dostoevsky claims that Levin is not “one of the People:” “While I continue to believe as before in the purity of his (Levin’s) heart, I do not believe that he is ‘one of the People;’ on the contrary: I see now that he is aiming, with love, to dissociate himself” (1061).

Dostoevsky’s criticism is directed toward Tolstoy himself, since Dostoevsky sees Levin not only as an invented character but a mouthpiece for Tolstoy’s ideas and his ideal. He lists five aspects of Tolstoy’s/Levin’s worldview: 1) “People by no means share the aims of this so-called national movement and do not understand it;” 2) “it has all been deliberately fabricated;” 3) “all the volunteers were either desperate and drunken people or simply fools;” 4) “that this whole so-called upsurge of Russian national feeling for the Slavs was not only fabricated by well-known people and supported by hired journalists but had been fabricated contrary to our most fundamental principles;” 5) “that all the barbarities and unprecedented torture inflicted on the Slavs cannot arouse in us Russians any direct feeling of compassion and that ‘such direct feeling for the oppression of the Slavs does not and cannot exist” (1062).

Dostoevsky sees Levin through the rejection of the connection with all Orthodox Slavs dissociating from the majority of Russians. What makes it worse and more terrifying for Dostoevsky is that he persists in seeing Levin as possessing a pure heart. If someone with

a pure heart can do this, what can be expected of the rest? Dostoevsky wonders what could have caused Levin "to dissociate himself and 'secede' in so morose a fashion" (1062). He goes further, calling Levin's views "ugly," "unnatural," and "artificial." Although Dostoevsky says that he refuses to confuse the author with Levin, he is still bothered by the proximity of their views: "I still did not expect this from such an author!" (1062)

On the one hand, Dostoevsky wonders how Levin, who so loves his own son, can feel no compassion for children outside of his family circle, namely the Serbian children suffering from the violence imposed by the Turks. On the other hand, Dostoevsky's own sphere of love does not extend beyond the Slavs. Significantly, one of the diary entries, in which Dostoevsky discusses this question of who the people are, is titled "Confessions of a Slavophile." As Knapp explains, Dostoevsky's compassion for the Serbs was bolstered by a mix of factors (ethnic solidarity, Orthodox triumphalism, and Russian imperialism). And Dostoevsky appears to identify the neighbor one should love as a member of one's sect (Orthodox Christians), rather than all human beings (following an universal approach), or as those with whom one shares a face-to-face encounter, which makes them a neighbor regardless of "ethnic, social, religious difference" (Knapp 123). We could make the same charge to Dostoevsky: why should Levin care only about the Orthodox Slavs and not, for example, Catholic or Muslim children?

But Tolstoy was also uncomfortable with Levin's delimited sphere of love; all late Tolstoy proves this. For Dostoevsky, love is activated in a "sect" or one on one, but Tolstoy will continue to search for universal possibilities of love's manifestation. Dostoevsky sees this possibility already present in the scenes of Anna's illness in Part Four of the novel. In the

entry following "Confessions of a Slavophile," Dostoevsky sees the reconciliation between Vronsky and Karenin at Anna's deathbed as just such a possibility,

> when the transgressors and enemies are suddenly transformed into higher beings, into brothers who have forgiven one another everything, into beings who, through mutual forgiveness, have cast off lies, guilt, and crime, and thereby at once have absolved themselves with full awareness of the right to absolution. (1071)

What bothers Dostoevsky is that this potential is not realized in the novel. Dostoevsky laments that the mercy of love does win, and yet "later at the end of the novel we have a gloomy and terrible picture of the full degradation of the human spirit" (1071). Dostoevsky uses *Anna Karenina* as a proof of the Russian genius that emerged from Pushkin, Russia's answer to Europe (even if Europe won't hear it). Dostoevsky uses *Anna Karenina* to claim the superiority of Russians—*svoi* over all *chuzhie*. Whether this move or Dostoevsky's overall criticism are fair to Tolstoy at this point of his life is an open question. But such a move would certainly be unfair toward late Tolstoy, with his fanatically intensified search for universal love.

How Do I Know Myself or My Neighbor?

Tolstoy tests various configurations of knowing and loving at the end of *Anna Karenina*. How do we know who to love? Again, this question is complicated. How do we recognize the people we should love? And what does it mean to say we "know" someone? Like other important philosophical moments in *Anna Karenina*, these questions are linked with attitudes toward food, which is always a manifestation of an attitude toward the body.

Foods is a form of sustenance as well as temptation; it offers pleasure and a way to make groups.

Immediately after we learn of Levin's way of life and his inability to answer the questions "What am I, and where am I? And why am I here?" and "What is the point?", Levin has a conversation with a peasant, which produces "in his soul the effect of an electric spark" (797, 799). "People are different," says the peasant, "one man lives just for his own needs, like Mityukha, who only stuffs his belly, but Fokanych—he's a righteous old man. He lives for his soul. Remembers God" (798).

Very near the end of the novel (in the concluding chapters of part 8), we find Levin at his Pokrovskoe estate. He stops to watch the peasants threshing grain. Like Andrei on the eve of battle, Levin looks upon this "intense work" (напряжение) in the barn, converting wheat into grain for bread, and sees only mortal flesh. He lapses into *memento mori* reflections: "They will bury him, and they'll bury Fyodor the machine-feeder, with his curly beard full of chaff and his shirt torn on his white shoulders. And the main thing is that they will be burying not just them but me, and nothing will be left. What is the point?" (797).

Despite his fatigue, he does something very typical: he meddles. He approaches the threshing machine and begins giving orders, upbraiding the curly-bearded peasant Fyodor for not doing it right, pushing him aside and doing it himself. When the workers later take a break, Levin strikes up a conversation about land and agriculture, asking whether the well-off peasant Platon would want to rent a plot of land that is currently farmed by Mitiukh, the former house porter. Fyodor responds that Platon, a decent man, could not make the rental profitable, while Mitiukha, who "has no mercy for a Christian," could make the arrangement

work. Mitiukha "lives to fill his belly," while Platon, "a righteous man," "lives for his soul, remembers God" (798).

This division of the self into animal and spiritual will be the basis of Tolstoy's philosophy in his treatise *On Life*. The split is also encoded into the entire architectonics of *Anna Karenina*. It was dramatized in Anna's and Dolly's conversation about man's ability to love his wife and mistress differently, and in Levin's and Oblonsky's conversation about Platonic and non-Platonic loves that was mirrored in their attitude toward food. In gross outline, we see it in the opposition between the two plotlines of Anna and Levin. This notion of love as a craving comparable to bodily or animal hunger is a theme Tolstoy maintains until the very end of the novel: the "man [who] lives just for his own needs. . . only stuffs his belly," Levin concludes, prefiguring *On Life*. "We should not live for what we understand, what we are attracted by, or what we want, but we should live for something we do not understand —for God, whom no one can understand or define" (799).

Levin here taps into what Tolstoy will later coin as "the reasonable consciousness" (разумное сознание), which is the subjugation of the animal self to the spiritual one by means of love.

Levin, "breathless with excitement" and "blinded by the light" of "important ideas," hastily leaves the barn for home.. And that knowledge (знание) I did not arrive at in any way, it was given to me as to all men, *given*. This knowledge is discovered in a sense that it has been there from the outset and only had to be realized: "I haven't discovered anything. I have just found out what I know. I have understood that power which has not only given me life in the past, but is giving me life now. I have freed myself from deception and have

discovered the master" (801). With a Platonic subtext, Levin keeps insisting that this knowledge was given to him:

> "The answer has been given to me by life itself, in my knowledge of what is good and what is bad. But there was no was that I could acquire this knowledge; it was given to me as it is to all people – *given*, because there was nowhere that I could have taken it from. He had been living (without being aware of it) by those spiritual truths he had imbibed with his mother's milk, and not only thinking without acknowledging these truths, but studiously ignoring them." (801)

Tolstoyan revelation can only happen to you; it cannot be achieved. Yet, the personal stories with their rejection/acceptance and misrecognition/recognition of these truths are not mystified indifferent noise because the end "always already was," but the narrative shape of search for truth, the biography of reasonable consciousness in time and space.

Levin acknowledges his revelation as faith, yet tries to comprehend it with reason, which is unable to contain or express this true knowledge. In an apologia against reason, Levin ponders: "Knowledge unattainable through reason has incontrovertibly been revealed to me personally, to my heart, yet I am stubbornly trying to use reason so I can express this knowledge in words" (820). Levin wants to share his revelation with Kitty, but realizes that he cannot do that as something not contained by reason cannot be expressed in words: "It is a secret which is only necessary and important to me, and can't be expressed in words" (821).

Does My Love Extend to My Nation?

The epistemological question "how do we know" becomes quickly an ontological question, a question of sets or sorting: "How do we know (recognize) whom we love?" The answer Levin arrives at, however contingently and possibly momentarily, is that we can come to love everyone through an understanding of our own soul and its identity with others' souls. All men can possibly come to understand "perfectly" the same truth—that the life of the soul, not the body, is the one true life.

How we can know whom to love. Who is my family? Who is my neighbor? These are the *same questions* as those explored in *War and Peace*. But the answers are different here—personal freedom and responsibility. They become, therefore, deontological and political questions for Levin. He claims that murder is always wrong, and that though he might give into his passions and kill, one cannot realistically speak of a whole people giving into their passions and acting one way or another: "I don't know. If I saw that, I might give way to my impulse of the moment, but I can't say beforehand. And such a momentary impulse there is not, and there cannot be, in the case of the oppression of the Slavonic peoples" (810).

How far should neighborly love extend? Is there are path from neighborly love to universal love, or does it stop with the family? The nation? The Slavs? The Christians? Can this love be applied universally? As Levin ponders these questions, he is distracted by his own thoughts and perceptions: "All those conjectures about the significance of the Slav element in world history seemed to him so paltry in comparison with what was going on in his own soul that he promptly forgot all about them and was transported back to the same mood he had been in that morning" (818). In a characteristically masterful manner, Tolstoy shows us not only what governs our interiority, but the shallow skittish trajectory of our

exterior attention—that is, the scope of our love. Ultimately, Levin is simply indifferent to world events because he cannot know/love them.

The question of the Slavs is intricately bound with the particularity versus the universality of love. Acknowledging his awakening as faith, Levin wonders why this religious feeling should be available only to Orthodox Christians. But from this question too Levin is distracted, this time by the nursery and his own child:

> Just as he was going into the nursery, he remembered what it was that he had hidden from himself. It was that, if the main proof of the existence of God is His revelation of what is good, then why is this revelation confined solely to the Christian Church? What relation is there between this revelation and the beliefs of Buddhists and Muslims, who are also reverent and good? He felt he had an answer to this question; but before he could manage to articulate it to himself he had gone into the nursery. (818)

The significant event that has taken place is that Mitya had learnt to recognize his own family that day. This scene links back to the beginning of the novel, when Anna gains Dolly's appreciation by recognizing all of her children. Now Mitya recognizes his parents. This moment of recognition creates communities around the category of the *svoi* and it relies on mutuality. "I am so glad you finally love him!" Kitty tells Levin after Mitya recognizes them (819). The organic bond between mother and child, between father and child is established only through eye contact—that is, recognition.

The neighborly love here extands only to those literally near. Universal love once again seems out of reach.

How Do I Recognize My Neighbor?

How one is supposed to love one's neighbor, and who this neighbor is, is a question of the relationship between epistemology and ethics. It is in this sense that *Anna Karenina* explores "the family idea." In *War and Peace*, the idealization of family leads Tolstoy to nationalism, but in *Anna Karenina*, the question of ethical responsibility to the other leads to family and familiarity. Tolstoy in a sense here fails in his project. If we agree with Gustafson that the "late" Tolstoy offers the key to the "early" Tolstoy, then we need to see *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace* as failing to reach Tolstoy's ultimate goal. How are we to learn to love not this or that other, but every other? How do we arrive, through knowledge, at universal brotherhood and love, a love not dependent on national or familial relations?

Both *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* fails to arrive at the all-inclusive universal love; *War and Peace* is a family novel that turns into a national epic; *Anna Karenina* is an adultery novel (a genre explicitly about recognition/misrecognition, asking questions such as "who is my wife/husband?"), that turns into a family novel. In these relationships, the dynamics between desire to know versus desire to posses, on the one hand, and desire to know versus desire to be known, and on what grounds, are tested in various configurations.

Perhaps the most illustrative moment of recognition, of the "family idea" and its connection to knowledge and love, comes the same day as Levin's revelation before the thunderstorm, very near the end of *Anna Karenina* (part 8, chapter 18). Mitya, Levin's infant son, learns to recognize "his own people":

> 'There you are, look, look!' she said when her husband came up to her.
>
> 'Agafya Mikhailovna's right. He does know us.'

> The point was that Mitya had clearly and unmistakably begun to recognize his own family that day.
>
> As soon as Levin had come up to the bath an experiment was carried out in front of him, and the experiment was a complete success. The cook, who had been specially summoned for this, replaced Kitty and bent over the baby. He frowned and started shaking his head. Then when Kitty bent over him, his face lit up with a smile, and he pushed his little hands into the sponge and burbled with his lips, making such a happy and strange sound that not just Kitty and the nanny but also Levin were lost in unexpected admiration. (818-819)

This moment of recognition delights everyone, though there is surely a sort of uneasiness or uncertainty in the moment: Mitya's "obviously, undoubtedly" recognizes "all of his own." The baby's recognition of "his people" is, in Kitty's mind, directly connected to Levin's love, as though Levin could not love the baby until the baby recognized him. Before the recognition he loved in a monologic, possessive way, but now he loves dialogically.

Levin learns to accept self-righteously glorify the limitation of the scope of his love for the neighbor. In a sense, the baby's recognition is synecdoche, the part standing in for the whole. "Our people" are people we can recognize, we can literally see them: note Kitty's emphatic "Посмотри, посмотри" and the emphasis on the baby's seeing the cook. When we recognize and are recognized by "our people," we love them. This configuration of knowledge and love, however, is obviously limited. Tolstoy, after *Anna Karenina*, rebels against these very limitations and thus must revise his understanding of epistemology,

subjectivity, and aesthetics to resolve the issue and secure universal love as a real and required possibility.

Levin, at the end of *Anna Karenina*, attains (at least provisionally) a happiness not unlike Pierre's at the end of *War and Peace*—a state in which life's fundamental questions remain unanswered, but in which one also feels no need to ask them:

> When Levin thought what he was and what he was living for, he could find no answers and was driven to despair; but when he stopped questioning himself about this, he seemed to know what he was and what he was living for, because he acted and lived in a resolute and definite way. (793)

Levin experiences both epistemic despair and some intuitive grasp of his role in life. Epistemic despair can only be resolved by intuition and intuition involves faith:

> Thus he lived, neither knowing nor seeing any possibility of knowing what he was and what the point of his life on earth was, and while he was tormented by this lack of knowledge to such a degree that he was afraid of committing suicide, he was at the same time resolutely carving his own particular decisive path in life. (796)

This way of life for Levin is entirely pre-given; it is based on the traditions of his ancestors:

> For his family to live in the manner to which his father and forefathers had grown accustomed, that is, with the same level of education, and to bring up his children in the same was without question a necessity. It was as necessary as sitting down to dinner when one is hungry. (794)

Levin simply accepts both knowledge and love as he has inherited them: reflection and seeking are not means to find the answers to "the meaning of life," but are the very source of the problem. Even his love for Kitty is based on his preconceived notions of family. Prince Andrey falls in love with Natasha because of his lack of understanding and a desire to know and be known, but Levin's love is based on preconceived ideals of family and familiarity that has nothing to do with knowing Kitty or himself.

But this lack of self-knowledge on Levin's part is crucial. Though he has an intuitive grasp of life's meaning, it is based on these preconceived notions of family life, and therein lies the problem. Precisely because of this lack of self-knowledge, Levin's sphere of love does not extend beyond the family and the neighbor. If knowledge is what is needed for love, love cannot extend beyond the familiar. But seeing only the familiar as one's own is a failure in understanding of the human condition for Tolstoy, a failure to see sameness underlying all of us—a form of subjectivity that will become a fundamental building block for late Tolstoy. For this understanding self-knowledge is key: by comprehending ourselves properly, we comprehend the other as the same as ourselves.

Tolstoy writes:

> Есть два способа познавания внешнего мира: один самый грубый и неизбежный способ познавания пятью чувствами. Из этого способа познания не сложился бы в нас тот мир, к[оторый] мы знаем, а был бы хаос, дающий нам различные ощущения. Другой способ состоит в том, чтобы, познав любовью к себе себя, познать потом любовью к другим существам эти существа; перенестись мыслью в другого человека, животное, растение, камень даже. Этим способом познаешь изнутри и

> образуешь весь мир, как мы знаем его. Этот способ есть то, что называют поэтическим даром, это же есть любовь. Это есть восстановление нарушенного как будто единения между существами. Выходишь из себя и входишь в другого. И можешь войти во всё. Всё — слиться с Богом, со Всем.

Tolstoy proposes two way of cognizing the world, of experience the world outside the self. The first is "crude," using nothing but "the five senses." This crude method involves recognizing the external world as a world of objects, as things without order, "chaos." What results is "undifferentiated sensations," precisely because the subject, in perceiving the world with only his or her senses, fails to see the underlying connection between the self and the outside world. We end up like Leibnitz's impermeable monads, just subjects ontologically divided from the world of experience.

Tolstoy's second method of cognition skips over the "crude" method of using human perception and begins with internal cognition, with "love for the self" and moving to "love for other creatures," a sort of intensely personal recognition of one's own needs as also inhering in the other: "You leave yourself and you enter into the other." Tolstoy explicitly links this recognition of the other with aesthetics, a "poetic gift" of love.

Toward Universal Love

In "The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History," Isaiah Berlin posits that "Tolstoy's gifts and achievement were one thing," but that "his beliefs" and consequentially his self-assessment of his own achievements, were another thing entirely (438). Berlin argues, essentially, that Tolstoy's gifts in his fiction for depicting the "'texture'

of life, both of individuals and communities" were unparalleled (447). His unique talent was to depict

> the individual experience, the specific relation of individuals to one another, the colours, smells, tastes, sounds and movements, the jealousies, loves, hatreds, passions, the rare flashes of insight, the transforming moments, the ordinary day-to-day succession of private (451)

However, Tolstoy rebuked his own talent, "condemned it absolutely," because Tolstoy sought, in place of the diversity of individual experience, a force or law that integrated and reduced this heterogeneity to a singularity, something "truer" and "realer" than individual, fleeting experience (451). This urge is the Tolstoy's hedgehogginess:

> [Tolstoy's] genius lay in the perception of specific properties, the almost inexpressible individual quality in virtue of which the given object is uniquely different from all others. Nevertheless he longed for a universal explanatory principle; that is, the perception of resemblances or common origins, or single purpose, or unity in the apparent variety of the mutually exclusive bits and pieces which composed the furniture of the world. (463–464)

If we agree with Berlin's thesis, it would be easy to see how this tension between his own foxy talent and hedgehog beliefs are inherently applicable to Tolstoy's path to his late views on human nature and universal love. Tolstoy sought "common origins" and "unity," yet his talent and genius led him to explore "specific properties." We can see in this opposition between genius and inclination the path Tolstoy traverses. It moves through *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina,* with their celebration of love for the individual (but always

as means to universal love), to his later works, where all others can be known and loved precisely because they share "common origins" and "unity."

Gustafson proposes that the primary rule "in reading Tolstoy. . . is that the later clarifies the earlier:" "earlier work may be an experimental version of a later one and [later] works may reveal the hidden patters and meanings of earlier ones" (7). This pattern, this process of articulation of the cognitive value of love, this emergence of Berlin's "common origins"—we get a glimmer of it in *Childhood,* and then watch its emergence through *War and Peace, Anna Karenina*, and Tolstoy's late belletristic and philosophical writings.

Anna Karenina continues to test various configurations of love and knowledge. Formally, the question is basic and was asked at the beginning of this study: do we need to love to know, or do we need to know to love? You can hear the question "How do we know who we love?" as "What formal method allows me to recognize the people I love or ought to love?" (Here I intentionally echo Bakhtin's узнание in his discussion of "unrepeatable acts" from *Toward a Philosophy of an Act*.) What's the deontology of love? How do we know, in the superset of humanity, what set of people is "ours?" Who, in Gustafson's terms, is one's own (*svoi*) and who is alien (*chuzhoi*) (7–8)? Who is part of the game (as it is figured so often in the novel), who gets to hide with five-year-old Lyovochka, under mother's shawl draped over two chairs, and be *my* Ant Brother?

What energes are two general models of attraction: like-for-like and between opposites. Each model has laden philosophical implications. Let us consider them each in turn. Like-for-like is more enclosed, discriminating, and potentially prefers one's family or nation. Attraction to what is different from us breeds cognitive humility, a desire to know something other than us and to accept plurality. Bakhtin's model of cognition and his ethics

are based on this model of love that accepts plurality: I should not love the other as myself but as other.

And who do I *not* love? Who is outside of my "game," conversation, nation, or circle of people I love? This question of who is *not* my neighbor, who do I *not* love, becomes crucially important in *Anna Karenina* as well. In *War and Peace,* this lack of love—or *lovelessness,* to use Bakhtin's term—was a crucial formal feature as a configuration of love between author and hero; in *Anna Karenina,* it becomes an overtly explored philosophical question, explored both in form and content and in their linkages. For Tolstoy, as Gustafson argues, this question of not loving is always a failure, a defeat of recognition: Tolstoy the Stranger "wants to love and belong and cannot" (15). This failure to love the other, as I argue in this chapter, gets figured, as it was in *War and Peace,* as a failure of cognition. Not to love is not to know, or perhaps it is the other way around. *War and Peace* demonstrated more evidence for Tolstoy's belief that to love is to know; *Anna Karenina* begins to strongly test and the opposite configuration: that to know is to love. This is true both for the Vronsky/Anna and Levin/Kitty plots.

But we could understand the question "How do we know who we love?" to instead emphasize the active cognizing of the other. What ways do I understand the object of my love? What does it mean for the loving subject to cognize the other as a subject—that is, from within? Not only recognizing, but active cognizing is key here, and in active cognizing, like in active empathy, both parties are dynamic and changing. Both parts are changing, the observer and the observed. This dynamic between the cognizer and the cognized is interrogated repeatedly and explicitly throughout *Anna Karenina* as well as in Tolstoy's later writings.

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In *War and Peace*, love preceded knowledge; in *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy establishes a stronger necessary link between them, by suggesting that perhaps knowledge is necessary for love and thus has to precede it. Consider Levin's desire to love his peasants and his expressed sorrow about his inability to do so because of lack of knowledge: "I would love them if I knew them." This change of the relationship between love and knowledge helps to explain Tolstoy's crisis and the changes in his aesthetic paradigm. These changes are both narratological, generic, and ontological. After getting rid of excessive desire in *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy has to find a way out, a new connection between love and knowledge that will allow the universal all-inclusive love he is after in his life and art. If knowledge is a necessary condition for love, how can one love everyone? How can one know everyone? By assuming that everyone is the same underneath.

CHAPTER 3: LATE TOLSTOY: CLIMBING DOWN PLATO'S LADDER

This chapter will argue that late Tolstoy (that is, after *Anna Karenina*) thinks that we need to start with *agape*, rather than love for an individual. Importantly, what makes this new trajectory plausible for Tolstoy is a new conception of subjectivity: everyone is both in a state of being (rather than becoming) and that state of being is ultimately the same for all individuals. We can be all loved from the outset because we can be all known. We are all knowable simultaneously because we are, in a profound sense, all the same.

***

When Tolstoy discusses the pagan and ancient Greek conceptions of the ladder in "The First Step," he has in mind a classical reference, part of every intellectual's toolkit: Plato's ladder, which starts at (literally) carnal and moral baseness and rises upward toward a limit.

The thesis of this dissertation has been that while early Tolstoy complicatedly embraced the idea that universal love might arise eventually from what starts as eros, love the individual, late Tolstoy subverts this Platonic ladder, and argues that genuine morality, right living, is a process, a constant upward motion toward a never-achievable, always disappearing limit. This approaching a vanishing limit is essentially a reappearance of Zeno's paradox from *War and Peace*. Just as Achileus can never catch the tortoise, true ethical living can never be perfect enough: there is always another rung to climb. If Zeno's paradox is explained by a calculus of speed and distance, the paradox of morality is explained by time and space (finitude) and the relation of each to infinity.

There are important ways that Tolstoy subverts and reverses the Platonic ladder. Not He claim that higher stages can be achieved only if they are not recognized as such. A profound lack of self-knowledge is required in Tolstoy's moral schema, and if someone means to climb the ladder to a higher level, he or she is sure to fail. (The prime example of this, as I'll argue shortly, is Sergius in Tolstoy's late work, *Father Sergius*.)

Tolstoy also changes the direction and order of the kinds of love necessary for climbing the ladder toward enlightenment and universal love. For Plato, and for early Tolstoy, it is necessary to begin with *eros,* and through the love of a particular, beautiful body, the beholder begins to see this beauty in others, begins to see the same beauty in ideas as well. This idea of natural ascent from individual to universal is plainly evident in Plato's schema: Eventually, the climber will achieve an all-inclusive universal love, *agape*. *Agape* is achieved through a sort of generalization of *eros,* or for that matter, any other sort of love for the individual. Tolstoy, however, rejects this projection from *eros* to *agape.*

Allow me to restate this problem in terms of Tolstoy's own development. Early Tolstoy, like Plato, posits that love is prerequisite for knowledge, and that for achieving divine love you start from the individual. To achieve *agape,* you need *eros, storge*, or *philia*. (The three sorts of love are different, yet they overlap in that each is particular in its object.) This understanding of love, as we have seen, underlies both the philosophy and the aesthetic structure of *War and Peace*. Late Tolstoy reverses the order, claiming that *agape* is the condition of possibility of *storge* and *philia*, and not the other way around. He simply dispenses with *eros* as a kind of love. Perhaps *agape* is the condition of possibility of *storge* and *philia,* but *eros* should be bypassed or marginalized.

In *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy continues to test various configurations of the relationship between love and knowledge. What he discovers, what is depicted in the pages of the novel and the musings of its characters, is that love of a particular person (or for that matter, particular groups), and the subsequent knowledge gained from this particularized love, is that we can never arrive at universal love as logically necessary, as universally achievable. If human beings are understood to be in a state of constantly becoming, is human nature fluxes and varies, then universal lovewill be achieved rarely—if ever. It is difficult enough even on the level of a single subject to love and know an ever-changing other and thus advance toward *agape*. It is practically impossible for this path to be traversed by all and thus to become something universal.

In a strangely circular, almost dialectical manner, knowledge is sublated in late Tolstoy; it now takes the place of love, becoming the condition of possibility for love. As Tolstoy writes in 1890: "One needs to love oneself to gain knowledge and then use this knowledge of the self to know others, through love." Here, love remains an initial condition; knowledge becomes not the result, but instead another required condition.

Pursuing the task of logically securing the possibility, and thus the requirement, of universal divine love, Tolstoy runs into certain problems. If this task is a matter of lengthy spiritual achievement, not everyone can get there. Only the very select can, in fact, climb up Plato's ladder. Moreover, given the understanding of subjectivity underlying this worldview (namely, that a subject is in a constant state of becoming), one's object of love, whether a person or a field related to it, will continue to develop and thus escape one's understanding. As one acquires ever fuller understanding, the other will develop beyond one's knowledge.

This constant striving to know the object of one's love can never achieve completeness—unless death finalizes it, of course.

If love is prerequisite of knowledge, then love can only be operative in certain cases, and even then might not lead to complete knowledge. And as even love for a particular person can be an endless striving given our limited time and attention, we surely cannot be demanded to love everyone. That would simply be impossible with this structure of knowledge.

The idea that knowledge is prerequisite of love runs into its own set of problems when Tolstoy attempts to construct a system founded on logic or reason—not a divine obligation or a revealed mystery, but a natural obligation that follows logically derives from insatiable and universal assumptions. Tolstoy goes as far as to claim that love is the only thing that works. This is not an outrageous assumption, of course; many world religions concur. But Tolstoy also makes this a demand of the intellect, of reasonable consciousness. The scenario is problematic for even loving a single person, and hence, if the goal is to secure the possibility of universal love, the question becomes: how can anyone first come to know everyone, in order to love everyone? If the initial and sufficient condition is itself logically or even physically impossible, then the system collapses into absurdity.

Tolstoy will come up with answers. It is partly this conundrum, I believe, that leads him to major revisions of not only what it means to love, or what it means to know, but also what it means to be a human being. He revises his understanding of human subjectivity to solve this logical problem: if knowledge is perquisite for love, and if it is impossible to know everyone, how can you possibly be required to love everyone? Tolstoy's solution: to claim everyone is the same. Human beings are not in a state of becoming, but a state of being—

they are identical underneath and are not in flux. The possibility of knowing, and therefore of loving, is again possible.

This claim about Tolstoy's changing conception of the cognitive value of love is far-reaching and encompasses, consciously, virtually the entirety of Tolstoy nearly sixty-year career. It requires first an exploration of the use of ladders as an emblem or theme in Tolstoy's works.

Ladders in Tolstoy's Works

The plot of *Death of Ivan Ilyich* is simple: Just when Ivan Ilyich thinks he has arrived at the height of his life, he falls off a ladder, and, after a prolonged illness, dies.

The ladder and curtains are obvious symbols. Tolstoy is teasing the reader with overtly Christian and secular symbolism, while simultaneously accepting their usefulness (what Gustafson calls Tolstoy's "emblematic realism"). The curtains stand for Ivan's solipsistic isolation, while the ladder suggests Ivan's ceaseless social climbing. He wants to impress his peers with his good taste, which is always, of course, proper and pleasant. He mounts a ladder, covers the light shining through the window, and falls to his death. Only Tolstoy would attempt something so brazenly obvious and succeed at it.

Simultaneously, however, Tolstoy here is intentionally employing a philosophically familiar and rich symbol. There is a tension between the banal and the spiritual. In the philosophical tradition, we often speak of Plato's or Hegel's ladder. Ivan Ilyich's fall from a ladder reveals his mistaken philosophy of life. He thinks he has surmounted life exactly at the lowest point of his life, precisely because he has a misconceived idea of life and its hierarchies. He fails at living rightly and falls to his death from the ladder, the very thing that

he thought he needed to climb. Plato's ladder is upside-down. Ivan Ilyich finds himself in the topsy-turvey world of the Sermon on the Mount.

Tolstoy's thought follows a trajectory similar to that of Ivan Ilyich. Young Tolstoy embraces Plato's ladder, believes in self-perfection, and agrees that the love of particular people plays a vital mediating role in this structure of ascending enlightenment from *eros* to *agape*; late Tolstoy revises and completely reverses the structure and subverts its hierarchies. Young Tolstoy, along with Plato, believes that *agape* is what awaited one on the top rung of the ladder as the last stage of an ascending path. Late Tolstoy believes *agape* to be the very first step, the very condition of possibility of any other kind of love.

Young Tolstoy sees a human being as a questioning and questing force ascending the ladder of self-perfection toward the truth. Late Tolstoy sees the ladder as a false construction, something one must fall from and there at the very bottom, discover the truth.

Here is how Tolstoy discusses the image of the ladder in his 1891 short moralistic treatise "The First Step" (Первая ступень):

> All moral teachings set up that ladder which, as the Chinese wisdom has it, reaches from earth to heaven, and the ascent of which can only be accomplished by starting from the lowest step. As in the teaching of the Brahmins, Buddhists, Confucians, so also in the teaching of the Greek sages, steps were fixed, and a superior step could not be attained without the lower one having been previously taken. All the moral teachers of mankind, religious and non-religious alike, have admitted the necessity of a definite order of succession in the attainment of the qualities essential to a righteous life. The necessity for this sequence lies in the very essence of things, and therefore, it would seem, ought to be recognized by everyone.

We are prepared for the image of the ladder by the very title; although in English translation "the first step" conjures up the image of horizontal movement in space, in Russian "pervaya stupen'" refers to a step in a staircase, a rung in a rising ladder, and thus conjures an upward movement. But "The First Step" immediately undermines this image. According to Tolstoy, Christianity retains the image of a ladder but approaches it differently than paganism. In paganism, the goal is to ascend the ladder from a lower state of being to a higher one. There is a direction and a telos, upward toward the top rung. Christianity, however, subverts the hierarchy implicit in a ladder. Tolstoy acknowledges that there are steps, higher and lower spiritual stages, an upward and a downward. But Christianity exceeds this paganistic way of seeing the world precisely in its lack of a "final step," in its rejection of a teleological ascent to a final, static, higher spiritual stage. For Tolstoy, Christianity has first steps but not a final one. This is what scandalized the idealist philosophers in 1880 and 1990s—Tolstoy's strange bend to Kant and spiritualism.

As so often with Tolstoy, the question comes down to intentionality and self-consciousness:

> The difference between the Christian and Pagan teaching of goodness lies in this: that the heathen teaching is one of final perfection, while the Christian teaching is one of infinite perfecting. Plato for instance, makes justice the model of perfection, whereas Christ's model is the infinite perfecting of love. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect". . .

There is no final step, no top rung on Tolstoy's ladder. There is only the act of climbing, "infinite perfecting." Tolstoy thinks that virtue is a process rather than a state of

being—deontology minus teleology. We *practice* perfection without ever achieving it. Moreover, in Tolstoy's moral landscape, you can climb the ladder only if you don't think or know that you are climbing a ladder: "Whereas, according to the Christian teaching, which sets up the ideal of infinite perfection, this division is impossible. There can be neither higher nor lower grades—all steps are equal in relation to the infinite ideal."

For Tolstoy, morality and perfection are similar to calculus and to the race between Achilles and the tortoise in *War and Peace*. Just as the great warrior could never in theory catch up with the slowest creature, humans can never arrive at the vanishing limit of perfection. Moral perfection resembles the limit of a function in calculus, or historical explanations in *War and* Peace: ultimately unachievable, always subdividable, never achieved. You can only ever *approach* self-perfection. Stasis at the top of the ladder is replaced by open-ended motion upward. All parts move. What Tim Langen says about the calculus' attraction for Tolstoy as an explanatory model for history holds true, I think, for more than just history:

> Tolstoy feels compelled to insist on [epistemological] solubility. Rather than a credible model for the derivation of historical laws, calculus serves in this book as an idealized model for the reconciliation of incremental reason with the sweep of absolute truth, and of the thinker's right to criticize alien theories at any level of particularity, with the artist's total sovereignty over the whole of his work. (24)

This unending approach-to-infinity, the importance of the infiitessimally-small in Tolstoy's moral universe. History for Tolstoy is nothing more nor less than the totality of

human experience. Just as no historian can ever arrive at the "first" cause, no person can ever acieve moral perfection.

An Example: Father Sergius' Fall from the Ladder: Swimming on Dry Land

You can see this peculiar kind of ladder, one with a top run ever-vanishing, higher and higher, in Tolstoy's late story *Father Sergius*. On the verge of suicide after spending the night with the merchant's "half-witted" daughter, Father Sergius lies down to rest near a river. He has sinned, but instead of begging forgiveness or considering the girl whom he had abused, he decides on suicide: "Yes, I must end it all. There is no God. But how am I to end it? Throw myself into the river? I can swim and should not drown. Hang myself? Yes, just throw this sash over a branch" (263). With these thoughts, he falls asleep for a moment, and when he wakes, he begins to think of Pashenka, who presents herself to him as a means of salvation.

We need to read this part of the story allegorically. Sergius has fallen, both physically and spiritually. He has committed a grave sin. He contemplates sinking, drowning, continuing his downward trajectory. But in Tolstoy's cosmology or theology, the idea of falling marks this moment as one of redemption and a discovery of true life. He has thrown away his ladder and embarked on a new life.

Pashenka plays a crucial role in Father Sergius's realization of what it means to serve people and what it means to serve God. The encounter with Pashenka prompts Father Sergius to reevaluate his life. "I am not a holy man, I am not even as good as a simple ordinary man; I am a loathsome, vile, and proud sinner who has gone astray, and who, if not worse than everyone else, is at least worse than most very bad people" (266). This reevaluation is clearly

still part of the same up and down rhetoric: he has to be the best or the worst. But now, after the dream in which an angel advises Father Sergius to seek salvation from Pashenka, he is resolute that he must continue living: "I must go on living," he tells Pashenka. "And I, who thought I knew everything, who taught others how to live—I know nothing and ask you to teach me" (267). He decides that it is Pashenka's humble and self-sacrificial existence that is saintly rather than his own ultimately vain desire to serve God.

Father Sergius sets aside both his name and possibly his pride and attains the sort of present-time active love and selflessness that Tolstoy praises. All this becomes possible for him thanks to Pashenka.

When Father Sergius, resting near the river, first recalls Pashenka, he remembers how in their childhood he and the other boys would make fun of her: they would ask her to show them how to swim, she would lie down on the floor, and flap her arms awkwardly to show them. The boys would laugh and make fun of her. This seemingly small detail, I argue, is of great significance. Hegel and Kierkegaard have both used this image of swimming on dry land to discuss the very nature of philosophy. In his introduction to *Science of Logic*, Hegel claims that learning to philosophize is similar to learning to swim: you cannot do it on dry land. This implies a necessary leap; you must throw yourself into the water before you are sure you have mastered the skills to survive. In "Father Sergius," this image of swimming on dry land, I believe, is used to define Stepan Kasatsky and his non-participation in *true* life. There is an important reversal that occurs at the end of the story, when Father Sergius realizes that the correct way to serve God is to be found not in his saintly existence, but in Pashenka's complete engagement with life at its most basic and accessible. This reversal

invites the reader to retrospectively reevaluate the story along with Father Sergius, and to see that it is that not Pashenka, but Father Sergius who has been swimming on dry land.

Hegel uses the image of swimming on dry land to criticize his fellow philosophers for not accounting for experience in their philosophical studies. Kant, for example, whose work Hegel sees himself completing, considers experience a part of the empirical world and outside the scope of his inquiry about the *a priori*, universal, and unchangeable structures of the mind. Hegel sees a crucial oversight here; experience itself for him has a universal structure, which is not randomly changeable or individual, but dynamic. Not to account for this dynamic structure of experience, claims Hegel, is like trying to learn to swim on dry land: a sterile and pointless exercise.

In Tolstoy's story, this futile image comes to define Father Sergius's non-participation in life. His strivings are based on misunderstood conceptions of individuality and personhood, a mistake that leads him away from meaningful engagement with life. Let us trace his journey toward isolation and alienation.

In the beginning of the story, Stephan Kasatsky is described as an able and ambitious young man. He is talented enough, but what drives his striving is the desire to be better than anyone else in everything he does. This commitment to self-perfection is familiar to us from the writings of early and late Tolstoy. The central striving of Nikolenka and the main theme of *Youth* is self-perfection. Tolstoy passionately criticizes, even satirizes the notion of self-perfection and progress in *A Confession*. Self-perfection as a goal and practice in life separates the perfecting subject either from others (by setting the subject to opposition and competition) and from oneself (the desire to be better often implies the notion that one is not good enough). What Tolstoy finds necessary for a meaningful life, however, is merging with

the other, not separation. Kasatsky's ambitious desire to be better than anyone else is based on an understanding of subjectivity that erects barriers between the self and other, a barrier that is not merely metaphysical.

Misunderstanding subjectivity, Kasatsky's mission of self-perfection leads him to literal isolation. The first major mistaken step, of course, is his decision to leave society and become a monk (уйти со света). Father Sergius separates himself from "the world" and "worldly affairs." Any interaction with people becomes a distraction from his spiritual self-perfection and service to God: "I left the world to save myself from temptation!" (244) He isolates himself from people, becoming a hermit and a recluse.

"Father Sergius" is ultimately a story about belonging and feeling at home in the world. When Kasatsky realizes that he cannot belong to the inner circles of society he had so longed to enter, he rejects the world, claiming spiritual superiority by becoming a monk. The story describes this from his sister's perspective:

> Only his sister, who was as proud and ambitious as he, understood him. She understood that he had become a monk in order to be above those who considered themselves his superiors. And she understood him correctly. By becoming a monk he showed contempt for all that seemed most important to others and had seemed so to him while he was in service, and he now ascended a height from which he could look down on those he had formerly envied. (240).

While accepting this motivation as true, however, the narrator emphasizes another motivation, unknown to the sister: Father Sergius's sincere religious feeling." But the two motivations are ultimately not so different: Tolstoy's point here is that the desire to live a difficult, religious, disciplined life is a species of pride and contempt for others.

To attend to his inner life, Father Sergius completely neglects others, who appear to him as temptations and distractions. Even the death of his mother and the marriage of his sister leave him indifferent. The tension between abstract ideals and real people is all the more emphasized by the divorcee's sarcastic remark (she has come to seduce Father Sergius): "Do you wish me to freeze under your window while you say your prayers?" (249) His vanity and overweening self-esteem remains one of his main character traits, even after he decided to dedicate his life to "serving God" and separates himself from others, finally taking up residence in a cave. When the divorcee shows up not only are her stockings and body wet, but the entire cave is described as bulging with moisture. "The room smelt strangely of perspiration and of earth. It all pleased him—even that smell" (250). And it is near water, by a lake, that Father Sergius has his revelatory dream about Pashenka. On the verge of a suicide, he is revived to a life in close proximity to a life-generating body of water.

Water is the traditional symbol of life. Already in *War and Peace* Tolstoy uses dryness to characterize, for example, old Prince Bolkonsky and the life-killing limitations of reason. Moisture and dryness are employed throughout "Father Sergius" and symbolically played against each other. For example, when Father Sergius goes to visit Pashenka, the narrator tells us that she was no longer Pashenka, but "old, withered, wrinkled (dry) Praskovya Mikhailovna" (264). This description is somewhat ironic, of course, because it relies on the opposition of body and spirit. Spiritually, Pashenka is not dry.

Father Sergius finally achieves the necessary dissolution of the self after his fateful encounter with Pashenka. He rids himself of self-conscious striving through, paradoxically, a logical mistake:

> "Pashenka is what I ought to have been but failed to be. I lived for men on the pretext of living for God, while she lives for God imagining that she lives for men. Yes, one good deed—a cup of water given without thought odf reward—is worth more than any benefit I imagined I was bestowing on people. But after all was there not some share of sincere desire to serve God?" he asked himself, and the answer was: Yes, there was, but it was all soiled and overgrown by desire for human praise. Yes, there is no God for the man who lives, as I did, for human praise. I will now seek Him!" (269)

There is a logical mistake here, which will allow Father Sergius to begin serving people without seeking human praise or thinking that he is serving God. Father Sergius says that Pashenka lives for God because she lives for men. Then he says that instead of serving God, he was serving people. But if serving people means serving God, how was he not serving God? This logical mistake is too basic not to have been intentional on Tolstoy's part. What is key here is that by serving people, Father Sergius will serve God only if he does not think he is serving God—that is, if he serves God *unself-consciously*. As Tolstoy had already claimed in *War and Peace*, "Only unconscious activity bears fruit." But to achieve this state, Father Sergius needs to change his habits. He so loathes himself that he becomes a beggar and develops new habits that make him present for others' needs.

After stripping himself of self-conscious awareness of his deeds, itself an almost impossible task to undertake consciously, Father Sergius also needs to strip himself of all individuality to achieve the kind of presence Tolstoy idealizes: being in the moment and attending to the immediate needs of others. Father Sergius even stops using his name: when taken to the police station and asked "who he was and where was his passport," he says "that

he had no passport and that he was a servant of God" (271). In Siberia "he works in the kitchen-garden, teaches children, and attends to the sick" (271). The narration of the story switches to the present tense at this moment. The story of Sergius's quest for self-perfection has ended, and a new, unending story has begun. The kind of love yielded by this knowledge—present, active love—is only possible in the present moment; it cannot refer to the past as foundation of individuality or toward the future as reward. It seems to be offered to nameless strangers. It exists in the always unfolding, completely contingent present moment. Only through removing intentionality, individuality, and any context for temporality is Father Sergius able to achieve spiritual transcendence. The present tense implies memory-less deeds and a non-judgmental reaction to others' needs. This is Tolstoy's deontology, his "how to live:" Seek not God, for God is everywhere unfolding in the present moment. Looking for him *there*, at the top of the ladder, as Sergius has done, prevents the seeing of him *here*, in the act of ascending.

The tension between seeking isolation and seeking community is a common theme in Tolstoy's oeuvre—Gustafson figures it as the tension between Tolstoy "the resident" and Tolstoy "the Stranger." Arguably, one has to traverse this trajectory through isolation to community. The attempt to exclude and isolate oneself results in a situation, like Sergius's, where one "ends up" seeking community. This process seems strangely Hegelian (strangely, for Tolstoy so emphatically rejected Hegelian dialectics). The truth is not in one or the other. They need one another; the stranger calls to community. The truth is in the dynamism and motion between the two polarities. Life is the falling down and climbing up of Jacob's ladder.

Father Sergius had thought sanctification lay in removing himself from the world, failing to realize that true freedom for Tolstoy is overcoming one's self-imposed isolation. Freedom can exist only in community. Truly free means truly chained, enslaving yourself to others, just as truly free in *War and Peace* meant acknowledging the infinite bonds and structures of necessity. In the scene from their childhood, where the boys would make fun of Pashenka, she was the outsider. She wanted to participate in the game but was not allowed to join in the circle of boys. Her isolation was circumstantial, however, while Father Sergius's subsequent isolation was self-imposed. Pashenka is described as "insipid, insignificant and pitiable" (263). Holiness and foolishness are closely linked here; holy foolishness also always implies not thinking or caring about what others think. As Gustafson says, the lesson of "Father Sergius" is that "knowledge through affective awareness is knowledge by participation and not narration (240).

Impersonal Life

This logical paradox, the impossibility of ever reaching the end of one's moral journey, is at the core of Father Sergius's spiritual transformation. Sergius seeks to serve God, and believes that his journey is like the pagan ladder, upward, an ascent toward the top rung, toward a static state of being. However, only when he does not think he is serving God but thinks he is (merely) serving people does he truly serve God. The "vertical" movement toward God, upwards and away from the "simply human" toward heaven, occurs only when Sergius's journey becomes a horizontal one, like Pashenka's, when he travels actually across the earth, forgets the ladder, and serves people instead. The two axes, horizontal and vertical, are thus intricately linked. The ladder perhaps is not the correct metaphor. Perhaps swimming

in a river better represents how life must be lived. The correct way of living for late Tolstoy is metaphorically described by fluid, horizontal, non-hierarchical movement.

To reveal the significance of these images and the conception of human subjectivity implied by them, this chapter will consider *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, *Father Sergius*, the novel *Resurrection,* and the philosophical treatise *On Life*. The conception of human subjectivity that Tolstoy arrives at in these works plays a crucial role in his views on the cognitive value of love for life and art.

Let us begin with the understanding of human subjectivity that slowly emerges after *Anna Karenina*. For the possibility of uninversal love, Tolstoy requires a shared, universal, and fixed human nature. This is a state shared by all, a sort of neo-Procrustean model of human essence, undifferentiated, a state that renders all humans ultimately similar one to the other. This new understanding of human nature is the main underlying philosophical and aesthetic message of *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886), which explicitly tells the story of everyone: "Ivan Ilyich's life had been most simple and most ordinary and most terrible" (89).

Tolstoy depicts an experience that is shared by all, not only because he is dealing with a universal human experience—death—but also because he insists that every individual experiences it in the same way. Through Ivan Ilyich, Tolstoy is relating a way of relating to the world that reveals his new ontology. The old ontology accepted becoming and self-perfection, but his new ontology is against becoming, as well against arriving. It relies on radical sameness.

Tolstoy writes on the very first page of the story: "On receiving the news of Ivan Ilych's death the first thought of each of the gentlemen present in that private room was

about the changes and promotions it might occasion among themselves and their acquaintances" (83). He continues a few paragraphs:

> Besides considerations as to possible transfers and promotions likely to result from Ivan Ilyich's death, the mere fact of the death of a near acquaintance aroused, *as usual*, in all who heard of it the complacent feeling that, "it's he who is dead and not I." Each one thought or felt, "Well, he's dead but I am alive!" (84; emphasis mine)

The problem here, of course, is that Tolstoy considers it artificial and mistaken to observe any separation between I, you, and he/she. "He is dead and I am alive" is what Ivan Ilych's colleagues think, without taking the further step, realizing that the same claim from Ivan Ilych's perspective would be as follows: "I am dead and he is alive." The difference between those claims would be obliterated at the moment of the colleagues' death, which is unavoidable. But they fail to see this. Ivan Ilych had, himself, done exactly the same: ignored his own mortality.

This failure of human relatedness, in Gustafson's formulation, has a rhyming scene in *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* and an antipode in "Master and Man" (1895). Ivan Ilyich, just like his colleagues, strongly believed in his own individuality. He had been convinced that this individuality would save him from mortality: "The syllogism he had learned from Kiesewetter's Logic:

> "Caius is a man, men are mortal, therefore Caius is mortal," had always seemed to him correct as applied to Caius, but it certainly did not apply to himself. That Caius – man in the abstract – was mortal, was perfectly correct, but he was not Caius, not an abstract man, but a creature quite separate from all others. (110)

Compare this with Gerasim's attitude, expressed in a comment to Ivan Ilyich: "We shall all die, so why should I grudge a little trouble?" (115).

Tolstoy thinks that this obliteration between "you" and "I" is not only the totalizing effect of death, but also the truth of human existence per se. For late Tolstoy, individuality is a phantom, and only by realizing the spectral nature of individuality can one lead a meaningful life. This position is a bedrock truth for many non-Western belief systems, of course, but not for Enlightenment Europe.

It is this realization, this obliteration of the difference between "you" and "I," that constitutes Brekhunov's revelation in "Master and Man." Compare the reaction "He is dead, but I am alive!" with Brekhunov's reaction at his approaching death as he attempts to save his servant, Nikita: "It seemed to him that he was Nikita and Nikita was he, and that his life was not in himself but in Nikita. . . . 'If Nikita is alive, I am alive too!' he told himself triumphantly" (339) That triumph is Tolstoy's as well.

The continuity and permanency of consciousness can be eternal life precisely because consciousness is *not* individual, but shared: consciousness is participation in the communal, and therefore a disappearance of individual will into the expression of the will of the whole. Tolstoy does not deny that these participants in consciousness have personal memories and individual voices and perspectives. The organs of perception and communication need not wholly disappear along with the disappearance of the will. But these personal memories and individual voices and perspectives only appear in time and space. There is a more essential dimension, that of reasonable consciousness, outside space and time. We can tap into reasonable consciousness and communicate with minds across time, while existing in time and space. But this communication does not depend on our sensory organs of perception.

Father Sergius and Ivan Ilyich: A Study of (Male) Subjectivity

There is no question, of course, that Tolstoy does not approve of Ivan Ilyich's way of life. Ivan Ilyich's life, the narrator tells us, was "most simple and most ordinary and most terrible" (89). The narrator's disdain for what he perceives as Ivan Ilyich's mediocrity and self-delusion is undeniable. From many perspectives, Ivan Ilyich is fairly successful, but Tolstoy sees him as mediocrity. If Nekhlyudov from *Resurrection*, with Lydia Ginsburg's charitable scrutiny, could be included in the list of Tolstoyan "truth-seekers," Ivan Ilyich would surely never make the list. But why not? How is Ivan Ilyich different from such an emblematic truth-seeker as Father Sergius?

In fact, there are striking similarities in the character and life descriptions of Ivan Ilyich and Father Sergius. Both are described as "capable" (способный): "Even when he [Ivan Ilyich] was at the School of Law he was just what he remained for the rest of his life: a capable, cheerful, good-natured, and sociable man, though strict in the fulfillment of what he considered to be his duty. And he considered his duty to be what was so considered by those in authority" (90) Likewise, Stepan Kasatsky, the future Father Sergius, was as a boy "distinguished both by his brilliant ability and by his immense self-esteem" (235) Ivan Ilyich is also defined by ambition, but of a more unself-conscious, instinctive sort: "Neither as boy nor as man was he a toady, but from early youth he was by nature attracted to people of high station as a fly drawn to the light, assimilating their ways and views of life and establishing friendly relations with them" (90) Kasatsky too strives to be accepted in the highest society: "He tried in everything he took up to attain such success and perfection as would evoke

praise and surprise" (90) Both Ivan Ilyich and Stepan Kasatsky take up dancing and perfect themselves in it to achieve a certain social prominence:

> While he [Ivan Ilyich] had been an official on special service he had been accustomed to dance, but as an examining magistrate it was exceptional for him to do so. If he danced now, he did it as if to show that though he served under the reformed order of things, and had reached the fifth official rank, still when it came to dancing he could do it better than most people. (93)

Similarly: "Wishing to secure a brilliant position in high society, he [Stepan Kasatsky] learnt to dance excellently and very soon was invited to all the balls in the best circles, and to some of their evening gatherings" (237) It is important to note that all men of the nobility took up dancing, just as girls played the piano or sang. It is clear that Tolstoy disdains both characters' high society upbringing.

Both characters are seekers, strivers, and in their own way both are dedicated to self-perfection and elevation. Both are aware of other people's opinions of them and both care deeply about how they are perceived. But their aspirations are markedly different. So, given these correspondences, how is Ivan Ilych's instinctive ability to gravitate toward success different from Stepan Kasatsky's decision to be first in everything, to be accepted in the highest society?

Ivan Ilyich is concerned with what others think for social climbing. He does not care whether he deserves his social position or people's respect and admiration as long as he has his high social position and power over others. He gloats over his ability to judge people and determine their fate. Stepan Kasatsky too desires to distinguish himself. But his ambitions are different from Ivan Ilyich's self-complacent social climbing. Father Sergius's is a ladder to

moral growth, tarnished by pride. It is important to him that he is worthy of the admiration of others, as well as of himself. It turns out, however, that pleasing himself is much more difficult than pleasing others.

There is also a significant difference in temper. Kasatsky is proud, competitive, and hot-tempered. Ivan Ilyich is not. He is smooth, friendly, and able to sink amiably into the background. Ivan Ilyich very possibly would have forgiven his fiancée a similar compromising "lapse," if only to avoid a scandal (and Tolstoy hates this commitment to proprieties), but Kasatsky relishes in scandals (as did Tolstoy). But on a daily basis, Ivan Ilyich appears to be the kinder man. He fears death and Tolstoy condemns his attitude as cowardness, but can anyone really be expected to suffer and die of undiagnosed cancer without any fear of death and pain? Yet Tolstoy clearly despises Ivan Ilyich. We might wonder then, if Ivan Ilyich is "everyman," has Tolstoy come to hate human nature? Perhaps not human nature itself, but surely anyone who conceives of human nature differently than Tolstoy?

Tolstoy's beloved and emblematically psycho-biographical Father Sergius makes mistakes similar to those of Ivan Ilyich. For instance, both of their aspirations are based on a misconceived notion of individuality and subjectivity. Father Sergius's striving for moral self-perfection relies on the same understanding of individuality and competition with others as Ivan Ilych's commitment to personal success at the very end of his life. Ivan Ilyich breaks through his solipsistic self-enclosure through empathy, but Father Sergius has to free himself not only of vanity but of self-consciousness: he has to strip himself of all individuality to achieve spiritual perfection, to find himself a home and become a resident. But we cannot

forget how he does it: by using an innocent feeble-minded sensuous girl as a means for his ends—namely, to ruin himself.

Pashenka and Praskovya: A Study of (Female) Nature

Father Sergius achieves this ideal spiritual state thanks to his encounter with Pashenka. Ivan Ilych is married to a woman with the same name–Praskovya. The name is not the only correspondence between the two female characters. Praskovya Fedorovna is for Ivan Ilych as much of a catch as Countess Korotkova is for Stepan Kasatsky. She is "the most attractive, clever, and brilliant girl of the set in which he moved, and among other amusements and relaxations from his labors as examining magistrate, Ivan Ilyich established light and playful relations with her" (93). But soon after marriage, Praskovya Mikhailovna becomes disagreeable, subject to fits of jealousy:

> His wife, without any reason—*de gaite de coeur* [out of sheer wantonness]—began disturbing the pleasure and propriety of their life. She began to be jealous without cause, expected him to devote his whole attention to her; she found fault with everything and made coarse and ill-mannered scenes. (94)

Praskovya Fedorovna generally is as unpleasantly described as Ivan Ilyich himself. Pashenka, on the other hand, emerges the true saint of "Father Sergius." Yet there are striking similarities in the descriptions of their lives. Pashenka tells Father Sergius of her own marriage that "[i]nstead of helping my husband I tormented him by jealousy, which I could not restrain. The frightful scenes we had!" Once again, we have the "unmotivated" jealousy and "scenes" between the spouses.

What makes Pashenka nearly a saintly figure and Praskovya Fedorovna a mediocre and unpleasant presence for her husband? The difference is between *loving attention* and *judgmental depiction*. It is also, connectedly, a difference of perspective. Praskovya Fedorovna is presented to us through the eyes of her husband, or the narrator, or the narrator while observing her in his own name, or observing her from her husband's perspective.

Pashenka's image, on the other hand, is built through her own dialogue with Father Sergius, who is full of loving attention to her, and through the narrator, who is full of loving attention for both of these characters. Praskovya Fedorovna is always shown from without, whereas Pashenka is depicted from within, and with love. Pashenka describes herself; hers is a free self-admission, from within, whereas Praskovya is seen through Ivan Ilyich's eyes only—that is, from without. We are back, in other words, to the different representational strategies for Hélène Bezukhova and Natasha Rostova.

Such rhyming scenes, in which similar character traits are perceived from different perspectives, can be found throughout Tolstoy's corpus. As in the rhyming scenes with Karl Ivanich in *Childhood*, Tolstoy in different works experiments with various ways similar "sense data" can be perceived, analyzed, lived, and presented. Gustafson points out how Tolstoy sees love as a mode of knowing, and discusses the attending consciousness as the cause and the condition of possibility of love. Of course, love is also the cause and the condition of possibility of attending consciousness. Tolstoy plays with these configurations throughout his life and writing. What matters here are not the facts themselves, however they may be reified, but the perspective of the author, and the author's personal relationship with the character. Two characters may seem to share very similar traits—Ivan Ilych and Kasatsky, Praskovya Fyodorovna and Pashenka—but depending on the "attending

consciousness," the members of these pairs may be depicted entirely differently. Of course, Tolstoy is modeling a relationship with the world here, holding forth this attending consciousness's perception as the "right" way to discern the world.

It is Bakhtin who hints at the importance of love in Tolstoy's aesthetic creation, in his preface to a 1930 edition of Tolstoy's *Resurrection*. He too discusses a rhyming scene, which clearly demonstrates the aesthetic difference that the presence or absence of love can make. Bakhtin juxtaposes the scene where Nekhlyudov wakes up in his room in *Resurrection* with the opening scene of *Anna Karenina* when Obolonsky wakes up in the morning. We will discuss these Bakhtin's reading of these scenes in following subsections.

But in addition to Tolstoy's moral perspectivism in art that emerges with the consideration of these rhyming scenes, there is also a particular understanding of human essence. This understanding can be expressed in Brekhunov's "I am Nikita and Nikita is me," in Gerasim's "We will all die one day," and in Tolstoy's claim in *Resurrection* that human beings are like rivers, comprised of the same water.

Which Comes First, Universal Love or Love of the Individual?

Resurrection constantly refers to this dual animal and spiritual nature of human beings that Tolstoy sets out in *On Life*. But *Resurrection* also displays Tolstoy's new notion of subjectivity—namely, that all of humanity is the same. Individuality for late Tolstoy is part of the phantom of existence; stable or persistent personality (личность) is a "superstition." Here is how he speaks of personhood or personality (личность) in *Resurrection*:

> One of the most widespread superstitions is that every person has his or her own special, definite qualities; that a person is kind, cruel, wise, stupid, energetic, apathetic, etc. People are not like that. We may say of a person that they are more often kind than cruel, oftener wise than stupid, oftener energetic than apathetic, or the reverse; but it would be false to say of one person that they are kind and wise, of another that they are wicked and foolish. And yet we always classify mankind in this way. And this is untrue. People are like rivers: the water is the same in each, and alike in all; but every river is narrow here, is more rapid there, here slower, there broader, now clear, now cold, now dull, now warm. It is the same with people. Every person carries inside the germs of every human quality, and sometimes one manifests itself, sometimes another, and people often become unlike themselves, while still remaining the same. (300)

This conception that we are "composed of the same water" is not controversial. What is disputable is whether we hold people accountable for accumulated "badness" commited when the water was floating badly. The basic ingredients are the same, but some people avoid evil and others do not: surely this matters morally? But this notion of subjectivity—namely, that we are all the same underneath, "composed of the same water"—is what allows Tolstoy to reverse the trajectory of Plato's Ladder. This view of human nature supports his new conception of philosophy of love—namely, that divine universal love is not the goal and the endpoint, but must be the origin of other kinds of love. Early Tolstoy, in other words, was mistaken: we do not climb the ladder to find universal love on the top rung, nor do we learn to love the individual and thereby arrive at the top rung. Our journey toward "living rightly" is like Kasatsky's journey (or Ivan Ilyich's, though his is incomplete, interrupted by death).

We begin our ascent when we fall, when we find ourselves without a ladder. Love for the individual, for the discrete, infinitely variable other, can only manifest itself after universal love for all.

This journey from here gets encoded in the plot trajectory of *Resurrection*. Tolstoy dedicates several chapters of *On Life* to "true love:"

> The feeling, solving all life's contradictions and giving the greatest good, is known to all. That feeling is love. Life is the activity of animal personality subjected to the law of reason. Love is the only reasonable activity of human beings. The animal personality longs for its own good; reason indicates to humans the deceptiveness of personal good and leaves them only one path. Love is the activity on that path. . . True love always has at its root a renunciation of the welfare of personality and the goodwill to all people that results therefrom. True love for certain people - relations or strangers - can only grow in this general benevolence. And only such love can give the true good of life and solve the apparent contradiction between the animal and the reasonable consciousness. (151)

Only universal love can create the potential for individual love, not vice versa. Only after Nekhlyudov cultivates this kind of love, after his painful escapades in the darkest spheres of life, is he capable of loving Maslova rather than using her as an instrument of salvation. And then, of course, he can let her go. "If you feel no love," Tolstoy writes, "sit still. Occupy yourself with things, with yourself, with anything you like, only not with others. . . Only let yourself deal with a person without love ... and there are no limits to the suffering you will bring on yourself."The truth is there from the outset and is accessible to the author from the outset; the characters, especially Nekhlyudov, must catch up with him.

Let's return for a moment to Gustafson's concept of a loving "attending consciousness." While love is the lesson Nekhlyudov has to master to save his soul, there is a noticeable lack of love between author (Tolstoy) and hero (Nekhlyudov). This lack of love is apparent throughout the narration. We can see this by comparing scenes from *Anna Karanenia* and *Resurrection*. Bakhtin juxtaposes these scenes to demonstrate how every description in *Resurrection* is subjugated to its ideological thesis. Bakhtin writes:

> In Oblonsky's waking-up scene, each detail, each epithet fulfilled a pure representing function: the author was simply showing his hero and showing us things, losing himself thoughtlessly in his portrayal; both the strength and the succulence of his portrayal lie in the fact that the author is ***admiring*** his hero, his joie de vivre and freshness, and admiring as well the things that surrounded him. In Nekhlyudov's waking up scene, each word fulfills not a representing function but primarily an unmasking, reproaching, or repenting function." (252) [Там, в картине пробуждения Облонского, каждая деталь и каждый эпитет несли чисто изобразительную функцию: автор просто показывал нам своего героя и вещи, отдаваясь бездумно своему изображению; и сила и сочность этого изображения в том, что автор любуется своим героем, его жизнерадостностью и свежестью, любуется и окружающими его вещами. (115)]

Tolstoy is well aware of this lack of love on his part, as he wrote in his diary on January 5, 1897:

> I began rereading *Resurrection* and when I reached *his* decision to marry, I stopped with disgust. Everything is fake, imagined, and weak. It is difficult to fix what has already been spoiled. In order to fix, I need to: 1) alternatively describe her and his

> feelings and life. Describe hers both positively and seriously; his – both negatively and with a sneer. I will hardly finish. It's already been spoiled too much.

Curiously, when the Tolstoyan positive hero was characterized by a certain life force and striving, there was an apparent love present in Tolstoy's aesthetic activity. Even if the works did not invite the reader to examine their achievements in the realm of piety, religiosity, or even love, the works themselves seemed to embrace all of those elements. But when Tolstoy decides that striving is not sufficient and he needs to teach and demand universal love from his characters, love on his part seems to disappear. When Tolstoy was struggling to finish *Anna Karenina* in 1877, Sofya Andreevna recalled him saying:

> How I'd like to finish up this novel more quickly and begin something new. My idea is now very clear. In order for an artistic work to be good, one must love the main, basic idea in it. This in *Anna Karenina* I love the *family* idea, in *War and Peace* I loved the *national* idea, a result of the war of 1812; and now it is clear to me that in the new work I will love the idea of the Russian people in the sense of a *conquering/overpowering force*.

This love of a single idea, I think, is retrospectively forced on his previous works, full of contradiction and Tolstoy's love of life and his living characters. In *Resurrection*, the symbolic plotline is even more straightforward than its external plot. Ekaterina Maslova's adopted name for her work as a prostitute, Liubov, leaves no place for ambiguity: what is on trial here is love. Yet while blaming his characters for their lack of love, Tolstoy himself seems not to possess the same love he exhibited for his characters in his previous novels. And here lies a curious paradox.

This paradox supports Dmitriy Bykov's reading of *Resurrection*, in which he claims that the novel presents an insoluble problem because "when a stylistic device becomes a worldview, life becomes impossible."[6] In *Resurrection,* Tolstoy transforms his trademark stylistic device of estrangement as well as his new theoretical framework of life with its absolute truth available to him into a required standard of being. He is chasing Nekhlyudov with the truth. Lydia Ginzburg is more generous and includes Nekhlyudov into the rank of Tolstoyan truth-seekers. "In order to have a positive role in the world created by Tolstoi," she writes,

> it is not necessary that a character be without faults, although it is necessary that he choose to strive for truth and virtue. Pierre Bezukhov has led a profligate life in his youth, but that does not keep him from being a positive hero. Pierre is "likable." But Nekhliudov in *Resurrection* is not, indeed even unpleasant, although that does not hinder him, given the place he occupies in the novel, from being a positive hero either. The dissolute Pierre, the egoistic Nekhliudov, and the stingy landowner Levin are all truth seekers and therefore people with a positive function." (342)

I do, however, believe that Nekhlyudov differs markedly from Tolstoy's earlier truth-seekers. He is not really seeking any truth until truth itself begins to chase him. As Bakhtin explains in his preface to the novel: "Tolstoy's stubborn, but hopeless quest for a new artistic form, everywhere ends with the moralist's victory over the artist" (255). Tolstoy's moralistic agenda, however, is made possible by his new conception of subjectivity discussed above. Again, for late Tolstoy, who considers knowledge to be prerequisite for love, if we can know

[6] Дмитрий Быков, лекция "Лев Толстой, Что начинается в воскресенье."

everyone this burden is light, for we are all the same underneath, and thus all can be known and loved.

In *Resurrection* and other works of late Tolstoy, we are now in a somewhat Buddhist, somewhat Kantian static world. In addition to changing his aesthetics in turn of the consciousnesses represented from within, this revision of subjectivity also changes the genre of Tolstoy's writings. His prose becomes significantly shorter and more parable-like. Love is no longer the desire to know, so there is no need of sustained attention for development. If knowledge is there to begin with, it only needs to be disclosed. For this creative purpose, short forms such as parables, fairy tales, and essays are more appropriate genres than the novel (his shortest novel, *Resurrection,* being the experimental exception).

Love and Knowledge in *Resurrection*

Let us now consider the representations of psyche in *Resurrection*. The plot of the novel is simple: Prince Dmitriy Nekhlyudov is called for jury duty. There, in the defendant, a prostitute called "Lyubov'" ("Love"), he recognizes Katiusha Maslova, whom he had once loved, seduced, and subsequently abandoned. This encounter launches Nekhlyudov's quest for salvation, which begins with his desire to free himself of guilt by helping Maslova, even unto a proposal of marriage, progresses through his odyssey in the prison system, the Senate, the church, high-society salons, all kinds of bureaucratic administrations, and ends with his salvation, which occurs only when his acts of kindness are stripped of sociality, recognition, and sexuality. This salvation occurs after Maslova chooses another life partner, and Nekhlyudov achieves his sought-after spiritual rebirth in complete solitude, alone, reading the Gospels.

> As Bakhtin points out in his scholarly introduction to Eikhenbaum's 1930 edition, In *Resurrection* the narration is concentrated only around Nekhlyudov and in part around Katyusha Maslova; all the other characters and all of the remaining world are depicted in Nekhlyudov's field of vision. Except for the hero and the heroine, none of the novel's characters are linked to one another by anything, and they are united only externally by the fact that they come into contact with Nekhlyudov, who visits them while soliciting on his own case. (244) [Воскресении» повествование сосредоточено лишь вокруг Нехлюдова и, отчасти, Катюши Масловой, все остальные персонажи и весь остальной мир изображаются в кругозоре Нехлюдова. Все эти персонажи романа, кроме героя и героини, ничем между собою не связаны и объединяются лишь внешне тем, что приходят в соприкосновение с посещающим их, хлопочущим о своем деле Нехлюдовым (107)].

The main consciousness represented from within is Nekhlyudov's. We are presented with his consciousness in detailed descriptions over long stretches of time. Even Maslova, the positive character of this novel, is rarely represented unmediated by another character; she is mostly represented through Nekhlyudov's intermediating consciousness. We are told what she feels, for instance, but (unlike Nekhlyudov) we are not given access to long internal monologues and deliberations that explain why these emotions arise: "The organizing center of the novel had to be Nekhlyudov," writes Bakhtin, "the depiction of Katyusha is both skimpy and dry, and is constructed entirely in the light of Nekhlyudov's quest" (252).

Anna Karenina unfolds the process of *corrosion*; *Resurrection* unfolds the process of *correction*. We thus begin with a consciousness already gone astray, but we trace its

salvation by a return to a previous state of innocence. The author/narrator does not simply follow and describe the character's development; he is aware of the truth from the beginning and will walk the character toward that truth. There is a dissonance between author and hero that will be gradually bridged until their worldviews converge.

After *Anna Karenina,* Tolstoy's art switches from a descriptive to a prescriptive paradigm. This is not to say that his artistic creations lack an ethical dimension and that his sympathies do not lie with particular trajectories of development. But whereas in *Childhood* and *War and Peace* Tolstoy had described the processes by which knowledge follows love, now, due to his new conception of subjectivity, he has no "process" to describe. Love and knowledge are there at the outset, but have been obscured. The reader and the characters need to be told what to do with this knowledge and how to access the love that is necessarily is always already there. It must be onscured because narrative is motion and Tolstoy sustains plot interest by teasing the reader with rejected plots.

Resurrection is structured differently from the dialectical nature of the previous novels. Tolstoy has now made the leap from Levin's desire to its actualization. He now grants knowledge, thereby making love an omnipresent, immutable potential. He posits that all human beings are good and essentially undifferentiated, and that the idea of personhood [личность] is a "superstition." Thus he can know everyone, and love them. This demolition of difference makes the dialectic impossible.

Thus did late Tolstoy revise his notion of subjectivity. Let me explicate what this kind of subjectivity entails. A year after the publication of the novel, a review appeared by Alexander Aksakov, titled "What Kind of Resurrection is This? On Tolstoy's *Resurrection*." In this review, Aksakov attacks Tolstoy's notion of immortality, which does not preserve

anything *personal* beyond death. (The afterlife in Christian theology is *personal*. After death, we retain our memories and personalities.) Let me take Aksakov's argument further and claim that late Tolstoy sees individuality as an illusion not only after bodily death, but even in life; his new notion of subjectivity is based on an underlying sameness that oftentimes in his narratives is *revealed* at the moment of death. Aksakov quotes heavily from Tolstoy's philosophical treatise *On Life* (1887). As the treatise was written alongside the novel, I will appeal to some of its theoretical statements as did Aksakov, albeit different ones.

Tolstoy began *On Life* (O zhizni) in late 1886, while recovering from a wound (from which he almost died) received while working in the fields of his estate. The essay was originally called *On Life and Death*, but soon after beginning the project, Tolstoy dropped "death" from his manuscript, having decided that it was nothing but a distracting myth. There is no death: the soul is eternal.

Tolstoy delivered an abbreviated version of the work in a lecture, now lost, before the Moscow Psychological Society, Russia's first professional philosophical society, at the invitation of Nikolai Grot, in March of 1887.

If there is immortality, though, how are we to understand it? If our soul persists after our physical death, what remains of us, what do we leave behind? To answer these metaphysical questions, Tolstoy confronts a series of social and moral questions, especially empirical questions about the nature of reality and our perception of it. What, he wonders, is the role of science and the arts when it comes to discovering ontological truths about living creatures? Over the course of thirty-five short chapters, Tolstoy argues that the goal of life is to overcome one's individuality by learning to love all.

Genuine love always has at its basis a renunciation of individual happiness and the resulting goodwill toward all. Genuine love toward certain people—your kin or strangers—can only grow from this goodwill toward all. And only this love provides the true happiness of life and solves the seeming contradiction of animal and reasonable consciousnesses. This is odd for a thinker who also insists that happiness is a right. Why should my happiness jeopardize general goodwill?

It is not accidental, of course, that Tolstoy opens *On Life* with epigraphs from Pascal, Kant, and the Gospel of John. The quote from Pascal praises the human capacity for thought, and the quote from the Bible announces one of the main strains of thought in the treatise: the Gospel demand to "Love one another." Tolstoy was fascinated by the image of the decrepit John mumbling these words over and over. He even wrote an address in 1907 entitled "Love One Another," which explained the nature of the afterlife and collectivity to young people. Kant is also apropos here, as the notion of subjectivity that Tolstoy presents has a dual nature: we are comprised of animal and spiritual components and operate between phenomenal and noumenal worlds. But if Kant claims that the noumenal world cannot be known, Tolstoy believes it can. This dual animal and spiritual nature, discussed in detail both in *On Life* and *Resurrection,* initially led Tolstoy to crafting two different characters, two different Nekhlyudovs (at the time still called "Valerian Yushkin") in his drafts, one with the animal and one with spiritual nature.

Hegel uses the image of swimming on dry land to criticize his fellow philosophers for not accounting for the experience of living. To open *On Life,* Tolstoy employs another image associated with the workings of water—that of a mill and a miller—to make a similar point. The miller decides to study the mill, comes to the conclusion that it is the river that makes the

mill run and is so delighted at his discovery that he begins to neglect the mill. “Such is the approach of our sciences in studying life,” concludes Tolstoy.

As in *A Confession*, in which Tolstoy criticizes sciences for either asking the wrong questions (mathematics, natural sciences) or being unable to answer the questions it does ask (philosophy, social sciences), in *On Life*, Tolstoy criticizes sciences for forgetting *why* they are studying life. The purpose of any study, Tolstoy claims, is to improve life. For example, studying the origin of life is, for Tolstoy, similar to studying the river in order to understand and to maintain the mill. The river is important, but what is crucial is a certain sequence and a hierarchy of reasoning and focus, followed by hard work and good work habits, to sustain and grasp the internal workings of the mill. Reasoning about the river when you want to improve the working of the mill is (to extend the metaphor) like swimming on dry land.

What has been earlier called Tolstoy’s “perspectivism” in art is expressed in his discussions of life and sciences as well:

> It is commonly said that science studies life from every side. But, really, every object has as many sides as there are radii in a circle—that is, innumerable. Since one cannot study something from every side, one needs to know which side is more important and more necessary, and which side is less important and less necessary. Just as you cannot approach an object from all sides at once, you cannot study the phenomena of life from all sides. One way or another, things fall into an order, and this order is the heart of the matter. This order is provided only by an awareness of life. [Говорят обыкновенно: наука изучает жизнь со всех сторон. Да в том-то и дело, что у всякого предмета столько же сторон, сколько радиусов в шаре, т. е. без числа, и что нельзя изучать со всех сторон, а надо знать, с какой стороны

важнее, нужнее, и с которой менее важно и менее нужно. Как нельзя подойти к предмету сразу со всех сторон, так нельзя сразу и со всех сторон изучать явления жизни. И волей-неволей устанавливается последовательность. Вот в ней-то и все дело. Последовательность же эта дается только разумением жизни (PSS XXVI: 321)]

This awareness of life in the form of consciousness is what constitutes life for Tolstoy. Importantly, this reasonable consciousness is outside of space and time and is not linked to personality, as is commonly assumed. It connects human beings by transcending the fundamental contradiction of life, which lies in the separation between the self and others. Consciousness, Tolstoy explains in *On Life*, is first experienced only internally as the awareness of one's own life. A living human being feels life only in himself. He only observes other lives and sees those only as conditions of possibility of his own existence. He wishes well (*благо*) only to himself.

But trying to achieve personal "благо," he realizes that his happiness depends on others and suddenly he begins to also realize that others too only care about their own "благо." They also see only their own lives as real. He also realizes that not just one person but everyone is ready to sacrifice him for their own "благо." So his personal "благо" is not as easily achievable as he had thought. With experience, the very notion of "благо" is reconsidered. It cannot be merely pleasure, which always brings suffering. He realizes that he is fighting something that is impossible to fight: the whole world (for "благо") and his own inevitable mortality (for life). Now he begins to reconsider the very notion of his own personality, for which he desired "благо." He thought only his life was real, but comes to

realize that it is the world outside that will survive and live forever. Only this external world, which he does not care about, has the features he desires.

To overcome this opposition between the world and the individual, Tolstoy criticizes the traditional notions of personhood and individuality. He even rejects the idea of one's life beginning with birth and ending with death: our reasonable consciousness, our true life, is outside of time and space. In time and space, he claims, there is no possibility of happiness for an individual life; suffering, evil and death are inseparable from one's life:

> The only aim for life that initially occurs to someone is his individual happiness, but there is no such thing as individual happiness; were there something in life like happiness, then life, in which alone happiness is possible—individual life that is—with its every movement, every breath, is drawn inexorably toward suffering, evil, death, and destruction. [Единственная представляющаяся сначала человеку цель жизни есть благо его личности, но блага для личности не может быть; если бы и было в жизни нечто, похожее на благо, то жизнь, в которой одной возможно благо, жизнь личности, каждым движением, каждым дыханием неудержимо влечется к страданиям, к злу, к смерти, к уничтожению. (PSS XXVI:326)]

So by pursuing individual happiness, people set themselves up for disappointment and error. The error lies not in happiness, but in the very notion of individuality. The human condition is the same for all; thus, notions of "true" happiness and "true" life are everywhere and always the same, claims Tolstoy:

> The human condition in the world is everywhere the same, and therefore the contradiction of a man's pursuit of individual happiness, and the realization of its impossibility, is also the same for everyone. All definitions of true happiness—and

therefore all definitions of true life—that have been revealed to people by the greatest minds of humanity are thus essentially the same.[так как положение в мире всех людей одинаково и потому одинаково для всякого человека противоречие его стремления к своему личному благу и сознания невозможности его, то одинаковы, по существу, и все определения истинного блага и потому истинной жизни, открытые людям величайшими умами человечества. (PSS XXVI:327)]

It stands to reason that *if* the human condition and human beings are essentially the same, then knowledge of the human condition can be achieved through self-knowledge. By knowing ourselves we can know all living creatures and this knowledge is primary. It is this collapse that Bakhtin rejects in Tolstoy:

> If I know that the horse, the dog, and the tick sitting on it are all living creatures, and I can observe them, it is only because the horse, the dog, and the tick all have their separate aims—the aim of each is its own happiness. I ***know*** this because I ***know myself*** just as such a creature—one pursuing happiness.
>
> All cognition of life is based on this pursuit of happiness. Without acknowledging that this pursuit of happiness that a person feels within himself is life, and the sign of every life, any study of life is impossible, any observation of life is impossible. Therefore, observation begins when life is ***already known***, and no observation of the manifestations of life (as the false science presumes) can define life itself. [Если я знаю, что лошадь, и собака, и клещ, сидящий на ней,— живые существа, и могу наблюдать их, то только потому, что у лошади, и собаки, и клеща есть свои отдельные цели,— цели, для каждого, своего блага. Знаю же я это потому, что таковым, стремящимся к благу, знаю себя.

> В этом стремлении к благу и состоит основа всякого познания о жизни. Без признания того, что стремление к благу, которое чувствует в себе человек, есть жизнь и признак всякой жизни, невозможно никакое изучение жизни, невозможно никакое наблюдение над жизнью. И потому наблюдения начинаются тогда, когда уже известна жизнь, и никакое наблюдение над проявлениями жизни не может (как это предполагает ложная наука) определить самую жизнь. (XXVI:436)]

Love unlocks the possibility of knowledge, but the knowledge is always already there. We observe life already knowing it, and we discern manifestations of its truth. And we discern not phenomena, not "good enough" truths that are limited in their analytic capacity by our necessarily human perception. We have direct access to noumena, to the *ding an sich*. Or so claims Tolstoy.

Perspectivism and the Oak Tree

With these ideas from *On Life* in mind, it is interesting to look back at an iconic scene from *War and Peace*, which can be differently interpreted from the perspective of late Tolstoy: Andrey and the oak tree. The oak tree functions on several levels. First, it is an actual tree that Andrey encounters. At the same time, it is a symbol for Andrey's spiritual rebirth. But the relationship between this symbol and Andrey is complex. One could look at the tree as mirroring the spiritual processes Andrey experiences or even as causing these processes (or, at least, making him conscious of them). *On Life* offers yet another perspective: it is precisely because he is now in love that Andrey is even able to notice the tree.

Prince Andrey first encounters the tree when traveling with Pierre. Hearing a conversation between Pierre and the coachman, Andrey assumes they are talking about spring. He begins to look for oaks, notices a tree, and begins to psychologize it:

> With its huge, gnarled, ungainly, unsymmetrically spread arms and fingers, it stood, old, angry, scornful, and ugly, amidst the smiling birches. It alone did not want to submit to the charm of spring and did not want to see either the springtime or the sun. "Spring, and love, and happiness!" the oak seemed to say. "And how is it you're not bored with the same stupid, senseless deception! Always the same, and always a deception! There is no spring, no sun, no happiness."

What is astounding here—in Andrey's character in general—is a remarkable lack of cognitive humility. He is convinced he knows the inner workings of his wife, his sister, his father, and now, even this tree. Only after meeting Natasha and *not* understanding something—namely, the source of her happiness—is he transformed. But here too, his desire is not only to know but to be known.

Here is how the tree is described when Prince Andrey encounters it the second time after meeting Natasha:

> The old oak, quite transformed, spreading out a canopy of juicy, dark greenery, basked, barely swaying, in the rays of the evening sun. Of the gnarled fingers, the scars, the old grief and mistrust—nothing could be seen. Juicy green leaves without branches broke through the stiff, hundred-year-old bark, and it was impossible to believe that this old fellow had produced them. "Yes, it's the same oak," thought Prince Andrei, and ***suddenly a causeless springtime feeling of joy and renewal came over him***. All the best moments of his life suddenly recalled

themselves to him at the same time. Austerlitz with the lofty sky, and the dead, reproachful face of his wife, and Pierre on the ferry, and a girl excited by the beauty of the night, and that night itself, and the moon—all of it suddenly recalled itself to him. "No, life isn't over at the age of thirty-one," Prince Andrei suddenly decided definitively, immutably. "***It's not enough that I know all that's in me***, everyone else must know it, too: Pierre, and that girl who wanted to fly into the sky, everyone must know me, so that my life is not only for myself; so that they don't live like that girl, independently of my life, but so that it is reflected in everyone, and they all live together with me!"

Instead of desiring to know, Andrey wants to be known. What Andrey recognizes is his sameness with the tree, something that Pierre hints at a year earlier, in the exact same location, when he babbles on his Masonic nonsense, which, although caricatured by Tolstoy is not nonsense and reflects Tolstoy's own views. Pierre talks about the ladder that links us to the plant world and leads upwards into spiritual creatures. The point is to see the connection between humans and the universe.

"Reasonable Consciousness" and Science as Imitation of Imitation

Tolstoy's perspectivism—the belief that any object has so many sides it is simply impossible to study it from all sides and perspectives—gets constantly reiterated throughout *On Life*. The sciences, Tolstoy claims, mistake a part of the object for the whole; they study animal life, believing they are studying all of life, which can be known only in consciousness: "they forget that life can really only be knowable to man in his consciousness"[Наблюдения так сложны, так многообразны, так запутанны, так много

времени и усилия тратится на них, что люди понемногу забывают о первоначальной ошибке признания части предмета за весь предмет и под конец вполне убеждаются, что изучение видимых свойств вещества, растений и животных и есть изучение самой жизни, той жизни, которая познается человеком только в его сознании (PSS XXVI:333)]. When the focus shifts from studying life from, sort of reverting from Kant's Copernican turn to placing the perceiving subject at the center of the universe to be known, life appears to be mere struggle for survival and procreation: "It seems to [this] external observation that the aim of living creatures is the preservation of one's individuality, preservation of one's species, reproduction of your ilk, and the struggle for existence, and this farcical aim of life is imposed on man" [Целью живых существ представляется при этом внешнем наблюдении — сохранение своей личности, сохранение своего вида, воспроизведение себе подобных и борьба за существование, и эта самая воображаемая цель жизни навязывается и человеку (PSS XXVI:333)]. The world image that emerges is Darwinian.

The crucial and fatal mistake that this view leads to is a belief in the possibility of individual happiness, well-being, or individual anything:

> Beginning from this backwards perception of life—one that obscures the main contradiction of human life, its main feature—false science in its most recent conclusions comes to what the crude majority of humankind demands—the recognition that the happiness of one's individual life is possible, and the recognition of the animal existence as the only human happiness. [Ложная наука, взявшая за исходную точку отсталое представление о жизни, при котором не видно то противоречие жизни человеческой, которое составляет главное ее свойство,—

эта мнимая наука в своих последних выводах приходит к тому, чего требует грубое большинство человечества,— к признанию возможности блага одной личной жизни, к признанию для человека благом одного животного существования (PSS XXVI:333)].

This impedes our capacity for life, for when science oversimplifies life, it ruins one's potential to live well.

Opposed to the view of "false sciences," which see the beginning of life with birth and its end with death, Tolstoy claims that human life begins only with the emergence or appearance of "reasonable consciousness," which is outside of space and time:

> Human life only begins with the manifestation of reasonable consciousness—the same consciousness that simultaneously reveals to man his own life in the present and in the past, and the life of other individuals and everything that inevitably flows forth from the relationships of these individuals, suffering and death. This is the very same consciousness that produces in him a rejection of individual happiness and the contradiction, so it seems to him, that halts his life. [Жизнь человеческая начинается только с проявления разумного сознания,— того самого, которое открывает человеку одновременно и свою жизнь, и в настоящем и в прошедшем, и жизнь других личностей, и все, неизбежно вытекающее из отношений этих личностей, страдания и смерть,— то самое, что производит в нем отрицание блага личной жизни и противоречие, которое, ему кажется, останавливает его жизнь (PSS XXVI:342)].

This reasonable consciousness has no beginning or end, and is different from one's biology, biography, or connections. Like art, it connects one with people who live far away or have lived long ago:

> Rather than a son, he is aware of himself as something fused with the consciousness of reasonable creatures quite alien to him in space and time, who could well have lived thousands of years earlier, on the other side of the globe. In his reasonable consciousness, a man does not even see some sort of individual origin; he is instead aware of his ***extra-temporal and extra-spatial merging with other reasonable consciousnesses***. They penetrate him and he penetrates them. [Он сознает свое разумное происхождение вовсе не таким, каким ему видится его плотское рождение. Спрашивая себя о происхождении своего разумного сознания, человек никогда не представляет себе, чтобы он, как разумное существо, был сын своего отца, матери и внук своих дедов и бабок, родившихся в таком-то году, а он сознает себя всегда не то, что сыном, но слитым в одно с сознанием самых чуждых ему по времени и месту разумных существ, живших иногда за тысячи лет и на другом конце света. В разумном сознании своем человек не видит даже никакого происхождения себя, а сознает свое вневременное и внепространственное слияние с другими разумными сознаниями, так что они входят в него и он в них. (PSS XXVI:343)].

Through this reasonable consciousness, all humans are connected, as long as they are awakened to it.

As difficult as it might be to know other people, humans, through self-knowledge, gain knowledge of others as well. Even animals and plants become to a certain degree

comprehensible:

> These creatures [animals] would be completely incomprehensible to him had he no knowledge of man in general; but bearing this knowledge, and diverting his reasonable consciousness from the concept of man, he gains a certain notion about animals, too. . . . Looking further out he sees plants, and the prevalence of these phenomena in the world is even greater, and with it increases the impossibility of his knowing them. [Существа эти были бы совершенно непонятны для него, если бы он не имел знания о человеке вообще; но имея это знание и отвлекая от понятия человека его разумное сознание, он получает и о животных некоторое представление, но представление это еще менее для него похоже на знание, чем его представление о людях вообще. (PSS XXVI:355)].

It is only possible for us to know anything by transferring onto other things our knowledge of life as a striving for happiness and wellbeing, achievable by subjugating our animal nature to our reasonable consciousness. Our knowledge of plant and animal life is also based on this knowledge. We can, Tolstoy claims, know ourselves based on laws that govern animal life; however, we can know animal life only through our own internal knowledge of reasonable consciousness [Не себя мы можем познавать из законов, управляющих животными, но животных мы познаем только из того закона, который знаем в себе (PSS XXVI:357)].

The first necessary step is to get to know ourselves—which means, for Tolstoy, to realize that our personal well-being is unachievable and should be subjugated to our reasonable consciousness and love. Our reasonable consciousness is the only true knowledge for Tolstoy. Even animals we know only through projection and imitation, and thus our

knowledge of matter is an imitation of imitation. [Нужно нам знать, и мы знаем только себя. Мир животных — для нас уже отражение того, что мы знаем в себе. Мир вещественный уже есть как бы отражение от отражения (PSS XXVI:358)].

By claiming that our knowledge of matter is an imitation of an imitation, Tolstoy performs an interesting reversal. In the *Republic*, Plato famously claims that art is an imitation of imitation as the forms contain the true original form. For Tolstoy, however, this truth we are seeking lies in our reasonable consciousness. It is thus not art that is an imitation of an imitation, but our knowledge of matter—that is, science—that is an imitation of an imitation. Tolstoy not only repudiates the contemporary faith in science but also argues that art gives access to true knowledge.

If a person does not know the truth about life and only pursues his individual happiness, he does not recognize the same self-love in others. By recognizing the same love and striving for happiness in others, humans can no longer live for their own individual happiness, which is impossible to begin with, since the human condition is intricately connected to suffering.

The renunciation of individual happiness is thus a pre-condition for the possibility of true life and the emergence of the reasonable consciousness, which, like art, connects us to people throughout time and space. This act has epistemological significance: the renunciation of individual happiness is based on the recognition that others love themselves just as the subject had. This recognition, according to Tolstoy, prevents the subject from seeking individual happiness, which reasonable consciousness sees as evil and paradoxical:

> Were someone to pursue only his own individual happiness, loving only himself, his individuality, he would never ***know*** that other creatures also love themselves, just as

> animals do not know this; but if man knows himself to be an individual who pursues the same thing that other individuals around him are pursuing, he then can no longer pursue that happiness that appears evil to his reasonable consciousness, and his life can no longer consist of pursuing his individual happiness. [Если бы человек стремился только к благу своей личности, любил только себя, свою личность, то он не знал бы, что другие существа любят также себя, как не знают этого животные; но если человек знает, что он личность, стремящаяся к тому же, к чему стремятся и все окружающие его личности, он не может уже стремиться к тому благу, которое видно, как зло, его разумному сознанию, и жизнь его не может уже быть в стремлении к благу личности. Человеку только кажется иногда, что его стремление к благу имеет предметом удовлетворение требований животной личности. Обман этот происходит вследствие того, что человек принимает то, что он видит происходящим в своем животном, за цель деятельности своего разумного сознания. (PSS XXVI:364)]. The epistemological significance of renouncing individual happiness is described by Tolstoy in similar terms to Plato's theory of knowledge. This knowledge is remembered, it is something already-known, as it were. It seems self-evident: "This riddle was solved long ago. And for those who figure out the riddle, it seems surprising that they had failed to solve it sooner by themselves—it seems they had known it all along, and had just forgotten it."

What exactly is this self-evident solution to the problem of individual striving for happiness?

Reasonable consciousness is supposed to reveal a logical contradiction: if everyone strives for individual happiness (which Tolstoy defines as the desire to be loved by everyone

more than they love themselves), but also loves himself or herself more than others, then individual happiness obviously impossible. In this scenario, everyone loves himself or herself more than others, while wishing to be loved by others who only love themselves. In the pursuit of individual happiness, failure, thus, is guaranteed. There is only one solution, Tolstoy claims:

> If every creature lived for the sake of others' happiness and loved others more than themselves. Only then would you and all creatures be loved by all, and you, in their midst, would receive the very happiness you are seeking. If happiness is possible for you only when all creatures love others more than they love themselves, then you too, as a living creature, must love other creatures more than yourself. [Проходят века, и загадка о благе жизни человека остается для большинства людей тою же неразрешимою загадкой. А между тем загадка разгадана уже давным-давно. И всем тем, которые узнают разгадку, всегда удивительным кажется, как они сами не разгадали ее,— кажется, что они давно уже знали, но только забыли ее: так просто и само собою напрашивается разрешение загадки, казавшейся столь трудной среди ложных учений нашего мира.
>
> Ты хочешь, чтобы все жили для тебя, чтобы все любили тебя больше себя? Есть только одно положение, при котором желание твое может быть исполнено. Это такое положение, при котором все существа жили бы для блага других и любили бы других больше себя. Тогда только ты и все существа любимы бы были всеми, и ты в числе их получил бы то самое благо, которого ты желаешь. Если же благо возможно тебе только тогда, когда все существа любили бы других более себя, то и ты, живое существо, должен любить другие

существа более себя. (PSS XXVI:370)].

By loving everyone more than ourselves, we at the same time make possible a world where everyone is loved by others, which Tolstoy sees as the condition for the possibility of happiness. Life is the pursuit of the well-being of others, which, paradoxically, is the very realization that can bring happiness to the striving subject; as long as he is pursuing anothers' happiness, he will be happy:

> All it takes is recognizing that life is the pursuit of others' happiness, and the deceptive thirst for enjoyment is annihilated; the tormenting and idle activity aimed at filling the bottomless pit of individual appetite is replaced with an activity that corresponds to the laws of reason, one that consists of sustaining the life of other creatures, something necessary for one's own happiness. Thus the torment of individual suffering, something that destroys life's activity, is replaced by a feeling of compassion for others, one that causes activity that is doubtlessly fruitful and most joyous. [Стоит человеку признать свою жизнь в стремлении к благу других, и уничтожается обманчивая жажда наслаждений; праздная же и мучительная деятельность, направленная на наполнение бездонной бочки животной личности, заменяется согласной с законами разума деятельностью поддержания жизни других существ, необходимой для его блага, и мучительность личного страдания, уничтожающего деятельность жизни, заменяется чувством сострадания к другим, вызывающим несомненно плодотворную и самую радостную деятельность. (PSS XXVI:370)].

Happiness is attained only by giving it up. One needs to live in accordance with the law of life, which Tolstoy sees in "the mutual serving of one another" [Знаю, что, что бы ни

делал человек, он не получит блага до тех пор, пока не будет жить сообразно закону своей жизни. Закон же его жизни не есть борьба, а, напротив, взаимное служение существ друг другу . (PSS XXVI:373)].

In this mutual serving of one another and the renunciation of one's individuality we are supposed to eventually recognize "the whole forward movement of humanity and all living creatures who are closest to man." It is surprising to see Tolstoy earnestly discussing this "forward movement" of humanity, which he so viciously criticized in *A Confession*. But here, much as he will do at the end of *What is Art?*, Tolstoy claims that "the world, in its obedience to the law of reason, moves away from hostility and disagreement and toward greater and greater harmony and unity." Although human history appears to be progressive in these descriptions, Tolstoy sees progress not in increasing prosperity or pleasure, but in self-sacrifice: "One sees that the best people denounce seeking pleasure, that they call on people to exercise restraint, and the very best people, those praised by posterity, offer examples of sacrificing their existence for the happiness of others." "But there is still more," adds Tolstoy:

> Still more powerful and convincing than reason and history is something that seems to be from a completely different source, something that shows man what his heart pursues, that draws him onward, as one is drawn to some spontaneous happiness, unmediated wellbeing, toward the very activity that his reason has pointed out to him, something that in his heart is expressed as love. [Но мало того: допустив только возможность замены стремления к своему благу стремлением к благу других существ, человек не может не видеть и того, что это-то самое постепенное, большее и большее

отречение его личности и перенесение цели деятельности из себя в другие существа и есть все движение вперед человечества и тех живых существ, которые ближе к человеку.

…движение жизни только в том, что мир, из вражды и несогласия, через подчинение разуму приходит все более к согласию и единству.

Человек видит, что лучшие люди человечества осуждают поиски за наслаждениями, призывают людей к воздержности, а самые лучшие люди, восхваляемые потомством, показывают примеры жертвы своим существованием для блага других. Человек видит, что то самое, что он допустил только по требованиям разума, то самое и совершается действительно в мире и подтверждается прошедшею жизнью человечества.

Но мало и этого: еще сильнее и убедительнее, чем разум и история, это самое, совсем из другого как будто источника, показывает человеку стремление его сердца, влекущее его, как к непосредственному благу, к той самой деятельности, которую указывает ему его разум и которая в сердце его выражается любовью. (PSS XXVI:374)].

Love, for Tolstoy, is the very subjugation of our animal nature to reasonable consciousness. Love is what resolves the contradiction of human existence: “The feeling that resolves all contradictions of human life and that grants man the greatest happiness is known to all people. This feeling is *love*. . . . Love is the only reasonable activity of man.”

Importantly, this love has to be universal and all-encompassing: Tolstoy no longer sees love of particular people as necessary for achieving universal love, but vice versa. Love here appears as acceptance and confirmation, as in Eastern traditions, and to accept means to cease to desire, thereby achieving peaceful, all-encompassing love.

The kind of love that is necessary for resolving all contradictions of human life is cognitively and epistemologically conditioned. Tolstoy makes this claim in the very title of the chapter in which he explains in which ways and under which conditions love resolves life's contradictions: "Manifesting the Feeling of Love is Impossible for Those People Who Do Not Understand the Meaning of Their Lives" [ПРОЯВЛЕНИЕ ЧУВСТВА ЛЮБВИ НЕВОЗМОЖНО ДЛЯ ЛЮДЕЙ, НЕ ПОНИМАЮЩИХ СМЫСЛА СВОЕЙ ЖИЗНИ. Now Tolstoy's model is: know first, love second. He goes even as far as to assert that if you know, you *will* love. Tolstoy claims that everyone knows the power of love to resolve all of life's contradictions and bring well-being, which he equates with life itself.

Yet, echoing "The Kreutzer Sonata," Tolstoy imagines that someone who does not understand the meaning of life would reply that the feeling of love is only occasional and short-lived. This misunderstanding confuses the whole with a part, taking love to be "an accident" and "a mood" and not "the sole legitimate manifestation of life" and "the essence of human life" as it appears to reasonable consciousness: "But by not comprehending life, these people cannot comprehend love either, and the state of being in love appears to them as disastrous and treacherous, as all other states do." It is important to stress that love here is not an attraction but an attitude, a receptivity.

Moreover, Tolstoy claims that it is not particular but universal all-encompassing love that can resolve all of life's contradictions: "I can never love only my child, or wife, or only

my fatherland—it is never thus, and never can be thus. Each person loves simultaneously his child, and wife, and children, and fatherland, and ***people in general.***" Only by loving people in general is it possible, according to Tolstoy, to love particular people. This is an unusual view, as most philosophers following Plato believe that only through loving particular people is it possible to achieve universal love. Tolstoy, as we have seen, reverses this traditional philosophical trajectory.

To achieve this universal love, one needs to renounce one's animal individuality: "True love becomes possible only on condition that the happiness of the animal individuality is renounced" [Любовь истинная становится возможной только при отречении от блага животной личности (PSS XXVI:389)].Tolstoy connects this kind of love to the teachings of Christ. "Love is," Tolstoy writes, "a preference of other creatures above yourself—your animal individuality" [Любовь есть предпочтение других существ себе — своей животной личности (PSS XXVI:391)]. All "личность," for Tolstoy, seems to be animalistic.

Tolstoy defines love as a state of being rather than an emotional episode:

> Before becoming an effective feeling, true love must first be a genuine state. The beginning of love, its root, is not an impulsive emotional burst that clouds reason, as is usually believed. Love is a most reasonable, luminous, and therefore quiet and joyous state, which is natural for children and reasonable people. [Истинная любовь, прежде чем сделаться деятельным чувством, должна быть истинным состоянием. Начало любви, корень ее, не есть порыв чувства, затемняющий разум, как это обыкновенно воображают,

но есть самое разумное, светлое и потому спокойное и радостное состояние, свойственное детям и разумным людям. (PSS XXVI:390)].

Love here appears as grapeshot against a passive target; late Tolstoy finds attraction dangerous and seeks to reconceptualize love as multi-directional radiating. As Eugen Thacker writes in "Notes on an Impersonal Life:"

> For Tolstoy, reasonable consciousness entails a double refusal: a refusal of personality, of the ego, of psychology; and a refusal of the animal, of the organism, of biology. Reasonable consciousness is reflection on life that pulls apart life from human life, at the same time that the former absorbs the latter; the human life thinking life as non-human.

Like his intellectual hero Rousseau, Tolstoy believes that children naturally posses this love, a trust in and general goodwill toward all:

> True love always has at its basis a renunciation of individual happiness and the resulting goodwill toward all. True love toward certain people, your kin or strangers, can only grow from this goodwill toward all. And only this love provides the true happiness of life and solves the seeming contradiction of animal and reasonable consciousnesses. [Истинная любовь всегда имеет в основе своей отречение от блага личности и возникающее от того благоволение ко всем людям. Только на этом общем благоволении может вырасти истинная любовь к известным людям — своим или чужим. И только такая любовь дает истинное благо жизни и разрешает кажущееся противоречие животного и разумного сознания (PSS XXVI:391)].

If it is understood merely as the love of the animal personality, love only propagates isolation and struggle:

> Someone who stakes his life in the existence of his animal individuality cannot love because love would appear to him as an activity directly opposed to his life. Interestingly, deeds alone won't do. Tolstoy knows that moods and self-explanations are part of well-being. Even if someone who does not comprehend life really and sincerely wanted to devote himself to the activity of love, he would be unable to do so until he understands life and changes his attitude toward it. [Человек, который жизнь свою полагает в существовании животной личности, **не может любить**, потому что любовь должна представляться ему деятельностью прямо противоположною его жизни. Жизнь такого человека только в благе животного существования, а любовь прежде всего требует жертвы этого блага. Если бы даже человек, не понимающий жизни, и захотел искренно отдаться деятельности любви, он не будет в состоянии этого сделать до тех пор, пока он не поймет жизни и не изменит все свое отношение к ней. (PSS XXVI:391)].

The knowledge necessary for the emergence of the correct form of love is the recognition of the sameness in human condition. We cannot prefer individual people at the expense of others; we should love all, and only with this universal love in the background, can love of particular people flourish:

> People do not want to see that no existence, as an existence in the flesh, can be made more favorable than another, but it is a law, much as it is a law that you cannot raise

> the level of water in a lake higher than its general level. People who have corrupted their reason cannot see this, so they use their corrupted reason on a task as impossible as trying to raise the level of water at different spots on the surface of the lake. [Люди не хотят видеть того, что ни одно существование, как плотское существование, не может быть счастливее другого, что это такой же закон, как тот, по которому на поверхности озера нигде нельзя поднять воду выше данного общего уровня. Люди, извратившие свой разум, не видят этого и употребляют свой извращенный разум на это невозможное дело, и в этом невозможном поднимании воды в разных местах на поверхности озера — вроде того, что делают купающиеся дети, называя это варить пиво,— проходит все их существование. (PSS XXVI:396)].

As with the mill at the beginning of *On Life*, Tolstoy here naturally reverts to water metaphors.

The kind of love that is necessary for a meaningful life is sacrificial, active love: "There is no other love than "giving one's soul for the ransom of many." writes Tolstoy. "Love is only love when it is a sacrifice of the self" [И нет иной любви, как той, чтобы положить душу свою за други свои. Любовь — только тогда любовь, когда она есть жертва собой (PSS XXVI:924)]. This sacrifice of the self involves not only the renunciation of the animal individuality, but putting one's body in service of another: "Only when man gives to another, not only his time and effort, but when he expends his own body for the sake of the object of love, gives it his life—only this do we recognize as love, and only in this love do we all find happiness, love's reward" [Только когда человек отдает другому не только свое время, свои силы, но когда он тратит свое тело для любимого предмета, отдает

ему свою жизнь — только это мы признаем все любовью и только в такой любви мы все находим благо, награду любви. И только тем, что есть такая любовь в людях, только тем и стоит мир (PSS XXVI:392)]. Tolstoy here gives two examples of labor to illustrate the notion of serving with one's body—that of a mother, nourishing with her body, and a worker, laboring with his body for the nourishment of others.

For Tolstoy, therefore, the Hegelian "being-for-another" acquires a wholly new dimension. It does not involve only the sociality of our being and our mutual dependence for identity construction, but, with additional sacrificial undertones, it also becomes quite literally "being-for-another"—living and dying for others. Hegel is an ontological socialist, but he is also an ethical individualist. Tolstoy is neither. Tolstoy believes neither that we are entirely socially constructed, nor that morality is historically relative. Like Rousseau again, Tolstoy believes that we are fettered by our sociality; if these fetters are stripped away along with the "bad animality," we will reach a core that will be the same for all. This core is universally and unconditionally moral.

Late Tolstoy and Hegel's Ladder

In "Master and Man," Tolstoy shows that even someone as socially corrupt as Brekhunov can reach a universal core and that even in him this core is moral. But Hegel, as a phenomenologist rather than a moralist, refrains from ethical judgment. Instead he casts the master and slave dialectic as a necessary step (both individually and historically) on the ladder toward the formation of self-consciousness and its irregular but continuous growth. It is an experience that requires time—and only through the philosophical study of these social experiences can one continue climbing Hegel's ladder toward perfectible awareness. Tolstoy

places his ladder inward, and for the purpose of descending rather than ascending. What Tolstoy is after is a core consciousness, something closer to a soul than a self. Hegelian self-consciousness could never have been a desirable goal for Tolstoy—quite the opposite. It is in large part the source of the problem. Instead of striving toward self-consciousness, then, one should strive to rid oneself of the self in order to be one with the world through this universal "core consciousness." For this spiritual state Tolstoy would coin the term "reasonable awareness," razumenie.

This true and reasonable moral core, according to Tolstoy, is shared by everyone and is not gained gradually, as is Hegel's perfectible self-consciousness. For Hegel, life is a process of becoming; for the later Tolstoy, it is a state of being. While one's overall life experience can lead one to this core, its realization for Tolstoy usually happens through an unexpected event, a sudden confrontation with death; it is an epiphany, a kind of Augustinian revelation.

The suddenness and totality of Tolstoian transformations and unexpected illuminations—apparently out of character for the protagonist—will by some readers be seen as "unrealistic." Realist literature posits the gradual development

of a character based on accumulated experience. Tolstoy's contemporary N. K. Mikhailovskii, for example, claims that Brekhunov's final transformation is "too sudden a turnaround, too unmotivated an act—since only a short time before he was ready to betray and abandon the man to his fate in order to save himself" (Katz 455). Yet this suddenness of transformation is not a matter of verisimilitude. It is Tolstoy's philosophical claim about the truth of such transformations. The way to realize a internal, universal, and timeless core is to rid oneself of both time and the self in order to be at one with the timeless world. The process

of regaining this unity cannot itself be temporal. For Tolstoy, it is not so much a process of becoming that which we strive for, or learning from mistakes how to become better, but a state of being. In "Master and Man," therefore, Tolstoy is not interested in depicting a process of transformation that will prepare Brekhunov for his final selfless act, as Mikhailovskii thought would have been more plausible. The task, as Tolstoy sees it, is to place Brekhunov in a timelessness that will lead to a diffusion of the self. This is a difficult task, as narrative itself is a temporal art form: it unfolds over time. Although readers do witness a gradual transformation of the heroes, "Master and Man" is fundamentally not a temporal journey but a spatial one, a journey happening in some kind of phenomenological "now." The entire story is of an event that takes up only about twelve hours of Brekhunov's life.

Since the truth of the moral core shared by all humans is universal in Tolstoy's system, time has no power over it. Time, for Tolstoy, is another fetter of the finite world of sociality. And self-consciousness is fundamentally temporal: to be aware of a self is to be aware of that self as it changes over time. A self-consciousness occupied with the self, like Brekhunov's, is at almost any given moment either remembering the past or projecting itself into the future; it spends hardly any time in the present. A selfless consciousness, like Nikita's, constantly perceives the world as it is unfolding. It is grounded in the present. Such an active consciousness focused on immediate tasks would be the closest one could get to timelessness, to a universal "now." For Hegel, this is an almost pre-human state before the emergence of self-consciousness. For Tolstoy, it is the lost paradise that should be (and can be) regained.

For Hegel, developing self-consciousness is the homeland of truth. For Tolstoy, it is

its prison. But if for Tolstoy this truth can be freed from selfconsciousness and thus possessed by anyone; for Hegel, truth cannot belong to an individual subject; instead, it consists of the totality of movements that selfconsciousness undergoes, both as subject and as Spirit. So if for Hegel a human being is the instrument of truth through which truth manifests itself and alters the world, then this truth, being process, also changes as it changes the world. Change is what constitutes the necessity of a Hegelian world of progress; since finitude for him is the only infinity, change is the only unchangeable. For Tolstoy, truth cannot change. The unchangeable essence of human beings defies difference and time: this essence is timeless, and anyone can find it within himself or herself. For Tolstoy, truth is within the subject; for Hegel the subject is within the truth. Only by hyper-awareness (such as that possessed by a philosophical super-self-consciousness, like Hegel's own) can one observe not only the development of self-consciousness but of world history as a whole, discerning the truth in its movements. Tolstoy rejected this assumption. To him such a super-consciousness observed not necessity but futility. The truth is not found in the ways of the world but within oneself, beneath the surface of social conventions and individual personality. Hegel would claim that the observations of the "futility" of everyday existence are what makes wider realizations possible, and thus necessary. But surely Tolstoy would not agree.

Is Tolstoy's "Christian Love" Love?

My case for the cognitive value of love in Tolstoy's thought, a quest we find throughout Tolstoy's oeuvre, has been compassionate and nonjudgemental. I don't particularly condone his views on "proper" love. If anything, I find his position—his belief in

the radical necessity of universal love, and the difficulty achieving it—quixotic and unachievable. Like many scholars of Tolstoy (Berlin and Morson come to mind), I find myself marveling at the sheer scope of Tolstoy's project. He *must* answer every question, but the answer must always be the same. Berlin's words come to mind:

> No author who has ever lived has shown such powers of insight into the variety of life–the differences, the contrasts, the collisions of persons and things and situations, each apprehended in its absolute uniqueness and conveyed with a degree of directness and a precision of concrete imagery to be found in no other writer. No one has ever excelled Tolstoy in expressing the specific flavour, the exact quality of a feeling–the degree of its 'oscillation', the ebb and flow, the minute movements […] The celebrated lifelikeness of every object and every person in his world derives from this astonishing capacity of presenting every ingredient of it in its fullest individual essence, in all its many dimensions, as it were: never as a mere datum. (466)

Tolstoy sought, throughout his career, to resolve a conundrum: How can we achieve love for everyone, without exclusion, with all their "specific flavour," and leave no one behind, no remainder? By recognizing underlying radical sameness, we can come to love every living being.

As in Buddhism, we are supposed to think away our desires, become unattached and unattached, achieve peace, and just "radiate love." We also need to make this love active: We need to labor. We can love particular people, of course, but we can love them genuinely only if this love is grounded in universal love and benevolence. If this is the case, we love all particular people for that is what universal love implies.

This position of essentially kenotic love, of love "despite everything," is naturally

vulnerable. How real can love for anyone be if you love everyone? Tolstoy's position is easy to criticize and caricature. David Herman makes a lucid case against the mature Tolstoy's understanding of Christian love, correctly summarizing Tolstoy's position:

> True love for Tolstoy is about putting other people's needs ahead of your own, and thereby approaching selflessness. The twist is that the self of the other is just as great a threat to my ability to achieve selflessness as my own ego. Emotionally close contact with any other person inevitably inspires us to immoral reactions in Tolstoy: vanity or lust or condemnation of others, or any of a thousand bad acts. There is no way to be deeply and entirely virtuously aware of another person. Thus to become selfless, we need to shake free of all selves – our own and all others. We normally presume getting outside the self automatically means getting in touch with someone else; Tolstoy asks us to consider an alternative: that the goal might to get outside all selves, in touch with none, to an "empty space" where fullest virtue becomes possible.

Seen in this light, Tolstoyan Christian love is inhuman. As Herman (again, correctly) points out, "real" Tolstoy love implies a radical discounting of personhood, or individual subjectivity. "Caring about another is irrelevant; caring for another is all that counts." "True" Christian love "must be for the body of the victim, rather than other parts of the self, hence impersonal." Tolstoyan love is "preferably anonymous" and "administered quickly," to preserve anonymity and hinder "insight and the introduction of selves and personalities." Tolstoyan love is "aimed at relieving needs unquestionably needed rather than merely desired by the recipient." There is no Bakhtinian dialogue between subject and object; one never asks the other what he needs. Finally, love is "not aimed at relieving suffering; suffering is God-

given and meant to help sinners reform; love is only to preserve life, not to cure pain or misery."

We can see from Herman's attack that Tolstoyan universal love is open to at least two completely opposing interpretations. We can see it as a utopian enterprise. Tolstoy's overarching point is that if we all became love-radiating creatures, creatures who put others' needs above their own, we would all in turn be constantly "sunbathing in rays of love." According to Tolstoyan logic, if we all care only about our needs, our own well-being will be at odds with others' well-being, and no one's ends will be accomplished. In Tolstoy's ideal, quixotic universe, we will live in universal *misery*. If we care about everyone's needs but ours, if we act with complete self-oblivion, we will all be taken care of (maybe!), for surely everyone else caring about my needs will accomplish more than I alone can. We can all hope.

This interpretation yields a utopian picture of universal love and peace. But we can also see a dystopian picture, as Herman does, in which the project of universal love fails miserably because it finds no worthy objects and can be administered only when the object is near-death or for some other reason cannot answer back.

Tolstoy's position is indeed paradoxical. One way of grasping it is the hedgehog-fox problem: Tolstoy could not accept the degree of separateness and non-unity in the world. But, as a genius novelist, he knew all too well that "attending lovingly" to particulars takes immense effort and time. We cannot find the time and attention to cultivate love toward all those separate particulars. There are two ways out of this bind. One route is suggested by Herman: Trust yourself to love only those things that won't answer back.

Another route has been explored in this dissertation, and relies on Tolstoy's insistence that we are all, at base, the same. If that is the case, if the "hedgehog" is right and everyone's

nature is basically the same, then getting to know one body, one mind, is as good as the endless and impossible task of loving every particular person.

Falling off the Ladder

In the introduction to this dissertation, I drew attention to the problem of self-love, what Rousseau called *amour-propre,* that seems to haunt the periphery of every model for the cognitive value of love. In every case I examined, self-love was what needed to be overcome to gain knowledge of the world; Diotima explains that our self-love is what is first overcome by *eros*. Paradoxically, however, for thinkers like Kant, Rousseau, and even Schopenhauer, self-love was also the initiatory means by which we overcome our individuality and move toward knowledge of the world and love of others. Kant's formulation will serve as a generalization: our self-love cannot be separated from our need to be loved by others, and therefore, to achieve our goals, "we make ourselves an end for others."

There is a constant slippage, then, between "bad" self-love (bad because it is segregating, separating us from the "infinite" where we belong) and universal love. Perhaps it is always possible to fall down the ladder, even when the ladder is upside down, as Tolstoy suggests it might be. Herman takes issue with the late Tolstoy for doing exactly this, for falling off the ladder, when he writes that Tolstoy's "project of Christian love based on compassion, insight, and concern," morphs into "a new Christian project of self-absorbed self-Perfection." But placing love within the subject need not necessarily turn "active love" into selfish and self-absorbed enterprise. In Tolstoy's formulation, it cannot; this formulation is based on the desolution of the separation between subject and object. Many philosophers

have attempted to bridge this gap between subject and object. How does Tolstoy attempt it? He claims that the object of love is also within the subject. In "The Kingdom of God is Within You," Tolstoy writes:

> Christianity recognizes love of self, of family, of nation, and of humanity, and not only of humanity, but of everything living, everything existing; it recognizes the necessity of an infinite extension of the sphere of love. But the object of this [Christian] love is not found outside self in societies of individuals, nor in the external world, but within self, in the divine self whose essence is that very love, which the animal self is brought to feel the need of through its consciousness of its own perishable nature.

Understood correctly, placing the object of love within the loving subject does not lead to solipsism or the kind of self-absorbed love that Herman sees in Tolstoy. Rather, Tolstoy cleates a space for dialogue and recognition between what is inside and what is outside, a dialogue that desolves into radical sameness. If by loving someone I recognize that what I love is "divine essence of that very love," I see that same essence in the other: I approach them as a subject, and thus see sameness. What we can observe from this trajectory that Tolstoy is reversing not only Plato's ladder, but also Hegel's dialectic. If in Hegel, we start with sameness, which necessarily evolves into difference, in Tolstoy, we start with difference, which needs to reveal sameness. And, according to the late Tolstoy, we need to start with universal love and general benevolence to recognize this sameness.

Centrality of Love

As Gustafson argues, in Tolstoy the quest for love unites seemingly disparate periods and works. I have argued in this dissertation that, though Tolstoy's belief in the centrality of love as the essence of human condition continued on both sides of his spiritual crisis, his understanding of love, and the "way" leading to it, changed dramatically throughout his life. As Tolstoy revised his philosophy of love, his aesthetics changed accordingly. The purpose of this dissertation, then, was to trace and explain this trajectory.

Before his major personal crisis of the 1870s, what he called his "time of inner restructuring", Tolstoy attempted to follow a configuration of knowledge and love that largely conformed to the model laid out by Plato's "ladder" in the *Symposium*, "steps upwards," a path from concrete to abstract, from the love of a particular person to universal love. But Tolstoy repeatedly failed to arrive at the all-inclusive love that he sought, the love promised at the top of the ladder, *agape*. Though he tested various configurations of love and knowledge during the first half of his career, there was always an excluded remainder. Some people were left out, and his project of universal love was left incomplete.

In his early works, in particular the *Childhood* trilogy and "Lucerne," Tolstoy investigates how loving an object leads to what Bakhtin calls "aesthetic seeing." Such seeing allows the object to reveal itself, while simultaneously affecting the surveying consciousness as well. Nikolenka, the protagonist of *Childhood*, is depicted as an artist whose acts of seeing are, essentially, creative acts. His gaze reveals the "manifoldness of being," and therefore this gaze is, in Bakhtin's philosophical articulation, not only an aesthetic gaze, but also an ethical one. *Childhood* gestures at how to see something *correctly*.

In *War and Peace*, I've argued that we are granted access to certain characters' consciousness (Natasha's and Pierre's, for instance), and so we see them not as (mere) objects in Tolstoy's world, but as real subjects, endowed with a private, inner world of choice and deliberation. They are loved, "gazed at" aesthetically and therefore ethically.

This sort of seeing is a challenge to Kantian deontology. All moral failings, Kantian failures of duty, are always personal and intimate, so when we have access to the stories characters tell themselves about themselves (think here of Natasha's transgressions with Anatole, or Pierre's marriage to Hélène), there are no universals, no abstract "categorical imperatives." What, then, is real is not abstract duty, but stories, internal monologues. The author grants the reader special access to the internal world of those protagonists, those "heroes" who Tolstoy loves, and the reader is led to love them, and to contextualize their crimes and flaws and thereby forgive them.

The cognitive value of love lies in exactly this access to others' stories, to the inner world of others. Love and the knowledge it accesses is exculpatory, but it is also fundamentally discriminating: Like philia and storge, this kind of love can never be universalized. Just as Tolstoy's narrator in "Lucerne," we must choose whose internal world to access.

In *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy tries out a new configuration, one in which knowledge is primary. From knowledge arises love, though a different kind of love from the love of the author toward the hero in *War and Peace*. Tolstoy's quest for universal love leads him not only to a rejection of the family or nation as a main priority, but also to a revision of human subjectivity, epistemology, morality and the aesthetics of the prose forms. Aesthetics

necessarily reflects epistemology. How we know objects affects how we perceive them, and the way we perceive them is when we start in aestheticizing them.

One way to think of Tolstoy's crisis after *Anna Karenina* is to understand it, and more specifically *A Confession*, as a crisis in Tolstoy's model of love and its relationship to knowledge. In his attempt to achieve universal love through knowledge, in *Anna Karenina* and in *War and Peace*, Tolstoy runs aground, failing to reach the proverbial top of the ladder where lies *agape*. How much do you really need to know about a person or an object of study to love them (especially given the notion of the subject as in constantly development, and thus ever exceeding your knowledge)?

In chapter 9 of *A Confession*, Tolstoy asks: "What am I?" and he answers definitively: "A part of the infinite" [Что я такое?... часть бесконечного. (PSS XXIII:36)]. This statement is fundamentally ontological, it has to do with the individual's status, and it tries to draw lines that separates the world into categories, but it fails.[7] If we are part of the whole, then there can be no differentiation, no discrimination in our love. Like in Rousseau's social contract, the part belongs to the whole and the whole belongs to each individual part. Parts are undifferentiated, people are ultimately the same. (Tolstoy is already testing this idea when he talks about the "swarmlike life" of mankind in *War and Peace*.)[8]

[7] Irina Paperno discusses this aspect of A Confession in some detail, see p. 71-75. Paperno, Irina. "Who, What Am I?": Tolstoy Struggles to Narrate the Self. Cornell University Press, 2014.

[8] Miller, R. (2010). Tolstoy's peaceable kingdom. In D. Orwin (Ed.), Anniversary Essays on Tolstoy (pp. 52-75). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Late Tolstoy condemns most of his earlier creations. Seduction by art, the infection that takes place when the reader experiences the author's love for certain characters, no longer fits Tolstoy's worldview; it becomes, in fact, dangerous. Being infected by the author's love, the models for love and knowledge he had offered in earlier works like *Childhood* and *War and Peace*, and experiencing this love while reading, the reader might vicariously feel like he or she has fulfilled the demands of love. Such love will not be internally generated, however, and therefore it will be inauthentic, imitative, counterfeit love. It is what Tolstoy, in *What Is Art?* calls "insincere." Moreover, this vicarious love will be the wrong kind of love, the animal kind that prefers some to others, and the very love that Tolstoy denounces later in *On Life*.

Tolstoy's crisis and his subsequent search for "the meaning of life" stem partly from his response to this philosophical conundrum: how can we guarantee universal love, so that universal love is mandatory and "natural," if we insist that knowledge is the prerequisite for love, rather than the other way around? Tolstoy's solution is to claim that *all* can be loved as *all* can be known, precisely because individuality is a "superstition," and we are the same within the fetters of time, space, and particular sociality.

CONCLUSION

We can now return to our initial question: do we need to know to love, or do we need to love to know? Is love prerequisite for knowledge, or vice versa? Does love present an epistemological obstacle (an *auf sich* problem), or does it grant immediate and special access to the beloved object (an *an sich* problem)? Perhaps love is merely what results from knowledge and familiarity.

In this dissertation, these unequivocally philosophical questions about knowledge and love have become aesthetic questions as well. We need to treat love (or lack of love) as a means toward knowledge (or vice versa), but we also need to treat the love extended by the author to his (or her) hero. Such considerations then lead us to the question of love between reader and author, reader and character.

Moreover, Tolstoy explores the dynamic between love and knowledge in the content of his literary and non-literary works. This epistemological concern is ultimately moral, and its configuration directly affects his aesthetics, the overall form and genre of his works, as well as particular narrative techniques employed in these works. “In Tolstoy’s fiction there is only one plot event: all works embody and reveal the way to love,” writes Gustafson (205). “To Tolstoy the only perfection is love; the only sin, the lack of love, which is the “disassociation of people” (Gustafson 147). Epistemological questions lead to complicated and ultimately unlimited theoretical models that verge on cosmogony, a “totality explanation.” Tolstoy certainly treated them as cosmogonic.

AFTERWORD: SOME CLASSICAL CATEGORIES OF LOVE IN THE RUSSIAN TRADITION

Tolstoy's desire to start with divine love is very unusual. It is directly opposed not only to Plato's notion that *eros* is the necessary first step toward divine, universal, all-inclusive love, but differs also from the great theorists of love in the Russian tradition: Vladimir Solovyov (1853–1900), Vasily Rozanov (1856–1919) and Nicolas Berdyaev (1874–1948). To compare, let me consider the ways in which classical categories of love (*eros, agape, philia, storge, caritas*, etc.) relate to each other in the thought of these three philosophers of love. All three think that *agape* can be accessed only through another category of love directed toward particular embodied being(s), be it *storge*, *philia*, *eros*, or *caritas*. Each of these philosophers forms his philosophy by engaging with late Tolstoy, who by the 1890s had become an eccentric touchstone for Russian thought.

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Solovyov, Rozanov, and Berdyaev were all religious thinkers who strove to reconcile Western philosophical thought with their particular version of Christianity. Like Tolstoy, they found *agape* to be the most necessary kind of love for a meaningful life. They all agree that neither philosophy nor religion nor divine love can remain abstract and purely theoretical. It is hard to imagine anyone who thought it could. They sought a revival of idealist philosophy that would not only oppose materialist and positivist views, but would also integrate such views with a notion of divine love that would be accessible to embodied beings in their daily social practices. According to these thinkers, *agape* can be accessed only

through loving contact with other human beings, through *storge*, *eros*, and *philia*. But each philosopher differed on the relative importance of these classical categories of love.

Solovyov: *Eros* in Action

Berdyaev considered Solovyov's "On the Meaning of Love" and Plato's *Symposium* to be the two best studies of the topic of love "in world philosophy" (5). We started our investigation into Tolstoy's understanding of the role of love with Plato, so we will keep him in mind when treating Solovyov, who is both the earliest of our three thinkers and the most influential.

According to Andrzej Walicki, Solovyov's "originality and influence sprang from his ability to reconcile the ambitious attempt to create a philosophical system with the Russian intellectual tradition of reluctance to investigate 'purely theoretical' problems" (371). Theoretical philosophy, Solovyov always insisted, should be linked to religion and social practice; but only actualized love (*eros* in action) could reveal the philosophical significance of Christianity. Solovyov is chiefly responsible for what Mikhail Epstein calls the aspiration of Russian thought "to the personification of 'Sophia,' conceiving of wisdom as a person (and a female person at that) in order more fully to reveal the 'loving,' 'seductive' foundation of philosophy, its potential and even necessity of becoming an activity of loving understanding and action" (4). This, of course, follows Plato's steps in the *Symposium*, from the love of beautiful bodies to the all-inclusive love of concepts and ideas. But the abstract endpoint has been replaced with its symbolic incarnation. This representation of the ideal as a seductive female figure has several implications. Not only does it connect the end with the starting point, by referring back to the beautiful body, but also emphasizes its constant

presence: *agape* does not only start with, but is embodied in *eros*, as spirit is bound to the body.

Because these essentially spiritual concepts are rooted in corporeality, Epstein proposes a Russian "Philo-Sophia" that is opposed to a Western, more abstract "philosophy." All three Russian thinkers (Berdiaev, Solovyov, Rozanov) are engaged with "Philo-Sophia," an attempt to redirect attention back to the "forgotten" erotic source of life—philosophy, religion and art. Their shared project is an attempt to reclaim the spirituality of the body, to see the erotic as the gateway to the divine. This project began with Solovyov's Sophia as the unifier of human and divine worlds—or, as Judith Deutsch Kornblatt puts it, "a bridge from mundane reality to the spiritual world of beauty" (5).

Like the incarnation of Christ, Solovyov's Sophia offers a spirituality always grounded in reality, an intricate link between the transcendental and the empirical that never shies from the erotic. "Solovyov plays with the interaction of spirit and matter in Sophia," Kornblatt says, "just as he plays with the interaction of gender and the tension between religious philosophy and literary genres" with his "audacious combination of humor and mysticism, of sexuality and sacred vision, of fiction and spiritual truth" (11). Sexuality and sacred vision are necessarily linked for Solovyov: his Sophia, this "expressed or actualized idea," synthesizes in herself both *eros* and *agape*.

After a brief infatuation with positivism and utilitarianism during his years at Moscow University, Solovyov always aspired toward a synthesis between the divine and the erotic, between the idealistic and the materialistic. *Eros* had always been in his field of vision, especially after his "discovery" of Sophia. However, his later preoccupation with a refined definition of love and its vital importance for individual lives and human creativity is

probably connected with the break in his thought that occurs around 1883 and marks the transition to the second period of his intellectual development, a period that his biographer Evgeny Trubetskoi has called "utopian.[=]" As Walicki explains:

> The utopia to which Solovyov aspired was the unification of all the Christian churches, to be followed by the establishment of a theocratic Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. It was on behalf of this ideal that he attacked all forms of nationalism, rejected the Slavophile idealization of Orthodox Christianity, and condemned the persecution of national and religious minorities. (373)

How is this dream of unification and theocracy related to Solovyov's later writings on love? In this break with Slavophilism, traditional Orthodox Christianity, and nationalism, one can already detect the grounds of Solovyov's later rejection of love's subjugation to the interests of a group (be it family, nation, or human species). Solovyov propounds love's ability to connect humans with the divine through love's power of individuation.

The key text for understanding Solovyov's mature conception of love is his seminal essay "On the Meaning of Love" («Смысл любви», 1892), which Berdyaev had evaluated so highly. "On the Meaning of Love" challenges then popular Darwinian conception that procreation is the goal of sexual love. Solovyov opens his essay by speaking against the notion that sexual love makes individual human beings into mere means of reproduction. Solovyov claims to base his argument not only on idealistic conceptions, but also on the "facts of natural history" (19). Asexual reproduction, after all, is possible in nature. The division into sexes, according to Solovyov, can only be found in "higher organisms." The meaning of sexual love should thus be sought not in procreation, but in the essential properties of these higher species, for which the capacity of sexual attraction increases in

accordance with their stage of development. In human beings, sexual desire obtains maximal strength and significance, "uniting to the superlative degree the permanence of relations (as with birds) and intensity of passion (as with mammals)," while at the same time limiting the number of offspring. "Sexual love," claims Solovyov, "and procreation are related inversely… the stronger the one, the weaker the other" (20–21).

Solovyov engages evolutionary theories as well as thinkers such as Hegel and Schopenhauer, who explain the individuating power of love as a trick of the world spirit or of nature, which is aimed at achieving the continuation and perfection of the highest species. Solovyov argues, however, that often the most intense occurrences of love remain unrequited, and can even lead to celibacy or suicide. Procreation, on the other hand, often happens in the absence of love. The connection between love and procreation (between *eros* and potential *storge*) is therefore a false, or at least unnecessary, connection. Referring both to natural history and biblical narratives (Christ's conception and lineage independent of *eros*), Solovyov concludes that "strong individual love is never a mere tool for reproductive and familial ends" (28). Its positive meaning is instead grounded in the life trajectory of the individual.

Solovyov sees love as the peak of individuality in one's life, and individuality, for him, has independent significance. It is not a means for natural and historical processes, but an end in its own right. Due to the faculty of reason, an individual is capable of "infinite perfection" of its own consciousness as well as of the religious and scientific consciousness of humanity (29–30). In Solovyov's world, individuality does not stand opposed to the universal; quite the opposite, as Deutsch notes: "The more universal it is, the more individual it will be. Therefore, the absolutely universal entity will be an absolutely individual entity"

(8). By more individuation, for Solovyov, a human being gets closer to the Absolute; the path to universal love is through love of the individual. Love individuates, connecting the individual with the universal and eternal being of God ("On the Meaning" 31).

How does love achieve this individuation? Love of a particular other makes one step out of the "deceptive self-certainty" or "self-affirmation." The meaning and purpose of love, Solovyov tells us, is "the justification and salvation of individuality through the sacrifice of egoism" (32). But for for Solovyov, this process applies only to erotic love. Neither *storge* nor *philia* possess this power of individuation: "A mother who invests all of her soul into her children, sacrifices, of course, her egoism, but at the same time she loses her individuality and even if the mother supports individuality in the children, motherly love maintains and even strengthens egoism" (37).

Storge, with its sacrificial elements, fails to obtain the same individuating importance that *eros* achieves, and other kinds of love prove to be even more lacking. *Philia* lacks the formal differences and complementarity of (heterosexual) *eros*. In its particularly intense manifestations, according to Solovyov, *philia* turns into "an unnatural surrogate of erotic love" (37). As for patriotism and love of humanity, though important, they are never grounded in *eros*, and therefore are not vital and concrete enough to restrain egoism. For Solovyov, *eros* alone is capable of simultaneously individuating and connecting the individual to the divine.

Solovyov's "On The Meaning of Love," with its strong polemic against the connection between sexual desire and the propagation of species and their perfection, is directed not only against the evolutionary materialists and the German Idealists, but also against Leo Tolstoy, whose solution was to trick nature in return, and instead of being fooled

by desire, to use only sex for procreation. As Caryl Emerson points out, "Solovyov's great defense of eros in 'The Meaning of Love' is structured in part as a rebuttal of Tolstoy's 'Kreutzer Sonata'" (666).

Rozanov's "Family as Religion": *Storge* and *Eros*

Vasily Rozanov, in "Family as Religion," offers another response to Tolstoy's "Kreutzer Sonata." Like Solovyov, Rozanov, in "Family as Religion," treats erotic love positively, but only within the confines of family life. Arguing against the common reading of "Kreutzer Sonata" as a diatribe against marriage, Rozanov insists that it is instead an *affirmation* of marriage, but of marriage of a particular kind. Using Tolstoy's work as stepping stone, Rozanov proceeds to advance his own ideas about what constitutes "a sacred family." He writes: "The essence of pure marital union is perfect love" (132). For him, marriage is "sacred," a "religion"—but only when it is in "truth" and "in love." Without love and with deception, marriage becomes "a perversion" (132). For Rozanov, not just *eros*, but *storge* based on *eros* offers a gateway to the divine.

Marriage for Rozanov conquers death, and it does so not in the abstract but "in fact." By this he means that by having children, parents continue a material existence beyond their own lives and thus project themselves into eternity. "The mother dies for the infant, she is in him, and the brief portion of her personal existence she, naturally, sacrifices for the eternal (in the future) as well as for her own 'I'" (131). For Solovyov, eternity was best accessed precisely by the restriction of both procreation and the ego: "Sexual love and procreation are related inversely… the stronger the one, the weaker the other" (20–21). In Rozanov's

figuring of love, the exact opposite is true: it is only through procreation as an extension of the ego that immortality can be achieved.

Rozanov exposes the flaws and hypocrisies of religion which calls family "the abode of God," yet places sin (sexual attraction) at the core of the marital union. In this scenario, in traditional Christian concepts of matrimonial union, the image of God is left outside of the home, so to speak adjacent to it. Rozanov believes that a true understanding of marriage includes the divinity not only of sexual fertility but of sexual attraction, and would bring the image of God into the home, transforming it into God's temple. This requires a constant labor on the part of the married couple: "The art of living in a family consists of the constant elimination of the chaff from the wheat, which either enters from without or from within due to unhappy and sinful human nature" (131). Virtue (целомудрие), which is often associated with chastity, should not be detached from sexual contact. Quite the opposite. It is precisely women, Rozanov tells us, and not girls who exude religious light. For him, virtue, restraint and wisdom are even more needed in family life than in a solitary celibate existence. He writes that "the truth of gender and the soul of sexual attraction is not a perversion, but purity, virtue, and chastity, and, in the end, its highest ray is something religious" (132–133). Marriage for Rozanov does not destroy chastity, but rather extends and elevates it.

Sexual perversion, according to Rozanov, is caused not by the affirmation of erotic desire, but by its negation. Erotic desire finds its ethical home in the context of family and procreation. This fact was somehow unknown to both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, he remarks. Yet despite their ignorance, through their lives and works, these two great Russian writers still participated in creating what he calls the "religion of the family" (134).

Rozanov pleads with his readers to open their eyes ("будьте зорче") and see that "religion almost in all of its existent perfection springs from erotic love" (135). The examples Rozanov gives once again confirm that he is praising erotic love only within the context of family and procreation. To prove that religion comes from erotic love or gender, he points out that religion is "the prayers of fathers about their sons, of mothers—about their children; the prayers of children" (135). Every prayer, he claims, has eroticism at its foundation. As much as ascetic monks can be considered "earthy angels" or "heavenly humans," so too could a married couple or a parent rightfully claim proximity to God, precisely because religion stems from erotic love and its natural issue as family.

For Rozanov, there is no higher beauty than that of the religion of family. "If family is sacred, and family is based on erotic love, then isn't erotic love itself sacred?" he asks. In "Solitary Musings" ("Уединённое"), a work made up of fragments, Rozanov boldly claims that all asexual people are atheists: "The connection of 'sex' with God is more substantial than the connection of the mind with God, and even the connection of conscience with God – this follows from the fact, that all asexuals turn out to be atheists" (139).

Rozanov goes on to say that our "genitalia" are more important than "the brain." In "The Fleeting" ("Мимолётное"), another work structured around fragments and aphorisms, he continues to praise human sexual organs in quite paradoxical ways. He claims, for instance, that "copulation" creates a bond between people stronger than any familial relations of "father-son," "mother-daughter," and that touch itself is a sacred unity. He justifies this claim not by the experience of the unity itself, but by procreative potential. Despite Rozanov's fervent advocacy of family and procreation, he rages against the evolutionary theories of Darwin. The mouth is for kissing, he claims, and not for nourishment. "My

explanations are playful, I understand," he writes, "but it is no less possible to explain the universe by 'play' as by 'need'" (46).

Rozanov's sexual individualism complicates his celebration of procreation. Could his eulogies to erotic love and intimacy be applied to *eros* without *storge*? Or is *eros* necessarily always connected with *storge*? Did he trust deeply loving infertile couples? Can *eros* achieve its highest religious purpose only when carefully coupled with *storge*? Rozanov emphasizes the importance of *storge* that stems from *eros*; he sees the family life of procreation as the main route to the divine, even if other routes are possible. Since so many high profile Symbolist era "families"—really, couples—had no children or were even unconsummated, Rozanov is clearly launching a polemic.

Berdyaev and *Eros* as Free Creation

Nikolay Berdyaev's focus on existential freedom prompts him to condemn any kind of family, government, or religion that would restrict the freedom of the individual. "I strongly believe," he writes, "that God is only where freedom is." After flirting with Marxism and being arrested, Berdyaev moved away from revolutionary activities into the realm of "ethical idealism." He combined this idealism with existentialism, making the two main philosophical concerns of these movements—creativity and freedom—important leitmotifs of his works. His philosophy of love links these two domains together.

In his early essay "Metaphysics of Gender and Love" ("Метафизика пола и любви," 1904), Berdyaev criticizes the social sciences for ignoring the topic of love and sex—that is, *eros*, "the source of life, responsible for all human history" (232). Berdyaev praises Rozanov for turning his attention to the long-ignored topic; he sees Rozanov's project as ethically

valuable, but criticizes him for a lack of aesthetic restraint. For Berdyaev again, the aesthetic realm was extremely important and very much related to the role of *eros*. In "Metaphysics of Gender and Love," Berdyaev frames the topic of love in ontological and theological terms, by locating in love the secret of individuation and immortality.

There are several ways in which Berdyaev links *eros* with divine love. The immortalizing power of love is one of them. Another is the notion of intimacy. Berdyaev plays with expressions such as "the intimate question" («интимный вопрос»), referring to sex and intimacy as something secret, private, but especially precious to the subjects and thus sacred. Both love and religion share an aspect of intimacy for the subject; both originate in the subject and are actualized in the world. "The entire creation of culture," he writes, "is only the objectification, the generalization by the world of the subjectively-intimate, having happened in the hidden, mysterious depths" [Все творчество культуры есть лишь объективация, мировое обобщение субъективно-интимного, совершившегося в скрытой, таинственной глубине] (233). Both love and religion also break down the boundary with the other (чуждость). He considers literature a privileged space for the study of a philosophy of love, as the sciences have suppressed the topic and marginalized it into fiction.

Berdyaev's philosophy of love leads him to aesthetics and a philosophy of creativity. Let us consider the connection between creativity and love that Berdyaev posits. According to him, this is how *eros* is linked with *agape*. Not only is love a creative act in its own right, but creativity is also an act of love—and love of the erotic kind. In "The Meaning of Creativity" («Смысл творчества»), Berdyaev writes: "Eros is inseparably linked with creativity. And erotic unification takes place for the sake of creative ascent" [Также

неразривно связана эротика с творчеством. И эротическое соединение для творческого восхождения совершается] (2, 260).[9] Erotic energy is the source of creativity; thus, to understand the nature of creativity, one has to understand the nature of love. And love, for Berdyaev as for Bakhtin, is an attention-directing faculty, which yields knowledge; it is a creative act, as love "creates" the beloved object by means of attentive perception, thus adding knowledge to the object. Berdyaev writes: "In the creative act of love, the hidden truth of the beloved's face is revealed. The lover knows about the face of the beloved something the entire world is unaware of, and the lover is always more correct than the entire world" [В творческом акте любви раскрывается тайна творческого лица любимого… Любящий знает о лице любимого то, что весь мир не знает, и любящий всегда более прав, чем весь мир] (2, 250). Love is a creative act, since it sees the beloved in a special light and possesses a certain kind of knowledge, by which it creates the beloved object. Less obvious in the act of love, this aspect comes to the forefront in the creative process.

The free creation involved both in the act of love and the artistic process links both, through *eros*, to the divine love of God, *agape*. God creates the universe not out of necessity but as an act of free will and grace. Through this freedom, artistic creation connects to *agape*. Thus, through the creative process, *eros* reaches divinity. But *eros* also achieves this union with the divine through *caritas*, God's compassion for created beings. By the end of his writing career, Berdyaev found this connection between *eros* and *caritas* absolutely necessary. In his last work, "Self-knowledge" («Самопознание»), Berdyaev writes: "If erotic love is not connected with love-compassion, its results can be destructive and

[9] «Также неразривно связана эротика с творчеством. И эротическое соединение для творческого восхождения совершается» Бердяев Николай. Собр. Соч. Париж, 1985. Т. 2. Сю 260.

torturous. Eros intrinsically possesses cruelty, which it has to alleviate with pity, caritas" [Если любовь-эрос не соединяются с любовью-жалостью, то результаты её бывают истребительные и мучительные. В эросе самом по себе есть жестокость, он должен смиряться жалостью] (87). This cruelty links *eros* with Mars, the god of war. *Caritas*, on the other hand, brings *eros* closer to *agape*. This love-pity is contrasted with hedonistic love, which Berdyaev sees as prevalent in the works of Dostoevsky.

Continuing Solovyov's thesis in "The Meaning of Love" on the indivuating and immortalizing powers of Eros, but also considering the Eros of procreation, Berdyaev talks of two kinds of *eros*: "the heavenly" and the "earthly Aphrodite" of Christian Platonism. Berdyaev writes:

> Plato grasped with ingenious and divine power the difference between the heavenly Aphrodite and the Aphrodite of the common people, between the divine, personal love, leading to the individual immortality, and the vulgar, impersonally generic, natural love. In Plato's heavenly Aphrodite one already feels the breath of the Christian Eros, mysterious to this day, of the medieval romanticism and the deepest, of Vl. Solovyov possible only after Christ's teachings on love as the path to individual immortality. (Метафизика 237)

Having established the contrast between the individual and the generic, and rejected generic procreation and allotted a central role to the eternal feminine a central role, Solovyov, according to Berdyaev, "belongs to a new religious consciousness, approaches a new religious teaching about love, but does not reach the end" (Метафизика 238).

Berdyaev believes that earthly reproductive *eros* is involved in "bad infinity." It projects itself into the future, sacrificing the present moment without realizing that true

eternity is accessed in the present and from within the subject rather than stretched out in temporality. Like Kant, Berdyaev seems to divide the world into the noumenal and the phenomenal. Successive temporality for Berdyaev is a property of the empirical, phenomenal world. This "objectified world" presents such divisions as temporal succession and divisions into genders and into subject and object. He introduces the idea of "existential time," which unites the division of the "objectified world." This unity can be achived only through creative freedom. The creative powers of love allow the subject to break the boundary with the other, while remaining itself and even attaining more individuation. Through this act of love, the subject overcomes the law and necessity of the phenomenal world and obtains immortality: "Love is the window to eternity" (Метафизика 257).

"Berdyaev's world-view reflects many aspects of Tolstoy's," notes Gustafson, who compares Berdyaev's concept of the objectified world with Tolstoy's "being separated from the All, existing in the world of space and time, following the law of causality" (460). He also compares Berdyaev's notion of "existential time," with its "moments of eternity" now, with Tolstoy's "living in the present" with its "right-now" idea of time; and Berdyaev's creative freedom with Tolstoy's Divine Love and the Force of Life (460). Both thinks, Gustafson concludes, "share a theology of redemptive love. Both stress freedom but press it into the service of unity" (458).

Gustafson also connects Tolstoy's metaphysics of the All with Solovyov's metaphysics of unity:

> At first glance Tolstoy seems far removed from the recondite views of the sophiologists, but with them he shares a view of the world which is by nature good even when dominated by evil and at bottom always united with the

> Divine. . . . His images of nature are without exception sophiological. His understanding of the Force of Life, created and uncreated, we might say, resembles the sophiologist's Logos, which gives life to an assumed existing reality. Tolstoy shares with sophiology a panentheistic doctrine of God. (458)

Caryl Emerson points out other similarities between Solovyov and Berdyaev. Even though the two thinkers disagree on many matters, including the "ethics of nonviolence" and "the proper role of human sexuality," Emerson demonstrates that in certain areas, such as the relationship between art and love and even morality, their thought is compatible. Although Tolstoy would be appalled by Rozanov's discussions of sexual desire and intercourse, at most points of his life he would definitely share Rozanov's enthusiasm about the family, particularly its procreative element.

Tolstoy has both strong disagreements and surprising convergence with all three thinkers. Two of them were also in active polemic with "The Kreutzer Sonata." With this work in mind, we should turn to an earlier work by Tolstoy that in many ways anticipates "The Kreutzer Sonata"—"Family Happiness." "Family Happiness" describes the more positive (in Tolstoy's world) outcome to the family distress and jealousy presented in "The Kreutzer Sonata." It is illuminating to see how scenes from "Family Happiness" operate within the dynamics of Solovyov's theory that *eros* has the power to conquer egoism and "equalize" parties more justly than in other kinds of love, such as *storge*. And then we will consider how this contrasts with the same dynamic in "The Kreutzer Sonata."

Solovyov praises love for its power of individuation. It is valuable not because of its procreative potential, but because through the sacrifice of egoism, love (as a union of two equal, distinct, complementary beings) becomes the salvation of the individual, of course. In

Tolstoy there is not, of course, the individuating power of love described in Solvyov. For Tolstoy, individuality is not desired. As Berdyaev writes, "Tolstoy's Buddhistic inclinations" led him "to destroy everything that involved the personality" (*Dukhi russkoi revolutsii* 25). "Living for another"—leaving the ego behind—is what is required. Forgetting this and focusing on her own ego, Marya, the protagonist and narrator of "Family Happiness" destroys the unity between the spouses. *Eros* is condemned here too; the family salvation of Marya and Sergey Mikhailovich is their renunciation of sexual contact (Sergey Mikhailovich's inability of loving her "in that way" is implied in the text) and dedication of their energy to their children. The closing scene of happy parents playing with their son anticipates the familial utopia of the first epilogue of *War and Peace,* with the addition of ludic love. Tolstoy does not agree with Solovyov on the value of the individuating capacity of love, but agrees with him on the importance of love's capacity to free one of egoism. Tolstoy will not grant erotic love the place all three thinkers claim it deserves, but, like Rozanov, he values the procreative aspect of erotic love, accepting it only for this purpose.

Even though "Family Happiness" does not demonstrate the indiduationg power of love Solovyov praises, it demonstrates the dynamics of equality Solovyov ascribes to heterosexual love. When Sergey Mikhailovich first visits Marya and her sister, he treats her either as the child of a friend or a family acquaintance. But when the barrier between them begins to break down, she feels herself an equal in his eyes: "This was already not an old uncle, petting and teaching me, but a man *equal to me,* who loved me and feared me, and whom I loved and feared" (90) [Это был уже не старый дядя, ласкающий и поучающий меня, это был равный мне человек, который любил и боялся меня, и которого я

боялась и любила. This equality is, however broken with their marriage, when Marya admits having accepted her husband's power over herself.

Equality between the lovers is important, but what is even more important is the sacrifice of egoism. Retention of individuality is undesirable by Tolstoy, but Masha (importantly) does not feel supressed or exploited. When Marya begins to fall in love with Sergey Mikhailovich, here is how she describes her feelings toward him:

> It would happen that he would only think of giving me some advice and it would seem to me that I already knew what he would say. He would ask me, looking into my eyes, and his gaze pulled out of me the thought he wanted from me. All of my thoughts then, all of my current feelings were not mine, but his thoughts and feelings, which had suddenly become mine, had come into my life and lightened it up. Completely unnoticed by myself, I began perceiving everything with different eyes: I looked differently at Katya, at our people, at Sonya, and at myself and my occupations.

The center of gravity of Marya's perception has shifted; she has stepped out of herself to see the world and herself with the eyes of the beloved. The threshold between herself and the other has been crossed, and her consciousness has been lifted out of herself, exiting the egoism of autonomy and self-certainty.

There is something ethically positive about looking at oneself with the eyes of the beloved, Tolstoy suggests, but something ethically corrupt about looking at oneself with eyes of the crowd. This is first hinted at when Sergey Mikhailovich reprimands Marya for her inability to enjoy solitude. He tells her:

> "That's not good not to be able to tolerate solitude. Are you a lady? A bad

> lady, who is only alive while she is admired, but as soon as she is left alone, withers and cannot enjoy anything; because everything is for a show and nothing for herself?"

This is no longer empathy, caring, and openness to change and other perspectives on life; it is simple vanity. While in love with Sergey Mikhailovich, Marya has a fuller perspective on life complemented by that of her beloved. When out of boredom, she begins to attend balls, her perspective shrinks back on herself: she becomes utterly vain. She says:

> I was so clouded by this sudden, as it seemed to me, love to me from everyone around, by this air of luxury, pleasure and novelty, which I breathed here for the first time, that suddenly his [her husband's] domineering moral influence diasapeared here – so pleasant it was for me in this world not only to reach him but to overcome and exceed him, and love him even more for that and more independently than before, that I could not understand that it might be unpleasant for him to see me in society. I was experiencing a new feeling of pride and self-assurance, when entering the ball, I felt all the eyes directed at me, and saw him, as if ashamed of accepting his possession of me, hurry to leave me and get lost in the crowd of suits.

She loses the sense of equality that had already been tilted. She begins to ignore his perspective.

A Few Last Words

The Russian philosophical tradition takes self-conscious pride in its non-traditionalism, in its departure from European traditions. Modern Russian thought concerning

the relationship between love and knowledge makes no departures from this non-tradition, yet Berdiaev, Solovyov, and Rozanov all agree, more or less following the European tradition, that *agape,* universal love, is something one achieves, a love that is subsequent, always arising as a result of earlier love. In this locating of *agape* at the top of the ladder, of course, Russian philosophy never dismounts from Plato's ladder.

This positioning of *agape* as *telos* in the Russian tradition reveals Tolstoy's configuration of the cognitive value of love all the more striking in its originality. His design, at least in his later works, in which universal love and universal brotherhood requires the recognition of a kind of generalized, unchanging subjectivity, in which all are always and everywhere ultimately undifferentiated, allows Tolstoy to make *agape* both universally accessible, and universally imperative, and a starting point rather than an achievement.

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