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The critical spectrum on Lev Tolstoj is broad, ranging from E.N. Kuprejanova's (1966) view of him as an orthodox Enlightenment thinker to Richard Gustafson's (1986) Russian orthodox theologian. The one point about Tolstoj on which contemporary critics agree is nature's role as a moral standard. Gustafson (ibid.: 212) speaks for everyone when he calls nature "the privileged place in his [Tolstoj]'s] fictional universe". Gustafson has a Christian explanation for this fact. According to him (ibid.: 212-213), Tolstoyan nature is "the emblem of God's life in this world" and nature description in Tolstoyan fiction consists of "moments of the recognition and reception of God's gift of life" (ibid.: 446). Kuprejanova (1966: 119), on the other hand, traces the importance of nature for Tolstoj to Eighteenth Century philosophy. Despite this fundamental difference, Gustafson would concur with Kuprejanova (ibid.: 119) that "nature always remained for him [Tolstoj] the natural [estestvenaja] medium and metaphysical substance of mankind."

Without denying that Tolstoj loved nature all his life, I would challenge the validity of the belief that it remained the highest standard for morality even in his old age. I would maintain instead that the evolution of Tolstoj's thought eventually forced him to replace nature with rational consciousness as the final arbiter of morality. This demotion of nature did not give him joy. He did not loudly proclaim it as he had his religious conversion. He did acknowledge it, however, where it mattered most, in the great fictional works of his old age. One of these works, Chadži-Murat, is the subject of the present paper.

As the last of Tolstoj's Caucasian stories, Chadži-Murat cries out for comparison with its predecessors. (They are "The Raid" [1852], "The Woodfelling" [1852-54], "From Caucasian Reminiscences: the Demoted Officer" [1853-56], "The Snowstorm" [1855], the fragment "A Journey to

Mamakai-lurt" [1852], The Cossacks [1861], and "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" [1871].) Like them, it takes up the relation of man and nature, in Philip Rahv's words, "the inviolable rhythm of nature and human destiny" (1971: 227). It differs from them in its emphasis on the writer-narrator and how he came to write his work. The writer-narrator not only speaks in his own voice to begin and end his tale, thus structuring it in the most obvious sense; he generates its inner structure as well, with its bold juxtapositions of scenes and characters. The reader remains aware throughout of the writer-narrator who uses the so-called peepshow method to unite such disparate characters and milieus (Christian 1969: 244-245; Evnin 1960: 393). The brevity that this method allows and demands, just the fact that Chadži-Murat says so much in so short a space, draws our attention to the master shifting scenes behind the stage.

It is important to establish at the beginning that this writer-narrator is not Tolstoj himself. A.P. Sergeenko convincingly describes how the example of the battered thistle which provides the work's framing anecdote and then the memory of Chadži-Murat's heroic last stand jolted Tolstoj out of a period of depression (Sergeenko 1983: 14-17). V.A. Tunimanov links Chadži-Murat's escape from the Russians with Tolstoj's own final flight from Jasnaja Poljana (1984: 31-32; also, Šklovskij 1967: 559). I would go even further than these two and agree with Alexander Fodor (1984: 118) that Tolstoj and his readers, past and present, feel a kinship with Chadži-Murat as the "embodiment of that free spirit, volja, of which the Russians have an immense appetite". It is significant, however, as both Sergeenko (1983: 61) and Tunimanov (1984: 31-32) agree, that Tolstoj cuts from his account of his own encounter with the thistle precisely and only the lines which reveal its personal effect on him. — "That's what's needed! That's what's needed" (Tak i nado! Tak i nado!). It may be that Tolstoj's circumstances — like those of his Soviet readers — made him identify first with the presumed intensity of the thistle, and then with the courage and volja of Chadži-Murat. Tolstoj, however, is not simply identical with his narrator. It is an essential part of Tolstoj's objectivity that he allow Chadži-Murat to manifest the full charm of volja (the "energy and force of life" of the thistle), but the same objectivity requires that his writer-narrator resist that charm. Hence the excising of tak i nado.

Early on Tolstoj freed his work and its narrator to grow beyond a simple rebellion against his own personal circumstances. Chadži-Murat is not, as many critics hold, an implicit attack on Tolstoj's own theories of passive resistance, nor is it, as others claim, a return to an earther nature from his later asceticism. Instead, as this study will contend, Tolstoj's last Caucasian tale corrects his earlier ones in the light of his later philosophy, which his writer-narrator represents. The work, however, is most certain-
ly not an exercise in dogmatic philosophizing. Like Tolstoj’s earlier masterpieces, it makes its case through images and through structure.

What follows is not intended as an exhaustive treatment of Chadži-Murat. I do not discuss the court life of Nikolaj I and the Voroncovs or, for that matter, 'Samil’, and hence I do not do full justice to Chadži-Murat’s positive role as noble savage in a corrupt world. I will concentrate instead on a less obvious but equally fundamental comparison: that of the narrator and his epic hero. This approach both elucidates the peculiar structure of Chadži-Murat and lays bare the author’s concealed subordination of nature to rational consciousness in the work.

Chadži-Murat is made up of two parts: the story of the title character and an introduction and closing which frame it. The narrative for the most part preserves the calm, the "sense of moderation" (čuvstvo mery) which Tolstoj so admired in the Homeric epic.1 Even when the narrator speaks in his own voice, the voice of the Tolstoyan moralist, he does so in brief asides which do not much disturb the flow of the narrative.2 In the frame, the narrator steps to the fore to place before his reader the "vital, as yet unresolved question"3 which his epic dramatizes.

The frame has a plot of its own. The narrator, while gathering a bouquet, comes upon a thistle flower, called tatarin (Tartar), which proves very difficult to pick. Its unexpected resistance impresses him:

"But really, what energy and force of life," I thought... "How vigorously it defended its life and how expensively it sold it" (35: 5-6).

Turning homeward, the narrator crosses a ploughed field. The ploughing had been well done and nowhere in the field was a single plant or blade of grass to be seen – everything was black.

"What a destructive, cruel being is man, how many varied living things and plants does he destroy to sustain his own life," I thought, involuntarily seeking for something living in the midst of this dead black field (35: 6).

The ploughed field belongs to a gentryman. This accounts for its enormous size and the impression of desolation that it inspires. Yet even if the Christian anarchism and small scale agriculture favored by Tolstoj had prevailed, man would still have to destroy other living things to feed himself. The writer-narrator’s presentation of the vitality of the thistle and of human beings seems inconsistent. Human energy has devastated this field, but it has done so "to sustain [...] man’s] life". How is this funda-
mentally different from the struggle of the thistle to live? In the plant the writer-narrator praises what he appears to lament in human beings.

Now the writer-narrator comes upon a tatarin that stands alone, mangled but still alive in the field. Once again he exclaims at the vitality of this plant. Not only its name – Tartar – but the whole situation conjures up for him the story of Chadži-Murat which he had heard in his youth.

The writer-narrator’s encounters with the tatarin recall Chadži-Murat to him and infect him with the Caucasian warrior’s “energy and force of life”. He undertakes with his “certain Caucasian story” to infect his reader with the same feeling. (The term "infect" [zaražnet] is Tolstoj’s own, of course, from What is Art?) But the narrator’s and hence the reader’s admiration for Chadži-Murat will not be unbounded. The warrior’s vitality is problematic, and the writer-narrator intends in his epic to illustrate its bad as well as its good consequences for human society.

Tolstoj himself applied the term “peepshow” not to the juxtapositions of scenes indeed characteristic of Chadži-Murat, but to the appropriate method of depicting his main character:

13) How good it would be to write a fictional work to show clearly the fluidity of man, that he, while remaining one and the same, is now a tyrant, now an angel, now a wise man, now an idiot, now a strong man, now the very weakest being [...] 16) There is a kind of toy called an English peepshow – now one thing, now another appears under the glass. This is how I should present the man H-M: as husband, as fanatic and so on (3/21/98; 53: 187-8).

The famous device of the peepshow represents Tolstoj’s solution to the problem of how to depict “the fluidity of man” in the person of Chadži-Murat. Thus in but one example the text emphasizes the abruptness of Chadži-Murat’s switch from playfulness toward the younger Voroncov’s stepson – playfulness genuine enough to win the heart of little Bulka – to the stern dignity that he displays when Voroncov himself enters the room (VI, 35: 31). To the extent that this changeability governs Chadži-Murat’s behavior, he is a different man depending on the situation. What is one to make of the "good nature" (dobrodlušie) of the man who eventually orders the slaughter of his Cossack escort? The Russians and for that matter the reader may suspect Chadži-Murat of wearing his friendly expression as a mask to hide his ruthlessness. But they would be mistaken. Chadži-Murat has many faces. He can be as sweet as his follower Eldar, or as hard as his follower Gamzalo. With a discreet nod to romanticism, Tolstoj under-
lines the variability of his hero's character by making his followers represent different sides of their leader's personality.

The fluidity of Chadži-Murat's character is the direct expression of nature in him. It is the "energy and force of life" which informs both the thistle of the didactic tale and the human beings who trample it. This elementary manifestation of nature in human beings fascinated Tolstoj from *Childhood*, his first work, in which he defined the physical energy of childhood as "innocent gaiety" (*nevinnaja veselost*) on through *Chadži-Murat* and other works of his old age.

The life of Chadži-Murat is not entirely fluid, however. It is governed, formed by laws. The first of these, beyond the physical laws that govern all matter and the law of self-preservation, is the natural law of self-love, which is necessary for self-preservation. D.S. Merežkovskij (1902: 17 and passim) was the first critic to comment extensively on the visceral self-satisfaction of Tolstoj's characters, and it has since become a commonplace in the literature. Taking this view of Tolstoyan psychology, Merežkovskij considered Daddy Eroška of *The Cossacks* to be the archetypal Tolstoyan character, because most self-absorbed, self-reliant and earthy (ibid., 13-15).

This definition of man's natural state Tolstoj carries over from his early to his later work on the Caucasus. There is a hidden reference to *The Cossacks* in a scene in *Chadži-Murat* crucial for understanding the role of nature and the natural in it. Butler, a young Russian officer, admires the Caucasian mountains from his porch:

The sun had already come out from behind the mountains, and it hurt to look at the white stuccoed cottages illuminated by it on the right side of the street, but then, as always, it was cheerful and calming to look to the left, at the retreating and rising black mountains covered with forest and at the frost-coloured chain of snowy mountains visible from behind the ravine, trying as always to look like clouds.

Butler looked at these mountains, he breathed deeply and rejoiced that he was alive and that it was precisely he who was alive and living on this fine earth (XVIII, 35: 81).

Butler is the character in *Chadži-Murat* who most resembles Olenin in *The Cossacks*. The mountains at which Butler gazes are the same as those which fascinate Olenin and they mean much the same for both young men. What Olenin discovers on his journey to the Caucasus is the real world, whose massiveness and concreteness the mountains represent. In this reality is his own self, previously obscured by an excessive concern with the opinions of others, an overdeveloped vanity. The scene in *Chadži-Murat* under discussion recalls Olenin's reactions to the moun-
tains (6: 13-14, 43, 88). The mountains so overwhelm Olenin that his very consciousness becomes an interplay of objective (a gory) and subjective. In Chadži-Murat, however, Tolstoj emphasizes the natural egotism of the youthful observer.

The account of Butler’s response to the mountains underlines his profound self-absorption. The description is concrete, so much so that the reader seems to see the mountains with Butler: but this Tolstoj achieves by giving us the scene entirely from Butler's perspective. The sun hurts Butler's eyes (bol'no). The mountains do not really retreat and rise, of course; nor do they pretend to be clouds. They merely seem to Butler to do these things. It is significant that Butler's perceptions of the mountains are so true to human perception in general that we hardly notice that they are poetic. Language itself reflects the natural egotism of human beings. The mountains make Butler relax and rejoice (veselo i uspokoitel'no) because of a meaning that he, and human consciousness in general, assign to them. The mountains—nature—seem to support and even expand the sense of self that each of us feels.

There are other places in Chadži-Murat where nature appears entirely from the limited perspective of one individual. These usually brief descriptions accompany scenes which further the plot in some way. The scene under discussion, however, exists only to reveal Butler's (appealing and natural) self-love, and to show how that self-love makes Butler love nature. Inasmuch as our physical being—our particularity—comes from nature, it is understandable that Butler feels more alive in the massive physical presence of the mountains. But the fact is, of course, that nature does not reciprocate Butler's affection for her. Elsewhere in the text, as, for instance, in the ironic juxtapositions of the nightingales' love song and the different stages of Chadži-Murat's final flight, nature reveals herself as indifferent to the fate of any one individual. So in another sense Butler makes a mistake in this scene, but it is a mistake inherent to human nature.

The mountain scene in Chadži-Murat reflects a new reservation about the usefulness of nature as a moral standard, a reservation anticipated in What is Art? (Sergeenko [1983: 17, 28-30] emphasizes the strong connection between What is Art?, written in 1897-1898, and Chadži-Murat.) There Tolstoj argues for the separation of the beautiful and the good. Beauty, he says, is only what we like, while the good is the metaphysical basis of all else, including reason. Petr Struve (1921: 5-14), writing in 1908 and 1910, realized the consequences of this new doctrine. As a result of it, he claimed, Tolstoj forsakes the "God-Nature" who presided over the creation of such works as The Cossacks. Struve exaggerates the extent of Tolstoj's estrangement from nature. One can say this much, however. Nature, still the highest expression of beauty, loses moral
authority to the extent that beauty and the good no longer necessarily agree.

In the fifties the narrator of "The Raid" had proclaimed nature to be "the most direct expression of beauty and good" (VI; 3: 2). It provides a standard of harmony which, if man would only adopt it, would put an end to war. In Chadži-Murat nature is still harmonious, still potentially a guide (up to a certain point) for human behavior, but nature in human beings prompts them to interpret it as merely a support for themselves. Nature is beautiful and seductive — "what we like" — for this reason. Thus in Chadži-Murat Butler's poetic appreciation of nature is presented as ultimately self-serving ("He rejoiced that he was alive and that it was precisely he who was alive...").

In human beings nature expresses itself as self-love, self-absorption, love of life as one's own life. Tolstoj no more condemns this elementary fact of human life in Chadži-Murat than he does in War and Peace or The Cossacks. He pays tribute to Chadži-Murat to its enduring importance for his work in the little tale of the misplaced pipe. This is another hidden reference to the Caucasian war stories of the fifties, this time to "The Woodfelling". In the earlier story, a soldier named Velenčuk is fatally wounded on the retreat from the woodfelling, this and another detail (a heavy sleep which makes him late for the expedition) seem to have anticipated his death. The pipe, while solidly planted in the substratum of the text, clearly symbolizes Velenčuk's vital energy, about to be snuffed out. In Chadži-Murat the non-commissioned officer Panov finds himself without his pipe on watch duty. The ill-fated soldier Avdeev, who, like Velenčuk, will suffer a fatal wound during a woodfelling, fashions a pipe for him out of the non-com's pipestem, which he does have with him, and a hole in the ground, which will replace the missing bowl. The story of Panov's pipe, especially because of the link between Avdeev and Velenčuk, has the same symbolic undertones in Chadži-Murat as in "The Woodfelling".

At the same time, the use to which Tolstoj puts Panov's pipe reflects the lowered status of mere vitality — nature — in the later work. In Chadži-Murat, smoking (like drinking) consoles the soldier by distracting him from thoughts about his real situation. So it is with Avdeev. He gets to smoke the contraption he had devised and, after a gloomy conversation, he proposes another smoke. Smoking diverts his attention from painful thoughts of his wasted life to an absorbing bodily satisfaction. Animal vitality overpowers the voice of reason in him.

In "The Woodfelling" Tolstoj heightens the pathos of Velenčuk's death by portraying him as a man of exemplary virtue — "simple-hearted, good, extremely zealous [...] and extremely honorable" (II; 3: 44). Velenčuk is a precursor of Platon Karataev in War and Peace, a kinship in part traceable
to their common prototype, Socrates. Thus Tolstoj illustrates Velenčuk's ancient virtue – his love of justice – in the one anecdote that he chooses to tell from his life (the story of the stolen cloth, related below). Velenčuk's deathbed scene, in which he takes care to settle his debts and conspicuously does not make any religious gestures, clearly recalls Socrates' death in the *Phaedo*, in which, as his last act, he commands his followers to pay his debt to Asklepios. Only after Velenčuk has settled his accounts does he allow himself to cry out in pain, surrendering to his physical distress. If Velenčuk's love of justice and his physical vitality are not the same, neither do they conflict with one another here. And earlier on, before his wounding, Velenčuk's merriment and vitality, like that of Platon Karataev, are wholly at the service of his regiment.

Avdeev too is a good man, who has voluntarily entered the army in place of his elder brother. But Avdeev frequently regrets this sacrifice. It is in order to banish thoughts of his earlier, happier life that he suggests a smoke during the watch (II; 35: 15). On a previous occasion the same sad thoughts had led him to spend on drink company money entrusted to him (II; 35: 14). Avdeev's misconduct brings together and contrasts with two details from Velenčuk's life. Velenčuk's ominous deep sleep was not the result of drink, he reassures his officer (who, with the reader, believes him); and when Velenčuk, a tailor, has cloth worth seven rubles stolen from him, he borrows in order to repay his customer five rubles and later tries to give him the rest (II; 3: 44-45).

Avdeev's deathbed scene sums up the difference between him and Velenčuk. Avdeev first affirms the validity of his sacrifice for his brother. He then asks Panov whether he has found his pipe. Like his message of repentance to his family, this inquiry simply expresses his concern for others. Velenčuk's death had been consistent with his life inasmuch as he manifested the same love of justice then as he had earlier. Avdeev is more purely virtuous at death than in life. This is precisely because his vital forces are ebbing away. Avdeev first appears in the text as a "vigorous, merry voice" (*bodryj, veselyj golos*; II; 35: 12). His father remembers him as "deft, clever, hardy and, most of all, hard-working" (VIII; 35: 38). At his death he cannot even hold a candle in his hands. Now his concern for Panov's pipe must be simply disinterested; and indeed he shortly turns to a very different source of heat and light, a candle. (This evocation of Christianity is surely in deliberate contrast to Velenčuk's pagan "clear, calm gaze" of death in "The Woodfelling".) At death Avdeev leaves his vitality, and with it his self-love, behind him. He is more capable of self-sacrifice without it.

Self-love – nature – cannot by itself furnish a moral code to regulate behavior in human society. It may, as we have just seen, impede such behavior. And it may even foster immorality.
This point emerges in Chadži-Murat when Tolstoj rewrites a sequence from "The Raid" (1853). There a young corporal, hearing squeals in the raided village, had thought that the cossacks were murdering a child. Horrified, he had rushed to the child’s defense, only to discover the soldiers preparing to slaughter a goat (IX; 3: 35). In Chadži-Murat, a column of soldiers on their way to raid a village encounter a pair of wild goats: "[...] several soldiers with shouts and guffaws ran after them, planning to spear them with their bayonets," but the goats bound off (XVI; 35: 76). In "The Raid", the cossacks, momentarily interrupted, will presumably have their feast. In Chadži-Murat the goats escape, but the soldiers murder a child during the raid that follows. In both works, early and late, it is natural to kill and eat animals, and unnatural to kill human beings. But the brief goat hunt resonates very differently in Chadži-Murat than does the little vignette in "The Raid". The cossacks in "The Raid" kill a goat, not a child. The soldiers' merry chase in Chadži-Murat prefigures the death of Sado's son, speared in the back by a bayonet. And Chadži-Murat's killers stand over him conversing merrily, "like a hunter over a dead beast" (XXV; 35: 117). In nature, where "honorable battle" (battle for the sake of self-preservation) is the norm (Diary, 7/19/96; 53: 101), the prohibition against killing for its own sake, out of high spirits, would seem to be very weak. As if to emphasize this last point, the connection between killing and eating the prey is weaker in Chadži-Murat than in "The Raid".

Having said this, we must stress that Tolstoj believes with his mentor Jean-Jacques Rousseau that human beings are naturally good, if only in the sense that they intend no evil to others. Only the reciprocal growth of reason and the passions, the growth that propels human beings out of the state of nature, makes them actively want to hurt one another. Caucasian warriors, Chadži-Murat among them, have, strictly speaking, left nature behind them. Right up to the events which comprise the subject of the novella, Chadži-Murat has made war and pursued glory with full confidence in his success (IV; 35: 24). To the extent that love of honor and glory have guided his behavior, he is a creature not of the natural but of the savage state of human development. Rousseau had written as follows on the origins of honor:

As soon as men had begun to appreciate one another, and the idea of consideration was formed in their minds, each one claimed a right to it, and it was no longer possible to be disrespectful toward anyone with impunity. From this came the first duties of civility, even among savages; and from this any voluntary wrong became an outrage, because along with the harm that resulted from the injury, the offended man saw in it contempt for his person which was often more unbearable than the harm itself. Thus,
everyone punishing the contempt shown him by another in a man-
ner proportionate to the importance he accorded himself, venge-
ces became terrible, and men bloodthirsty and cruel. This is
precisely the point reached by most savage people known to us
(ibid., 149-150).

It is not difficult to see in this description the life of Lukaška in The Cos-
sacks or of the Caucasians in Chadži-Murat. (Caucasian life is compi-
cated by the addition of religious fanaticism to the bloody stew.) In The
Kingdom of God is Within Us (1890-1893), Tolstoj refers to this as the
pagan period of human history, when men saw the necessity of subordi-
nating the needs of the individual to the group, but still conceived of
the group as merely a collection of individuals. For this reason considera-
tions of honor, not self-sacrifice, governed the conduct of the group (28: 70).

Note how, in Rousseau's description, the first morality ("the first
duties of civility") and the first deliberate cruelty accompany one another.
The moral code of honor prompts both new respect for each and venge-
gance should any be wronged. The self-awareness and comparisons
made possible by a developing reason inflate natural self-love into a love
of honor and glory. Chadži-Murat exemplifies both the straightforward
morality and the straightforward love of honor of the savage man. Since
all characters in Tolstoj's world live by the laws of self-love, it is appro-
priate that he should name his work after this character. His is self-love in
its period of glory.

Despite Rousseau's characterization of this period of human history as
"bloodthirsty and cruel", he goes on to call it "the veritable prime of the
world" (ibid., 151). It is more problematic for Tolstoj. As always in his
relations with Rousseau, he is more concerned with morality than his men-
tor. The combination of freedom and society characteristic of the savage
state suffices for Rousseau because it so conduces to human happiness
(Rousseau 1964: 151). But for Tolstoj, all is not well at the gates of Eđen.
Reason has led men out of the forest but not clearly revealed their moral
duties to them.

Rousseau says that the basic social unit among savages is the family
(ibid., 146-47). This holds true for Chadži-Murat and his world. Loyal-
ties to kin are unshakeable, and other connections are assimilated to family
ones. Friends call one another brothers, and consecrate their friendships
by becoming brothers through ritual. Chadži-Murat's bond to the sons of
the Khan is particularly strong because his mother nursed the oldest son
(XI; 35: 50). His devoted servant Chanefi becomes his "brother" by suck-
ing at the breast of Patimat, Chadži-Murat's mother (XII, 35: 56). In the
dramatic climax of the work, Chadži-Murat demonstrates his loyalty to his
family by fleeing to the mountains in order to save them. He had earlier
joined the Russians to escape Samil'. Expecting fortune to favor him this time as it has done before, he at first dreams of revenge against Samil' and glory for himself (IV, 35: 24). Yet when he finally decides to abandon the Russians, he deliberately turns his back on "glory, rank, wealth" (XXII; 35: 101). In so clearly spurning his own self-interest, and even risking his life, Chadzi-Murat seems willing to sacrifice himself for others, and hence to overcome self-love to the extent necessary to preserve the family.

As Tolstoj argues, however, and as Rousseau would probably agree, we love our families, especially our children, so intensely because we mistakenly consider them an extension of ourselves.\(^{12}\) (Patriotism, which depends on the same psychological process, spreads self-love too thin [The Kingdom of God is Within Us, 28: 82].) Chadzi-Murat demonstrates the connection between love of family and of self in the reveries that precede his final flight. First he recalls how his mother almost lost her life by opposing his father's wish that she nurse the Khan's second son instead of the newborn Chadzi-Murat. This sacrifice of the parent for the child in turn summons up memories from early childhood, first of his mother and grandfather, and then of his own simple impressions:

He remembered the fountain near the mountain, where he, holding on to his mother's trousers, would go with her for water. He remembered the skinny dog who would lick his face, and especially the smell and taste of smoke and sour milk, when he followed his mother into the shed where she milked the cow and cooked the milk. He remembered how his mother shaved his head for the first time and how, in the shining copper basin hanging on the wall, he saw with amazement his own round bluish little head (XXIII, 35: 105).

Smells, tastes, a boy's first glimpse of himself with a shaven head, and hence probably his first moment of self-consciousness:\(^{13}\) this is the ineradicable, subrational, completely particular stuff of individuality, which Tolstoj celebrates from his very first works. As he has gone in memory from his mother and grandfather to himself, Chadzi-Murat now moves directly from himself to his own son Jusuf. ("And, having remembered himself when he was little, he remembered also about his beloved son Jusuf, whose head he himself had shaved for the first time.") He thinks of his last meeting with the youth, and of how Samil' has threatened to gouge out his eyes. This thought catapults him into action. He springs to his feet and gives the order to set the escape in motion. He has experienced the threat to his son as one to himself, and he acts accordingly.

This identification of oneself with one's family is fine as far as it goes. (In his diary Tolstoj writes that family life is a step down for someone
leading a spiritual life, but a step up for someone leading an animal life
[5/15/95; 53: 31].) Morality for Tolstoj, to the extent that it is based on
compassion, depends on just such a process of identification. The problem
with Chadži-Murat and savage or pagan man in general is that the identi-
fication with others does not extend far enough. He remains essentially
self-absorbed. To defend his honor, his family or his friend, he kills
without mercy. Tolstoj indicates the inadequacy of this moral position by
drawing a subtle connection between Jusuf and Nazarov, the youth whom
Chadži-Murat kills without hesitation on his way to rescue his own son.14
Nazarov "was the eldest in a poor family of Old Believers, who had
grown up without a father and supported his old mother with three daugh-
ters and two brothers" (sic; XXV; 35: 111). Chadži-Murat, on leaving
Jusuf, had consoled him for not being able to accompany his father by
commanding him to look after the family (35: 106). So the support of one
family dies in an attempt to rescue the support of another one. Thus does
Tolstoj call into question a morality based on family loyalty rather than
identification of all men as brothers. This morality is contradictory as well
as insufficient. In its highest manifestations, the life of savage man does
not really transcend the law of nature — self-love — in him.

To appreciate the continuity and the differences between the early and
the later Tolstoyan presentations of nature, it is useful once again to com-
pare Chadži-Murat with The Cossacks. Dmitrij Olenin, the hero of The
Cossacks, leaves the Caucasus at the end of the novella at least in part
because he senses the inadequacy of the cossacks' natural self-absorption.
Mar'janca will only marry a warrior like Lukaška, and Olenin can never be
more than an onlooker in the bloody contests which Lukaška welcomes as
tests of courage and skill. But Olenin's conscience, the "other happiness"
(XXVI; 6: 102) which keeps him from whole-heartedly embracing the
Caucasian way of life, provides an unsatisfactory counterweight to Lukaš-
ka's "energy and force of life". Indeed, in his desire for self-sacrifice
Olenin seems as self-centered as — and more needy than — Lukaška.
Daddy Eroška would seem to be the philosophical hero of the novella. In
his old age he restricts his hunting to beasts. He has relinquished the
pride which fuels both Lukaška's quest for glory and Olenin's desire to
ensnare his friends in "a web of love" (XXVIII, 6: 105). "You'll croak
[...] the grass will grow on your grave and nothing more" (XIV, 6: 56).

And what, after all, is wrong with Daddy Eroška's philosophy of eat,
drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die? It corrects the young man's
natural but mistaken view of himself as the center of creation. It sees na-
ture for what it really is, cycles of life and death with no heed taken of the
individual, and it accepts it. The answer is that Eroška's epicureanism is
essentially solitary. Having ceased to be a warrior, Eroška returns to the
forest. The desire for self-sacrifice of Olenin, self-interested though it may be, is a step toward civilization and morality.

Chadži-Murat's education consists in a progression from Butler's more realistic view of nature and human fate. He moves from a desire to influence and be admired by people to, in his last moments, a state so solitary that he has ceased to care even for his family. Tolstoj's reader, however, is not expected to identify fully with Chadži-Murat and so undergo this education with him. We cannot agree with Edward Wasiolek that the philosophy of Tolstoj's old age is that no one needs anyone else, and, if we didn't need one another, we would have brotherhood (1978: 199). We would say rather that if we didn't need one another, we would have no evil, but also no brotherhood. We would have returned to a state of nature which cannot provide the basis for a social morality.

Chadži-Murat resembles both Lukaška and Ėroška then; but Butler differs from his counterpart Olenin in certain crucial respects. In the Caucasus, and especially in the stag's lair, Olenin explores his own nature. There, stripped of social position and personal history, a mere animal like the mosquitoes swarming around him, without thought or desire and therefore without any sense of self, Olenin experiences "a strange feeling of causeless happiness and love of everything". The twin coordinates of Olenin's mood correspond to the voices of the body (its need for happiness) and of the soul (its love of others). So Olenin finds his soul in the stag's lair, that is, in nature. When, later in the reverie, he decides to live for others, he is choosing the "love of everything" over the self-love which flows naturally from "causeless happiness". Eventually Olenin yields to his passion for Mar'janka, and he then calls his moral plans a "one-sided, cold, intellectual construction" (6: 123). His morality has been too calculated, too much based on reasoning to stand up against his passion. Olenin has forgotten the "love of everything" that preceded his calculations. That love legitimates Olenin's morality for Tolstoj.

In Butler's moment of deepest intimacy with nature, in the scene on his porch discussed above, "he rejoiced that he was alive and that it was precisely he who was alive and living on this fine earth". There is real happiness here, and self-love aplenty, but no love of everything. Tolstoj still believes in this love, but he no longer locates it, or the soul for which it speaks, in nature. In the scene in The Cossacks reason functions as an agent of self-interest, guarding the independence of the self from external circumstance, and so turns a natural feeling into the "intellectual construction" later rejected by Olenin. Reason plays a more dignified role in Chadži-Murat. In his 1895 diary, Tolstoj writes that reason is "a new law to be found in him [man] himself, according to which he can and must direct his own life" (53: 66). This is not to say that reason does not exist in nature. It means that in nature human beings do not behave reasonably.
To be fully human, that is, autonomous moral beings, they must set aside self-love, the law of nature in themselves, for the "new law" of reason. They must heed what Tolstoj calls in the essay "On Life" (O žizni; 1888) rational consciousness. No longer as in The Cossacks will reason merely serve self-interest. It will lead instead to Tolstoyan Christianity—love of everything—which Tolstoj believes to be compatible with the laws of reason.

In Chadži-Murat Tolstoj does not require that his title character undergo rational reformation (as, for instance, Father Sergius in the story of the same name does). Instead he offers the narrator as a foil to Chadži-Murat. The warrior is a man of almost pure self-love; while the writer-narrator follows the dictates of pure reason. Chadži-Murat, appropriately enough, is the hero of the epic portion of the work, and the writer-narrator is a character in the tale which frames it. He represents an alternative to Chadži-Murat's heroic individualism and a solution to the problems posed by the workings of self-love in society.

We now return to the framing tale to examine the role of the writer-narrator. The story begins with his walk and his search for a bouquet of flowers. When the writer-narrator picks his bouquet, he is behaving "naturally", like other characters in the work. In pursuit of his own pleasure he competes with a bumblebee sucking nectar from the tatarin. The unexpected resistance of the thistle to being picked sets him to thinking. Reason, not feeling alone, begins to guide his attitude toward the plant. In an act possible only because of his developed reason, he turns his attention from his own pleasure to the flower as a subject in its own right. Instead of responding directly to the urging of his own self-love, he pays tribute to the flower's vitality ("But really, what energy and force of life..."").

Eventually another tatarin appears, reminding him of the "Tartar" Chadži-Murat, a hero from the days of the writer-narrator's youth. The last paragraph of the introduction makes this connection and thereby leads into the epic part of the work.

And I remembered a certain Caucasian story from long ago, part of which I saw, part of which I heard from eyewitnesses, and part of which I imagined. This story, as it took shape in my memory and imagination—here it is.

Memory and imagination are mentioned twice in these last two sentences of the introduction. These two offspring of reason are the parents of Tolstoj's art.15 The writer-narrator, at first absorbed in his own pleasures, is about to tell another man's story. In this basic sense art can be a moral
activity, transcending the simple struggles of nature. Tolstoj draws attention to this moral power of art from the very first word of Chadži-Murat. He begins the work with the word I (ja); but the writer-narrator proceeds to tell not of himself but of other "I"s." 16 This expresses in a nutshell the superiority in Tolstoj's opinion of prose fiction over other forms of art. The narrator is present and involved — unlike Shakespeare, "a talent, but a cold one" (Notebook #2, May-June, 1897; 53: 310) — but he writes of others, not of himself as he would in lyric poetry. The writer-narrator of Chadži-Murat differs from all the other characters in the work in that, while they remain essentially self-centered, he, through the action of reason, truly puts himself in their places.

The characters of Chadži-Murat are therefore not simply creatures and servants of a didactic narrator's imagination. Michail Kuzmin (Sorokin, 1979: 212) called the introduction a "prologue", meaning the beginning to a saint's life, and claimed that it spoils the work by its preaching. But the introduction also functions like a prologue to an epic poem. Viewed from this perspective, the list of flowers at its beginning, each flower carefully individualized, is like a catalogue of heroes. Tolstoj reworked this list many times, each time making it more colorful and striking (Zdanov 1979: 161). The care that he took with it indicates his attitude toward his subject as a whole. Yes, the "prologue" is a direct intervention by the writer-narrator which informs his reader how to approach the epic narrative. Yes, the writer in his generosity and wisdom is higher than any one of his characters. He proves his wisdom, however, by his "objectivity". Having breathed life into his characters, he lets them speak and act before the reader, only rarely intervening himself in the epic narrative.

So the story of the thistle contains a lesson for the writer-narrator. The field of flowers is "an allegory of life, colorful and endlessly varied" (Tunimanov 1984: 24). The writer-narrator wants to arrange the wild flowers into a bouquet for his table, but the thistle, prickly and unexpectedly tough, resists picking. Surely this is a warning to the writer to imitate, not to rearrange life. In the words of Donald Fanger, "The artist [...] must treat his characters as ethics would have him treat their prototypes in life, as ends in themselves, and not as means [...] this is what Tolstoj does in Hadji Murad" (1978: 575). Only human beings can do this — and must do it in order to be fully human.

We are now ready to explain the inconsistency in the writer-narrator's attitude toward vegetable and human vitality. Of course one can say that the plant in defending itself offends no one, while human beings destroy to preserve themselves. No doubt Tolstoj did prefer prey to predator. More important in this case, however, is the distinction between the human and the purely natural. Tolstoj does not apply the same standard of judgement to both. The thistle lives simply by the laws of nature. Human
beings, while also obeying the laws of nature, must, in order to realize their human potential, heed the higher law of human consciousness. They must shed their own individuality based ultimately on irrational self-love in order to merge with and understand others. (See *What is Art?* [XVI; 30: 157].) This the writer-narrator does, both in his original compassion for the thistle, and in his creation of the tale of Chadži-Murat.

At the end of his work Tolstoj contrasts the reactions of nature and human consciousness to the death of Chadži-Murat. Nature, represented in the final sequence by nightingales, is indifferent to the hero’s fate. Having sung twice before (XXIII, 35: 103-104; 35: 114), the nightingales trill again as soon as the battle in which Chadži-Murat dies has ended (XXV, 35: 118). The nightingales are courting. This activity is part of what Tolstoj calls the spiritual life of nature, because, according to him, the laws of sexuality make individuals serve their species (Diary, 7/19/96; 53: 100-101). It is left to the writer-narrator to serve the higher needs of human spirituality by rescuing Chadži-Murat from oblivion. This he does in the sentence which concludes the work and comprises the entire second half of the frame surrounding the epic narrative:

> This was the death which the crushed thistle in the middle of the ploughed field brought to my mind.

In the framing anecdote, where the writer-narrator compares Chadži-Murat to the crushed thistle, the gap between him and his hero is widest. Chadži-Murat appears as a thing of nature, not even an animal but a plant. The narrator with his love of natural beauty, his initial desire to appropriate and rearrange that beauty, then his compassion and his exercise of memory and imagination, is fully, only human. Thanks to this same writer-narrator, however, in the epic narrative Chadži-Murat bursts free of the framing metaphor, becoming himself fully human and so liable to our judgement of human things.

It is only by reflecting on the structure of *Chadži-Murat*, and especially on the relation of its two parts that one comes to understand the teaching of the work about the relationship of nature and rational consciousness. The epic narrative by itself rises to the level of "universal art" – the lower level of good art in *What is Art?* (30: 159-160)\(^\text{17}\) – but not above. The frame, however, both itself provides an example of Christian art and instructs the reader how to read the epic from a Christian standpoint. The very love which the writer-narrator feels for his subject is not, as G.W. Spence (1971: 379-380) would have it, "in spite of Tolstoyan theory". It is in fact the work's Christian, its Tolstoyan heart.\(^\text{18}\)
The writer-narrator of Chadži-Murat is more important than in earlier Caucasian stories because he has taken nature's place as the final repository of human wisdom. All the other characters in the work, even the best and wisest of them, see the world only from their own narrow perspectives. This is true of Avdeev, whose equivocating we have discussed above. It is true of Mar'ja Dmitrievna, who loves her drunken companion because she herself is childless, and whose sympathy for Chadži-Murat is mixed with sexual attraction (XVIII, 35: 84-85). It is true of Jusuf, Chadži-Murat's son, who, despite his love for his father, sides with Šamil because "he did not know the whole past, or he did know it, but, not having experienced it, did not understand why his father so stubbornly opposed Šamil" (emphasis mine; XIX; 35: 89-90). It is true even of the noble Sado, who risks his life to help his friend, because he does so out of pride. Only the writer-narrator's disinterested motives go unchallenged. He brings the characters to life and creates a world which, in assigning to each his proper place, reveals an understanding of the whole beyond the ken of any one of them. His hero tells (to Loris-Melikov) only the tale of his own life. The narrator, through rational consciousness, tells, then unites the stories of all the characters.

NOTES

1 Tolstoj, "O Šekspire i drame" (1903-1904). In 1928-1958: vol. 52, 252. Hereafter the Jubilee Edition will be cited in the text by volume and page number and, where necessary, by chapter. Translations are my own.

2 Sergeenko describes in the Jubilee Edition ("Istorija pisanija"; 35: 627) how Tolstoj was dissatisfied with the chapter on Nikolaj I because it was too critical of Nikolaj, too subjective. On the objective tone of Chadži-Murat, see Tunimanov (1984: 22-24).

3 On 8 May 1893 Tolstoj wrote in his diary that the purpose of art is "to represent people who are extremely different in character and situation and to place before them, to make it necessary that they resolve a vital, as yet unresolved question and to force them to act, to look and see how this question is resolved. It is a laboratory experiment" (52: 77). This study treats Chadži-Murat as just such a laboratory experiment.

4 "Whatever sad or difficult might happen or come to mind, you need only remember that God exists and you feel happy. Just as in the Caucasus there was a physical impression: but the mountains [a gory], so here there's a spiritual one: but God! (Diary, 10/21/94; 52: 149).
I am applying E.N. Kuprejanova’s general observation (1966: 151-152) about Tolstoj’s poetic language to this particular passage.

E.G. Babaev (1981: 81-84) has also taken note of this change and discusses its effect on Tolstoj’s attitude toward Puškin.

Pipes play a similar role in War and Peace. There Captain Tušin, concentrating on his task in the midst of hellish gunfire, imagines that his cannons are great smoking pipes (9: 233-234). Thus does Tušin through imagination marshal his vital energy to resist fear which would otherwise overwhelm and incapacitate him.

This kinship seems less odd in the light of two facts: Turgenev’s famous comparison of a peasant, Chor’, to Socrates in the opening story of Sportsman’s Sketches; and Tolstoj’s own fascination with the Platonic dialogues from the early fifties on (Orwin 1983).

L.M. Myškovskaja (1958: 251) points out that Avdeev and Platon Karataev are both peasants who have entered military service in place of an elder brother with children. As important as their identical circumstances in understanding the two, however, are their different reactions to those circumstances.

Rousseau (1964: 95-96) believes also in natural compassion which in the actual state of nature would hold these high spirits in check. He does not consider it strong enough to survive the development of reason and the passions.

In her interesting discussion of Tolstoj and Rousseau, G.Ja. Galagan (1981: 57-58) characterizes the artist as more optimistic than the philosopher. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Tolstoj’s greater moralism requires him to be more optimistic about such matters as the power of conscience or life after death: “I’ve been reading Rousseau and I feel how much higher than me he stands in education and talent, but in self-respect, firmness and reasonableness — lower” (Diary, 7/8/52; 46: 134).

When, in their conversation at Bogučarovo, Pierre objects that Prince Andrej lives for his family and therefore not, as Andrej has been arguing, for himself alone, Andrej retorts, "But that’s all just me, that is not others" (10: 11). In later essays, Tolstoj himself makes this point (Gustafson 1978: 512).

Chadži-Murat "as a boy saw his reflection only on the bottom of a scoured basin, and then became a commander" (Šklovskij 1967: 557). Does Šklovskij here hint of the connection between love of glory in the man and incipient self-consciousness in the boy? This intriguing observation in the middle of an implausible presentation of Chadži-Murat as hero of a peasant revolt is typical of Šklovskij’s biography.

On Nazarov’s story and the larger question of Tolstoj’s defence of the individual in Chadži-Murat, see Donald Fanger (1978: 571-582).

Rousseau (1964: 155) groups memory and imagination together with other parts of the intellect in his description of civilized man in the First Discourse. On the importance of memory in Tolstoj, see Boris Ejchenbaum (1968: 148-151) and Patricia Carden (1983: 81-102).
In "What I Saw in my Sleep" (1906), Aleksandra Dmitrievna, a kindly stand-in for the author, delivers the moral of the story in exactly these terms. Aleksandra Dmitrievna tries to convince Michail Ivanović to forgive his daughter, who has had a child out of wedlock. When Michail Ivanović relates his sufferings, Aleksandra Dmitrievna responds: "Mišel', always 'I', but she is also 'I.'" (35: 315-316).


We do not here discuss the nature of that love, only of the reason which leads us to it. For the most recent thorough discussion of Tolstoyan Christianity, see Gustafson (1986).

"On radovalsja na sebja, gordilsja soboj za to, čto postupat tak, kak dolžno" (he rejoiced, he was proud of himself that he had behaved as he should; I, 35: 12). Observe the emphasis on the reflexive pronoun in the Russian.

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