The importance of Tolstoi's psychology for his fiction is evident and has been an accepted theme of criticism from his day to our own. To the writer himself this psychology was from the very beginning a means to a moral end. His first writings, uncompleted philosophical essays in which he attempts a description of the human psyche (I, 226-36), are part of a project for self-improvement. As early as 1851 he declares moral improvement to be the goal of his fiction as well (I, 246). The attainment of this moral perfection, however, would not require the overthrow or transformation of human nature as the young psychologist understood it. In his first surviving attempt at belles-lettres, the so-called "History of Yesterday," Tolstoi writes that happiness and goodness coincide in the uncorrupted human soul (I, 291). This belief, which Tolstoi never relinquished, must be taken into account when assessing the merciless analysis to which he subjected himself and others in diaries and works throughout his life. The writings of Tolstoi's early period grow from his related concerns with psychological analysis and the possibility of moral perfection.

During his early years Tolstoi writes in two styles: the autobiographical and the epic. Works of this first kind include Adolescence (1852-54) and "Notes of a Billiard Marker" (1853), as well as the unfinished "Holy Night" (1853) and Novel of a Russian Landowner (1852-54). Those of the second are "The Raid" (1852), "The Woodfelling" (1853-55), "The Demoted Officer" (1853-

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1. Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoi, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii, 90 vols. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe isdatel'stvo "khudozhestvennaia literatura," 1928-59), XI, 294. Hereafter I will cite this ninety-volume work in the text and footnotes by volume and page number alone. All references to the writings of Tolstoi are from this edition. Wherever possible I have based my translations on those of Louise and Aylmer Maude in the Tolstoi Centenary Edition (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1928-37). I usually modify these translations, however, and the translations of drafts, unfinished works and diary passages are my own.

56), “The Snowstorm” (1856), a draft of the Cossacks (1853), several fragments related to the Caucasian sketches, and the three famous Sevastopol sketches (1855). Different as these two kinds of works may seem, they are aspects of the same continuing project. In the autobiographical writings after Childhood, Tolstoi takes as his theme the energy and passions of the adolescent and youth. In the epic ones (with the exception of the draft of the Cossacks) he explores the role of reason, war and nature in moderating these dangerous passions. The present paper will show how a moral-psychological problem which arises in one type of work is then addressed in the other.

In Childhood Tolstoi had attacked the destructive influence of vanity and asserted the happiness and goodness of the child. The sentimental tone of the story obscures to some extent its author’s perception of the limitations of that goodness: “Will that freshness, lightheartedness, need for love and strength of belief which one possesses in childhood ever return? What time could be better than the one in which the two best virtues—innocent merriment and a limitless need for love—were the only two impulses in life?” (I, 45).

Virtue gives happiness, says the narrator of a “History of Yesterday,” because happiness gives virtue (I, 291). In Childhood at least this formula has a straightforward meaning: happiness and virtue in the child do coincide. The child need not sacrifice himself to be good because he does not as yet cherish deeply desires which goodness requires that he relinquish. His “merriment,” the expression of his physical vitality, is “innocent,” that is, unself-conscious; and his “need for love,” the expression of spiritual vitality, is the same. The child differs from the man not in what he has but in what he lacks: full-blown passions and an aggressive sense of self which inspires them. He does not as yet feel that desire of the adolescent and man to expand into and absorb his surroundings. It is this impulse to possess and dominate—the unhappy metamorphosis of innocent merriment and the limitless need for love—which becomes a problem in adolescence. It turns harmless feelings into illicit passions.

Tolstoi’s treatment of childish sexuality in Childhood provides an interesting example of the distinction between self-conscious and unself-conscious feelings. In Chapter 9 (“Something in the nature of first love”) the children interrupt their game of pretend to look at a huge worm which Nikolenka’s sister has found. Nikolenka stares down at the creature over the shoulder of Katenka, the daughter of the family’s French governess. When Katenka twitches her shoulder in an effort to arrange her dress more comfortably, she draws Nikolenka's attention to the shoulder: “Her shoulder as she did this was two

3. In “Four Epochs of Development,” the unfinished project from which the autobiographical trilogy emerged, Tolstoi says that relations among children are the same as those among adults “with only this difference, that everything is done unself-consciously and therefore more nobly” (I, 137).