Hacettepe University

Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

ANIMALS IN SAKI'S SHORT STORIES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF IMPERIALISM: A NON-ANTHROPOCENTRIC APPROACH

Adem Balcı

Master's Thesis

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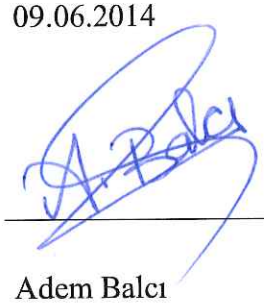

Adem Balcı

To my family

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ÖZET

BALCI, Adem. *Animals in Saki's Short Stories within the Context of Imperialism: A Non-Anthropocentric Approach*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2014.

Bu tez, Saki mahlası ile bilinen geç Viktorya ve Edward dönemi İngiliz öykü yazarı Hector Hugh Munro (1870-1916)'nun çeşitli öykü kitaplarından seçilen "Mrs Packletide'ın Kaplanı"[1] ("Mrs Packletide's Tiger"), "Esmé," "Tobermory," "Ceza" ("The Penance"), "Masalcı Amca" ("The Storyteller"), "Sredni Vashtar," "Tepedeki Müzik," ("The Music on the Hill"), "Gabriel-Ernest" ve "Laura" başlıklı öykülerini, "türcülük" ve "animizm" kavramları ışığında ele alarak yazarın dönemin hakim söylemi olan emperyalizme yönelttiği eleştiriyi incelemektedir. Her ne kadar sömürge sonrası dönem edebiyat kuramlarının etkisiyle dönemin birçok Batılı yazarının emperyalizm yanlısı olduğu ileri sürülse ve bu yazarların eserlerinin emperyalizmi yaydığı iddia edilse de, özellikle bu alanda son zamanlarda türetilmiş olan "Olumsuz Oto-Oksidentalizm" teriminin ışığında Batı'da da emperyalizm karşıtı insanların bulunduğu ve özellikle birçok yazarın emperyalizm eleştirisini eserlerine yansıttığı tartışmaları artmıştır. Bundan dolayıdır ki özellikle İngiliz emperyalizminin zirvede olduğu bir zamanda eserlerinde hayvan karakterlerine sıklıkla yer veren ve hayvan zulmünü açıkça yeren Saki'nin emperyalizmin her türlüsünü, özellikle de hayvanları ve doğal çevreyi hedef alan biçimini açıkça eleştirdiği görülmektedir. Cinsiyetçilik, ırkçılık ve "türcülük" gibi birçok baskı sistemlerinin birbirleri ile yakından ilintili olduğu ve özellikle bunların hepsinin de genel anlamda emperyalizmden büyük ölçüde etkilendiği ve bir taraftan da bu ideolojiyi oluşturduğu göz önüne alındığında bu tür baskı sistemlerinin birlikte değerlendirilmesi gerektiği meydana çıkmaktadır. Benzeri olan diğer baskı sistemlerini tanımlayan ırkçılık ve cinsiyetçilik terimlerinin modeli üzerinden türetilmiş olan "türcülük" terimi, farklı bir türe ait oldukları için ve bu yüzden de insanlardan alt bir konumda oldukları düşünülen hayvanların ötekileştirilmesini ve insanların ihtiyaçları ve zevkleri için hunharca kullanılmasını tanımlamaktadır. Bundan dolayıdır ki bu tezin birinci bölümünde incelenen "Mrs

[1] Aksi belirtilmediği takdirde, öykülerin Türkçe çevirileri Fatih Özgüven'in çevirdiği *İnsanlar, Hayvanlar ve Yırtıcı Hayvanlar* kitabından alınmıştır.

Packletide'ın Kaplanı," "Esmé," "Tobermory," "Ceza," ve "Masalcı Amca" öykülerinde, emperyalizm söyleminin bir yansıması olan "türcülük" kavramı tartışılmakta ve yazarın insanların hayvanlara karşı olan türcü yaklaşımlarına getirdiği eleştiri incelenmektedir. İkinci kısımda ise, "Sredni Vashtar," "Tepedeki Müzik," "Gabriel-Ernest" ve "Laura" isimli öyküler ise türcü yaklaşımın temel nedenlerinden olan emperyalist ve insan merkezli söylemlerin tersine, doğadaki her şeyin ruhu olduğu ve bundan dolayı da onların yaşam haklarına saygı duyulması gerektiğini savunan "animizm" kavramı ışığında incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler

H.H. Munro, Saki, "Mrs Packletide'ın Kaplanı," "Esmé," "Tobermory," "Ceza," "Masalcı Amca," "Sredni Vashtar," "Tepedeki Müzik," "Gabriel-Ernest," "Laura," Olumsuz Oto-Oksidentalizm, hayvanlar, türcülük, animizm

ABSTRACT

BALCI, Adem. *Animals in Saki's Short Stories within the Context of Imperialism: A Non-Anthropocentric Approach*, Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2014.

This thesis examines how the late Victorian and Edwardian British short story writer Hector Hugh Munro (1870-1916), better known by his penname Saki, opposes the dominant imperial discourse of his period and how he criticises it, through the analysis of his short stories "Mrs Packletide's Tiger," "Esmé," "Tobermory," "The Penance," "The Storyteller," "Sredni Vashtar," "The Music on the Hill," "Gabriel-Ernest" and "Laura" with respect to "speciesism" and "animism." Although, under the influence of postcolonial theories, most of the writers of the period are claimed to be pro-imperial and advocating and justifying imperialism in their works, especially the introduction of the term "Negative Auto-Occidentalism" has shed light on the fact that there were also anti-imperialist people in the West and especially many writers included the criticism of the imperialism in their works. With respect to the extensive use of animal characters in his short stories and the criticism of the exploitation of animals by human beings, it might be argued that Saki criticised all kinds of imperialism, especially the form of imperialism which targets animals and the natural environment. Various forms of oppression and domination such as sexism, racism and "speciesism" are interrelated with one another, and they are very much influenced by imperialism, as well as being the formative components of this ideology. Coined on the model of other oppression systems, "speciesism" means the marginalisation and the consequent exploitation of animals for human needs and entertainment based on the assumption that animals belong to an inferior species. In this respect, in the first chapter of this thesis, in the analysis of "Mrs Packletide's Tiger," "Esmé," "Tobermory," "The Penance" and "The Storyteller," "speciesism" as an extension of imperialism is discussed and the author's criticism of speciesist approach of human beings is dealt with. In the second chapter, as opposed to the imperialist and anthropocentric approach, which pave the way for the exploitation of animals, the term "animism," standing for the idea that each being in the world has a soul and thereby must be respected, is introduced and the stories

“Sredni Vastar,” “The Music on the Hill,” “Gabriel-Ernest” and “Laura” are analysed with respect to Saki’s tendency towards “animism.”

Key Words

H.H. Munro, Saki, “Mrs Packletide’s Tiger,” “Esmé,” “Tobermory,” “The Penance,” “The Storyteller,” “Sredni Vashtar,” “The Music on the Hill,” “Gabriel-Ernest,” “Laura,” Negative Auto-Occidentalism, animals, speciesism, animism

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INTRODUCTION

If there is one opinion established by existing criticism on the works of Saki, the late Victorian and Edwardian British short story writer whose real name is Hector Hugh Munro[1] (1870-1916), it is that he was a satirist and he criticised the hypocrisy and pretentiousness of the late Victorian and Edwardian British society. Similarly, if there is one quality which characterised the late Victorian and Edwardian British society, it was imperialism. However, there seems to be a lack in literature which appreciates Saki's work, especially his short stories, in the wider context of imperialism. This lack apparently results from an overlooking not only of the fact that the late Victorian and Edwardian British culture was imbued in the ideology of imperialism and the individual discourses which embodied and sustained this ideology, but also of Saki's real-life experiences of having been brought up in a family with a colonial administrative background. So there seems to be a need to appreciate Saki's short stories in the wider context of imperialism and its discursive components. However, given the characteristics of Saki's short stories, the most fertile ground for re-reading these works with an eye on certain discursive constructs is the context that is dominated by discourses on anthropocentrism and speciesism, which in turn, communicate with imperialism. This is especially true with reference to the idea of domination suggested by anthropocentrism and speciesism on the one hand, and to the Latin origin of the word empire, namely *imperium*, which means "to command and rule" ("*Imperium*" 65), on the other.

Although the European imperialism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries deeply influenced the colonised peoples in a negative way, as Serpil Oppermann argues in her article entitled "Ecological Imperialism in British Colonial Fiction," "[w]hat was even more spectacular than the brutal atrocities exercised on the indigenous peoples at the time were the acts of ecological mastery over nature in the colonized lands, because their consequences continue to affect the entire planet today" (180). Linked to colonialism in these terms, "ecological imperialism," introduced and discussed

[1] In this study, when the author is referred to his penname Saki will be used.

thoroughly in his book of the same name by environmental historian Alfred Crosby, is used to express the idea that European imperialism did not only upset the lives and cultures of the colonised peoples, but also influenced the natural environment and the animal species of the colonised lands in ways that were even worse. The destruction of nature and the exploitation of the natural resources, for some critics, were reflected in the colonial writings of the period. Yet, despite the dominant imperial ideology of the age, there were on the other hand, anti-imperialist writers, too. However, especially through the typical postcolonial appreciations of Edward Said with respect to his books *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), where he based his criticism on the Orientalisation of the colonial geographies, "the stories of the white man and woman" (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 21) have up until recently been thought to be advocating or justifying the idea of imperialism. Recent scholarship in the field has revealed that there were some discourses other than Orientalism in the West during the age of European imperialism and some of them represented a critique of Eurocentric imperialism. One such discourse has recently been named "Negative Auto-Occidentalism" which refers to "[t]he discourse which essentializes the West negatively […] through the construction of stereotypes and/or images of the West by Western agents" (Akıllı, "Re-Constructing" 29). Accordingly, some British authors of fiction who wrote in the imperial period also criticised the consequences of the European imperial venture, thereby representing a Negative Auto-Occidentalist view. Saki was one of them. Coming from a family that served the empire in the Indian subcontinent, having received an education that was shaped by the imperial mindset, and having worked in the Burma Police organisation for thirteen months (Byrne, "The Short Stories" 158), Saki has been, on these grounds, categorised as an imperialist writer by some critics of his work (Gibson, "Beastly Humans" 28, 108; Byrne, *The Unbearable Saki* 6; Salemi 424). However, a close examination of some of Saki's short stories reveals him to be adopting a Negative Auto-Occidentalist discourse, and therefore, critical of the imperial ideologies of his time, especially with respect to his approach to children and animals, the latter placing his critique into the context of ecological imperialism. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to examine the "Negative Auto Occidentalist" (Akıllı, "Re-Constructing" 29) approach of Saki with respect to his critique of imperialism, which is presented through his satire of the hypocrisy and

pretentiousness of the British middle and upper-middle classes. Nonetheless, before this main discussion, a brief account of the British colonisation of the Indian subcontinent will be helpful to set Saki's works in historical context.

According to many critics, the earliest invasion of the Indian subcontinent goes back to the Macedonian Greeks during the reign of Alexander the Great (Thapar 59). However, after the earliest colonisation of the subcontinent, spice trade between the Indians and the Europeans attracted the attention of the Europeans from the fifteenth century onwards. The arrival of Portuguese sailor Vasco da Gama at Calicut on the West coast of India (Limaye 11) in the fifteenth century resulted in the introduction of the subcontinent to the West. Only a few years after this event, Vasco da Gama managed to establish direct trade links between the Europeans and India near the end of the fifteenth century. However, Portugal was not alone; soon after, other European countries such as Denmark, England, France, and the Netherlands began to establish direct trading posts there as rivals of the Portuguese. Upon their first arrival at the subcontinent, the Europeans did not have the idea of colonising these lands; they had mercantile interests. The wealth and prosperity of the subcontinent influenced the Europeans deeply during the encounters in the spice trade. Especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the "long distance trade between Asia and Europe grew greatly in scale" (Marshall, "The English in Asia" 264). This trade between Asia and Europe was based on the European demand for the Asian crops besides the various products of the Asian artists such as silk, cotton and porcelain (Marshall, "The English in Asia" 264). The need for these materials increased especially by the seventeenth century.

Although the marriage of Catherine of Portugal to Charles II of England contributed a lot to the mercantile interests of England, as some provinces of India were given to the English as the dowry of Catherine, what made England the longest lasting power there was the establishment of the East India Company in 1600 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Although, at the beginning, the English merchants were restricted by the Portuguese and the Dutch in Asia (Marshall, "The English in Asia" 267), "[a]t the end of the seventeenth century [...] [the East India Company] was set to become the most successful of the European traders operating in Asia" (Marshall, "The English in Asia"264). Though the Company began as a trading entity, it immediately created

armies for itself. However, upon occasion, these armies were used by the Indian princes to suppress the problems among themselves, and thus the British got the upper hand gradually in the Indian politics. These internal conflicts among the small Indian princedoms helped the British power to increase there gradually. Thus, as stated by Mahmud, the Company was transformed from a trading entity into India's dominant political force with the help of its army:

> The East India Company had by the beginning of the eighteenth century three important trading centres, at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, with governors appointed by their board of directors to control the affairs of the trading stations. To protect themselves they enrolled local soldiers whom they called sepoys and trained them on Western lines. Soon they had three small armies too. As time went on, the local rajas and nawabs, noticing the strength of their sepoy armies, began to ask them for help in their internal affairs. In return first for more trade concessions and later for more land, the three centres began to take an active part - in Indian power politics. (183)

However, not only the company managed to be the superpower there with its army, but also economic reasons played a significant role. As Marshall puts it:

> British commercial enterprise, particularly that of the private traders and their Indian allies, could expand within the framework of opportunities offered by the local rulers. The needs of these rulers for cash and troops and the ambitions of the British could coincide to enable the British to play a political role as bankers to the state or as military commanders. Political infiltration could later turn to political dominance and eventually to outright rule, as the British took over the administrative structures created for the regional states and made them work for their purposes, drawing taxation into British coffers and bringing troops into British service. Had eighteenth-century India really been reduced to a wasteland, it is argued, a British Empire in India was hardly conceivable. As it was, British rule was sustained by Indian wealth and built on the foundations laid by the regional rulers. ("The British in Asia"497)

This military and financial power of the Company helped Britain to have the upper hand there. Thus, the British commercial interest from the beginning till the end of the seventeenth century (Canny 4), turned into a colonial interest in the eighteenth century, and thereby the role of the British Empire changed in the subcontinent in the eighteenth century, as Marshall posits:

> The role of the British [in the eighteenth century] was, however, to change fundamentally: beginning in eastern India from mid-century, they were to

> become conquerors and rulers. By 1765, [...], a sizeable territorial dominion had been established. From this beginning British power was to engulf the whole of the Indian subcontinent within a hundred years, and in the process the centre of gravity of the whole British Empire would shift from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. ("The British in Asia" 487)

As Phillipa Levine argues, when the British Empire colonised the Indian subcontinent, "India was not a single country or entity, but rather a collection of states ruled in different ways, and frequently with markedly different languages and customs. There was no single Indian language or religion. Small and large areas were governed by local dynasties" (61). The lack of a powerful and united nation brought about the colonisation of the country, as these little princedoms were already ruled by the British Empire. In fact, the emergence of these little princedoms was the direct result of the decline of the Mughal empire, which had controlled the subcontinent for some time till the middle of the eighteenth century. In this respect, as Marshall posits, "by the middle of the eighteenth century the British were dealing not with a unified Mughal empire, but with a number of regional rulers" ("The British in Asia 492).

Although, as Robert Johnson posits, "[t]he decay of the Mughal's authority hastened the British success" (24), Britain was not alone there. France appeared as a rival to establish trading posts. The war between Britain and France broke out in 1744, and it "ebbed and flowed" till the victory of Britain in 1761 (Marshall, "The British in Asia" 492). The marginalisation of the French in this power struggle for the rule of India resulted in the expansion of the British in the greater parts of the subcontinent in the early nineteenth century, and finally in the mid-nineteenth century Britain got the direct rule of almost all of India with the establishment of the British Raj in 1858. In fact, the power of the Company was already foreshadowing the future rule of the British Empire there (Bowen 530). Thus, even before the establishment of the direct British rule in India, the British influenced the culture and religion of these people. The British looked down upon the Indians, and tried to change their culture and religion. Besides, as Johnson argues,

> [i]mperialism was accompanied by racism. The categorisation, even dehumanising, of the 'black' or 'yellow' races from the second half of the nineteenth century, undoubtedly made it easier to justify British rule. Characteristics of inferiority were attributed to subject races, and the mantle of superiority exclusively British. (11)

When racist activities were added to the other problems, the indigenous people of the subcontinent rebelled against the rule of the British Empire. Thus, in May 1857, the Indian Mutiny broke out. The Indians were very angry with the British Empire, and they did not only revolt against the army, but also reacted violently against the British women and children. Thus, their violence, as Levine argues,

> was met with violence. The British exacted brutal punishment for the revolt, in a reaction to some of the more violent episodes of the rebellion. Many Britons were murdered, and it was the slaying of British women and children that most angered the British, both in India and in Britain. Accounts of the rebellion often focused on this, an emphasis that made the Indians seem cowardly, cruel and unchivalrous. Such a focus also allowed British opinion to minimize other elements of the rebellion. (77)

As the British Empire was victorious, as posited by John Darwin, "in the aftermath of the Mutiny of 1857, Company rule was replaced by the direct control of the London government, a transition glamorised a few years later by the proclamation of Victoria as 'Queen Empress of India' or *Kaisar-i-Hind*" (181). Beside being the most populous and the wealthiest colony, "India was a springboard for further expansion in Asia, a source of manpower and Britain's entrepôt to the Asian world" (Johnson 43). Thus began the direct British rule of about 90 years in India which lasted until the independence of India on 15 August 1947, under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership.

As mentioned earlier, Saki's duty in the police force in the colonial administrative system in Burma as part of the Indian subcontinent is the most important reason for the critics to label him and his works as "imperialist." However, as pointed out by Byrne, Saki, rather than being motivated by an imperialist interest, seems to have accepted to serve there in order not to disappoint his father Colonel Munro (*The Unbearable Saki* 6), because the Munros served the empire in the colonial administrative duties for many years as a family tradition. However, despite such strong military heritage of his family, one of the most important and outstanding characteristics of Saki was to step outside of the traditions and to question the standards and the values of the society that he was a part of. The central positioning of animals in his short stories, for example, suggests that Saki might easily question the dominant norms which are claimed to be true by the

mainstream society. In this context, ecological imperialism will be mentioned below to shed light on the oppression of animals within the context of imperialism.

To put it briefly, ecological imperialism is the intentional destruction of the natural resources and the animal species of the colonised lands for the scientific and economic purposes of the colonisers through exploitation. As Crosby argues, "the success of European imperialism has a biological, an ecological component" too, besides its triumph due to its "superiority in arms, organization, and fanaticism" (7). For Opperman, too, "as a specific manifestation of anthropocentric thought," ecological imperialism "can be defined as the systematic exploitation and re-shaping of the local ecosystems of the peripheries for the economic welfare of the center" (181). In this respect, central to the idea of European imperialism in general and to European ecological imperialism in particular, is the Eurocentric worldview along with anthropocentrism. While the first one underlines the centrality of the Europeans, the latter expresses the centrality of the human subject over and above anything else in the universe. As Huggan and Tiffin argue,

> [w]ithin many cultures – and not just western ones –anthropocentrism has long been naturalised. The absolute prioritisation of one's own species' interests over those of the silenced majority is still regarded as being 'only natural.' Ironically, it is precisely through such appeals to nature that other animals and the environment are often excluded from the privileged ranks of the human, rendering them available for exploitation. (5)

Contrary to the animistic beliefs of most of the indigenous peoples subjugated by Europeans, which offer a holistic view of the environment by attributing a soul to all the entities on earth, be they living or nonliving, most of the European colonisers believed that everything on earth was created to serve them. In this respect, as Oppermann posits "[i]n order to fully understand ecological imperialism it is essential to recognize its roots in the anthropocentric worldview" (180) which legitimises the ruthless use of the natural resources and the animal species for human needs. In the same fashion, to understand the roots of the anthropocentric worldview, it is necessary to understand the religion/philosophy nexus in Europe, particularly from the seventeenth century onwards. Especially René Descartes' separation of animals and human beings based on his dualistic approach paved the way for the increase of the exploitation of animals: for him animals were mere machines of nature. However, as Huggan and Tiffin argue,

"[a]lthough it was René Descartes who most famously encapsulated the western division of mind and body [and thereby, arguably, human and animal] in his *cogito ergo sum*, such a separation was already a part of the West's philosophy and religion in the works of Aristotle and in early Christian thought" (159).

In line with this, exploitation of animal species is also directly linked to the teachings of Christianity and, as put by Paola Cavalieri in her *The Animal Question*, "it is supported by more than twenty centuries of philosophical tradition aiming at excluding from the ethical domain members of species other than our own" (3). Thus, the assumed superiority of human beings over animals and the consequent exploitation of them can only be explained with the term "speciesism." The term speciesism was coined by the British psychologist Richard D. Ryder in 1970 and then was taken up by the Australian philosopher Peter Singer in his *Animal Liberation* (1975), and used extensively by animal rights philosophers and animal studies scholars to emphasise the human prejudice against animals. While for Singer, speciesism "is a prejudice or attitude of bias in favor of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species" (6), for Cavalieri, the term is used "to refer to the idea that humans qua humans have a privileged moral status compared to any other conscious beings. The notion of speciesism could actually be used to describe any form of discrimination based on species" (70). As Huggan and Tiffin argue in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism*, "institutionalised speciesism" plays a significant role in the continuation of the exploitation of the animal species. As they further argue, as the term "human being" is defined as the opposite of animal, human beings justify not only the ruthless exploitation and the cruel treatment of animals but also the cruel treatment of human beings who were treated not more favourably than animals as in the case of colonised people (5).

As Peter Singer in his *Animal Liberation*, Cary Wolfe in his *Animal Rites* and Paola Cavalieri in her *The Animal Question* argue, "speciesism" is modelled on other "-isms" such as racism, sexism and classism (6; 132; 70), which were, not surprisingly, among the major discourses that supported the British imperial ideology (Akıllı, "Spinning Yarns" 28). Thus, with reference to the way in which the term is modelled, the

neologism "alludes to the intrahuman prejudices that contemporary egalitarianism condemns. The first, fundamental objection that Peter Singer raises is based just on this parallel" (Cavalieri 70). Hence, as Cary Wolfe argues, by agreeing with Peter Singer's thought on the term speciesism, "[j]ust as the discourse of sexism affects women disproportionately (even though it theoretically may be applied to any social other of whatever gender), so the violent effects of the discourse of speciesism fall overwhelmingly, in institutional terms, on [...] animals" (6). From this vantage point, as speciesism was coined on the model of other "-isms," as Jodey Castricano also posits in the introduction of *Animal Subjects*, it "must be given the same critical attention that has been recruited against sexism and racism in critical race studies, feminism and queer theory" (1). As argued by Singer, "our present attitudes to these beings [animals] are based on a long history of prejudice and arbitrary discrimination" (xxiii). Thus, the exploitation of animals is "unlikely to be eliminated altogether until speciesism itself is eliminated" (Singer 94). In this respect, as Cary Wolfe posits, if we miss the chance of eliminating speciesism,

> a hundred years from now we will look back on our current mechanized and systematized practices of factory farming, product testing, and much else that undeniably involves animal exploitation and suffering— uses that we earlier saw Derrida compare to the gas chambers of Auschwitz—with much the same horror and disbelief with which we now regard slavery or the genocide of the Second World War. (190)

In line with this, the only way to escape animal abuse is through eliminating the speciesist attitudes towards animals. However, the escape from a speciesist approach in our relationships with animals is possible only by approaching them not as other-than-human but, as Cary Wolfe suggests in his *Animal Rites*, as infrahuman:

> [W]e may begin to approach the ethical question of nonhuman animals not as the other-than-human but as the *infrahuman*, not as the primitive and pure other we rush to embrace as a way to cure our own existential malaise, but as part of us, *of* us—and nowhere more forcefully than when reason, "theory," reveals "us" to be very different creatures from who we thought "we" were. (17)

In the marginalisation of animals with a speciesist attitude, the assumed superiority of the human beings over other species, as part of the humanistic thought in collaboration with the anthropocentric approach, plays a significant role. As put by Cavalieri,

"[h]umanism—as this intrahuman egalitarian approach was defined—has therefore two sides: an inclusive side, according to which *all* humans are first-class moral patients, and an exclusive side, according to which *only* humans are first-class moral patients" (70). In this vein, as they have assumed themselves to be superior to all the other entities, be it living or nonliving, human beings have given great damages to the natural environment. For many years, it has been denied that each of the living and nonliving entities on earth has a significant role in the ecological system and for the continuation of the life on earth. Thus, as mentioned above, eliminating speciesism at once is difficult as our prejudices against animals are rooted and pervasive, and because, as Cavalieri posits, the exclusion of animals is "supported by more than twenty centuries of philosophical tradition" (3) and with the teachings of some monotheistic religions which suggest the human dominion, in other words, *imperium* over animals. Through the teachings of these two dominant traditions, humans have seen themselves as the superior living being and thereby exploited all the living and nonliving entities extensively based on the dualistic view of especially the Western world emphasising the superiority of the human beings.

In the Judaeo-Christian traditions, for instance, the ruthless and needless exploitation of animals by human beings was justified on the grounds of the assumed superiority of human beings over animals based on the creation narrative of the Bible. Although the marginalisation of animals is central to the teachings of most of the religions, be it monotheistic Abrahamic religions or some Asian religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism, as Lynn White suggests, "[e]specially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen" (9). In this respect, the mistreatment of nature and the consequent exploitation of the animal species and the natural resources may be seen as the result of the anthropocentric creation narrative of the book of Genesis, and the teachings of the Bible. Hence, according to the book of Genesis, though created after all the beings, man is given the dominion of all the species on earth as he is claimed to be "created in the image of God" (Gen. 1:27). In this respect, as Lynn White argues, "although man's body is made of clay, he is not simply part of nature: he is made in God's image" (9). That is why, despite the fact that he is created after all the things, God tells Adam to "'[b]e fruitful, and increase, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, and every living thing that

moves upon the earth'" (Gen. 1:28). Through this authority given to him by God, Adam begins his dominion over animals by naming them and "whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that [was] the name thereof" (Gen. 2:19). As man had named animals, he had the right to do whatever he wanted thereof. Thus,

> [f]rom this notion of man's absolute dominion over the natural world comes the faith – also naturalized in much contemporary culture – in anthropocentrism; the belief that the human (*anthropos* is the Greek term for human) is the centre of all things, that the world revolves around him (feminists have spent many years attempting to turn that him into him/her). The Christian narrative has had a massive impact on the ways humans relate to the world around them. Anthropocentrism is naturalized: the eating of meat – often undertaken without thought for what it is that is really being eaten – is just one example of how normal anthropocentrism is in our cultures. (Fudge 15)

In line with the anthropocentric teachings of religion in the marginalisation of animals as part of the anthropocentric worldview, the second important tradition that paved the way for the marginalisation of the animals is the ancient Greek tradition which has shaped the Western world, and the Western philosophy. Although the denial of mind and thereby the denial of an immortal soul to animals began with Plato, who argued that animals lacked "Idea"s, the approach to animals was shaped better through the discussions of his student Aristotle. For Aristotle, humankind is also an animal but "a political animal" (*Politics* 5) with attributes such as language and reasoning. However, despite referring to humankind as animal, Aristotle nevertheless distinguishes between humankind and animals based on the aforementioned reasons. In this vein, according to his line of argument, which is best described as "the Great Chain of Being," as "nature [...] makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal whom she has endowed with the gift of speech" (*Politics* 5), and as he is the perfect amalgam of soul and body (*Politics* 8), through which he can both govern his own self and the rest of the animals, man has the right to govern and use animals and the natural resources to his own ends. For Aristotle,

> after the birth of animals, plants exist for their sake, and that the other animals exist for the sake of man, the tame for use and food, the wild, if not all at least the greater part of them, for food, and for the provision of clothing and various instruments. Now if nature makes nothing incomplete, and nothing in vain, the inference must be that *she has made all animals for the sake of man*. (*Politics* 13, my emphasis)

Beginning with Aristotle, animals were denied soul and consequently they were marginalised from the ethical and moral sphere on the grounds of the lack of language which stands for the presence of the faculty of reason for most of the philosophers. In this respect, the denial of consciousness brought about the idea that animals are inferior to human beings and they are created for the human beings' use. Though most of the philosophers shared almost the same idea about animals by denying them language and thereby consciousness, except for a few such as Pythagoras and Michel de Montaigne, the most notorious comments about animals and the subsequent mistreatment of them came in the seventeenth century with the French philosopher René Descartes' claim that they are "bête machine" which are nothing more than nature's automata, acting mechanically without any thought and feeling. As Descartes mentions in a letter written to the English Platonist and Cambridge scholar Henry More on 5 February 1649,

> since art copies nature, and people can make various automatons which move without thought, it seems reasonable that nature should even produce its own automatons, which are much more splendid than artificial ones—namely the animals. This is especially likely since we know no reason why thought should always accompany the sort of arrangement of organs that we find in animals. It is much more wonderful that a mind should be found in every human body than that one should be lacking in every animal. (qtd. in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* 366)

In this respect, for Descartes the lack of a soul in animals and its presence in human beings is already taken for granted. Thus for him, animals are the automata of nature created for the use of human beings. As John Cottingham posits in *A Descartes Dictionary*, "[i]n seventeenth-century usage an automaton is simply a self moving thing (that which contains some internal principle of movement, rather than depending on external impulse to move)" (20). Thus, as Cottingham further argues,

> [i]n describing the human or animal body as a machine or natural automaton, Descartes means to stress that its functioning and behavioural responses can be explained merely by the minutely organized structure of its internal parts together with the appropriate external stimuli, without the need to posit any occult internal principle such as a 'locomotive soul.' (20)

From this vantage point, in the age of mechanism, of course, it is not surprising that he refers to animals as automata, or machines because Descartes, as Cottingham propounds in his article "A Brute to Brutes?," refers not only to animals as machines but also to human beings, or more appropriately to human bodies as machines (552). However,

what is problematic with his use of the word automaton for animals is his doctrine of "animal machine," that is "bête-machine." This is the basis for the exclusion of animals from the ethical and moral sphere and then their consequent exploitation. As Michel Allan Fox and Lesley McLean argue in their "Animals in Moral Space," although animals share the same "physical space" with us, they are excluded from the moral space just based on their species (147). The reason for this exclusion from the moral space lies in the belief that "[a]ll space in which [only] human beings live and act, is moral" (Fox and McLean 169). However, this sphere which is called the "moral space" is, as they further argue, "the space of the real world where everyone inhabits" (169). That is why there is no reason to marginalise the animals from this moral space just based on their species. Like human beings, "*animals deserve to be the subjects of moral concern for their own sake*" (Fox and McLean 145).

Although animals do many things better than human beings, for Descartes they are nonetheless deprived of consciousness. The reason for the success of animals lies, for Descartes, in the fact that they are machines of nature, and that is why their bodies act mechanically and can be good at in doing something:

> It is also a very remarkable dexterity than we do in some of their actions, we at the same time observe that they do not manifest any dexterity at all in many others. Hence the fact that they do better than we do, does not prove that they are endowed with mind, for in this case they would have more reason than any of us, and would surpass us in all other things. It rather shows that they have no reason at all, and that it is nature which acts in them according to the disposition of their organs, just as a clock, which is only composed of wheels and weights is able to tell the hours and measure the time more correctly than we can do with all our wisdom. (Descartes, *Discourse* 39)

The reason for Descartes in resembling animals to automata is directly linked to the dualist thought, the roots of which lie in Descartes' famous formula "I think, therefore I am." First appearing in Discourse IV in *Discourse on Method*, in the French form as "Je pense donc je suis" and then in Latin as "Cogito ergo sum," in *The Principles of Philosophy*, René Descartes' famous dictum "I think therefore I am" is the most powerful claim of Western philosophy that puts an abyss between human beings and animals on the grounds of the lack of the human language in animals. After the

formulation of this dictum, existence has been associated with one's own utterance of it through language. As it has been only the human beings to underline their existence through the human language, and as language is accepted to be the sign of a rational soul, human beings have been assumed to be the only rational creatures on earth thereby the ones who have the right to dominate all the living or nonliving entities on earth. As Descartes contends in his *Discourse on Method*, the reason for animals for lacking language does not lie in the fact that they do not have the organs to speak; however, they lack consciousness to produce speech. Thus, the mute-deaf born people are able to produce a kind of sign language for themselves while animals cannot. Therefore, as he further argues, "this does not merely show that the brutes do have less reason than men, but that they have none at all, since it is clear that very little is required in order to be able to talk" (*Discourse* 39). As Descartes remarks in his letter to Henry More, it has been thought that animals think on the grounds that "we see that many of the organs of animals are not very different from ours in shape and movements. Since we believe that there is a single principle within us which causes these movements-namely the soul, which both moves the body and thinks- we do not doubt that some such soul is to be found in animals" (*The Philosophical Writings* 365). However, this, as he claims, does not mean that they have soul.

Yet, Descartes' mistake in denying soul to animals arises from his misconception when the roots of the word 'animal' are revealed. As Cottingham argues in *A Descartes Dictionary*, the term animal

> is etymologically connected with the Latin anima ('soul'), and hence bears traces of the scholastic idea that living creatures differ from non-living things in virtue of their being 'animated' or 'ensouled'; this notion partly has its roots in the biblical conception of living things as animated with 'the breath of life,' and partly derives from Aristotelian biology, which attributed to living things a hierarchy of faculties, often called various kinds of 'soul' – 'vegetative,' 'locomotive,' 'sensory' and (in the case of man) 'rational.'(15)

As is clear in the passage above, the word animal directly refers to soul; however, for Descartes animals lack soul. This is probably due to the fact that "he avoids the word animal to describe creatures like dogs, cats and monkeys, preferring the more down-to-earth label bête ('beast'), or in Latin *brutum* ('brute')" (Cottingham, *A Descartes*

Dictionary 15). Thus, referring to animals as beasts or brutes, Descartes denies most of the things which are attributed to them by some other philosophers.

The dualistic thought of Descartes paved the way for the exploitation of nature and animal species as a commodity for the increase of scientific knowledge. As animals were seen to be the machines of nature created for the use of human beings, people began to use animals in scientific tests to improve science. Thus, Francis Bacon used animals for scientific purpose and advocated ecological imperialism for the development of science. In this respect, as Oppermann posits, "[i]t was Francis Bacon, however, who first established the link between scientific knowledge and imperialism. As Bacon emphasised, scientific knowledge and imperial power had to go hand in hand for anchoring the colonial ideologies that sustained ecological imperialism" (184). Through the influence of Descartes, mastery over nature has been legitimated by Francis Bacon. However, another factor which contributed to this directly was "Eurocentrism." As most Europeans believed Europe to be the centre of the universe, they made use of everything for their own profits. As a result, ecological imperialism spread in the colonised lands. It was basically this Eurocentric mindset of the age of European imperialism which constituted the rationale for the main assumptions of postcolonial literary theory and criticism which initially targeted the canons of European literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

English literature of the colonial period has been analysed from a postcolonial perspective, especially after the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in which references to many works of the English literary cannon abound. However, until recently, postcolonialist critics have always focused on the conditions of human beings as reflected in literary works from an anthropocentric point of view, but the exploitation of the natural resources and animals has been disregarded in many studies. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) for instance, has been typically analysed as the epitome of colonial literature. Said designated *Robinson Crusoe* as one of the primary targets for his critique of European colonialism. So, to give an example from the case of this individual work, the ecological imperialism in the novel has been mostly absent from scholarly conversation, except for a few ecologically conscious critics. Besides

Robinson Crusoe's mastery over Friday, he tries to control nature and the animal species. Crusoe begins to kill the kittens on the island when their number increases:

> In this Season I was much surpriz'd with the Increase of my Family; I had been concern'd for the Loss of one of my Cats, who run away from me, or as I thought had been dead, and I heard no more Tale or Tidings of her, till to my Astonishment she came Home about the End of *August*, with three *Kittens*; this was the more strange to me, because tho' I had kill'd a wild Cat, as I call'd it, with my Gun; yet I thought it was a quite differing Kind from our *European* Cats; yet the young Cats were the same Kind of House breed like the old one; and both my Cats being Females, I thought it very strange: But from these three Cats, I afterwards came to be so pester'd with Cats, that I was forc'd to kill them like Vermine, or wild Beasts, and to drive them from my House as much as possible. (88)

As might be deduced from the excerpt above, although cats do not disturb him, when their number increases Robinson Crusoe kills them though he refers to them as his 'family.' Besides killing the cats, Crusoe prefers to eat baby pigeons just to please the desires of his human palate, rather than for survival. However, the human-animal relationship in *Robinson Crusoe* has been disregarded in the critical appreciations of the novel until recently. Moreover, the postcolonialist preoccupation with Saidian paradigms resulted also in the exploration and explanation of the processes of 'othering,' stereotyping, or the "Orientalisation" of the colonised peoples and lands.

For Edward Said, as he argues it in his *Orientalism*, the Orient was created by the Occidentals as the Eastern Other of the Westerners (Said, *Orientalism* 1, 2). The Orient and the Orientals were everything that the Occidentals were not. As unlike the Orientals, the Westerners were the civilised ones, they justified colonial deeds as civilising missions. For Said, according to the essentialist assumption of the Westerners, "[t]he Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, 'normal.'" (*Orientalism* 40). In a similar fashion, as he argues in his *Culture and Imperialism*, "the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with words and concepts like "inferior" or "subject races," "subordinate peoples," "dependency," "expansion," and "authority" (9). For him, in this light, culture and empire were deeply linked with each other and they mutually influenced one another. Thus, as the dominant ideology of the period was imperialism, the dominant imperial ideology was reflected into the colonial fiction. Hence, as he

remarks, "[b]y the end of the nineteenth century the empire [...] [was] no longer merely a shadowy presence, or embodied merely in the unwelcome appearance of a fugitive convict but, in the works of writers like Conrad, Kipling, Gide and Loti, a central area of concern" (*Culture and Imperialism* xvi-xvii). Although imperialism was the dominant ideology of the period and was directly influenced by culture, there was also an anti-imperialist discourse adopted by some others. Thus, contrary to Said's essentialist generalisations about the writers of the imperial age, "the stories of the white man and woman" (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 21) did not always advocate imperialism; on the contrary, at times they criticised it.

Although most of the writers of the colonial period were advocating imperial ideologies, especially at a time when New Imperialism was rising in the 1870s, there were also dissenters who were still carelessly categorised as pro-imperial writers until recently, based on the general assumptions similar to those of Edward Said. This apparent mistake may have been the result of the absence of the terminology which can express these alternative discourses in Western literature. Thus, the term "Negative Auto-Occidentalism" recently coined by Akıllı ("Re-Constructing" 29) seems to be useful in giving voice to these alternative and counter-discourses, which are present in many literary works of the period either explicitly or in an ambiguous way.

From this vantage point, the employment of such an ambiguous or implicit critical approach might be traced in the works of even the most celebrated "pro-imperial" writers. To illustrate, Rudyard Kipling, who wrote about colonial India, displays an ambiguous attitude towards British imperialism. His famous poem, "The White Man's Burden" published in 1899 at the turn of the twentieth century has been commented upon as being the most notorious literary work of the time advocating the imperial ideology of its age, by justifying the colonial activities of the European nations under the name of the "white man's burden." He was believed to have written this poem to celebrate the mastery of "the white man" over the indigenous peoples whom he presumably depicted as "half-devil" and "half-child." However, in contrast to many postcolonialist readings, the repetitive use of the phrases "half-devil and half-child" in Kipling's poem seems to be the implicit criticism of the colonial discourse of the age.

As his upbringing, the education he received and his family's colonial service in India are taken into consideration, Kipling is stereotypically thought to be a pro-imperial writer supporting imperialist ideas. However, in the case of Kipling, especially with reference to this specific piece of work, it turns out to be the other way around. Contrary to the essentialist approaches, in this poem Kipling presents a criticism of the British Empire and its imperialist ideologies from within. The use of words "devil" and "child" was common among the colonisers to refer to the colonised people to diminish their powers and to justify their imperial ideologies. A typical example of this discourse might be traced in George Alfred Henty's imperial adventure novel *By Sheer Pluck*. By looking down upon the indigenous people, Mr Goodenough, one of the characters, resembles the colonised people to children who cannot go further than imitating the white Europeans:

> "They are just like children," Mr. Goodenough said. "They are always either laughing or quarrelling. [...] The intelligence of an average negro is about equal to that of a European child of ten years old. A few, a very few, go beyond this, but these are exceptions [...]. They are fluent talkers, but their ideas are borrowed. They are absolutely without originality, absolutely without inventive power. Living among white men, their imitative faculties enable them to attain a considerable amount of civilization. Left alone to their own devices they retrograde into a state little above their native savagery." (118)

Hence, the use of the words "child" and "savage" was common among the colonisers to refer to the colonised people, as Henty does. In this respect, with the use of the same words, as Ibn Warraq argues in *Defending the West* "Kipling [was] attack[ing] the very notion of the stereotypical native" (398). Contrary to Edward Said's criticism of Kipling, as he is approaching the Indians in his works stereotypically as they are inferior to the Westerners, Kipling seems to criticise the colonial discourse of the period by using the very same words to criticise the West from within. In this respect, as Craig Raine argues,

> [t]he poem "The White Man's Burden" has been widely misread. In effect, critics have stopped, affronted, at the first stanza: "Your new-caught, sullen peoples, /Half-devil and half child." It is the imputation of childishness that lodges in the throat- and, alas, in the brain. Has anyone, I wonder, read to the end of the poem and understood it? The reward for taking up the White Man's Burden is satted in the last line: "The judgement of your peers!" Who are those "peers," those equals? Since the poem is addressed to the USA, you might think that "peers" refers to British imperialists. But you would be

> wrong. The "peers" in question are the "new-caught, sullen peoples" – raised to equality. (qtd. in Ibn Warraq 399)

In support of the main argument developed in this study, as regards the potential ambiguity of supposedly imperialistic texts, Ibn Warraq further argues that "Raine's interpretation would be one of refutation of Said's critique of Kipling. Under this interpretation there is neither a permanent racial divide nor a permanent empire" (400).

Likewise, Akıllı maintains that one of the manifestations of Negative Auto-Occidentalist discourse can be found in those works of the British colonial fiction which entail the Westerner writer's critique of his own Western society on the basis of this society's maltreatment of nature, as opposed to the ecologically tuned societies of the East. For instance, Akıllı argues that the imperial romances of Henry Rider Haggard contain a Negative Auto-Occidentalist discourse in the writer's criticism of the white European heroes of his novels on the grounds of their disrespect for the flora and fauna of the colonial setting. In an excerpt taken from *Allan Quatermain*, Haggard, for Akıllı, criticises white man's disrespect for the animal life in that land:

> As the group of heroes make their way accidentally to the lake near the city of Milosis, the capital of Zu-Vendis, on their boat Captain Good "spied a school of hippopotami on the water about two hundred yards off us, and suggested that it would not be a bad plan to impress the natives with a sense of our power by shooting some of them if possible. This, unluckily enough, struck us as a good idea ..." (*AQ* 126). As the hippopotami were being killed "some of the parties in the boats began to cry out with fear; others turned and made off as hard as they could; and even the old gentleman with the sword looked greatly puzzled and alarmed, and halted his big row-boat" (*AQ* 126). ("Henry Rider Haggard" 306)

As Akıllı further argues, the white adventurers, who try to show their power by killing innocent animals for nothing, cannot realise that those animals are accepted as sacred by that indigenous people ("Henry Rider Haggard" 307). In this respect, what Haggard tries to underline "is the incapability of white civilised men when it comes to understanding nature as a whole, and thus a criticism of the British imperial project which has been carried out most of the time by the destruction of nature in Africa, with its flora and fauna" ("Henry Rider Haggard" 307). Consequently, Akıllı redefines Haggard as an "anti-imperialist" and an "early eco-critic," even though this author has also been typically categorised as a 'pro-imperial' fiction writer in other studies such as

Wendy R. Katz's *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire*, Patrick Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness* and Laura Chrisman's *Rereading the Imperial Romance*. Obviously, the new terminology of Negative Auto-Occidentalism gives way to prospects of revisiting other British works of fiction of the period of imperialism. With reference to his intensive use of animals in his short stories, Saki seems to be a strong candidate for such a re-visit.

The British short story writer Charles Hector Hugh Munro "was born in Akyab, in north-west Burma, on 18 December 1870, *to a family with strong military and imperial connections*" (Bryne, *The Unbearable Saki* 5, my emphasis). At that time, Munro's father Colonel Charles Augustus Munro was the inspector general in the Burma Police. When Munro was 2 years old, he came to England along with his mother Mary France Mercer and two elder siblings, Charles Arthur (Charlie) and Ethel Mary Munro, as their mother Mary Frances Mercer, "the daughter of a Rear Admiral" (Byrne, "The Short Stories" 157) was pregnant; and she "returned to the *safety of England* and her husband's family for the birth of her fourth child. The pregnancy may have been difficult, since she had stayed with her husband in India and Burma for the births of her other three children" (Byrne, *The Unbearable Saki* 5, my emphasis). However, contrary to their expectations, as emphasised in the previous sentence, England was not safer than Burma and, "[s]oon after their arrival Mrs Munro met a runaway cow while walking in a Devon lane. A miscarriage and her death followed rapidly" (Carey ix).

After the tragic death of their mother, Colonel Munro sent his three children, Charles Arthur, Mary Ethel and Hector Hugh, respectively 4, 3, and 2 to his mother and "two spinster sisters, Aunt Charlotte ('Tom') and Aunt Augusta" (Carey ix) to a house named Broadgate Villa that he bought for them in Pilton, near Barnstaple, North Devon (Bryne, *The Unbearable Saki* 3). For Carey, as he further argues, with reference to Ethel's own account of the knowledge of them, "the two aunts hated each other 'with a ferocity and intensity worthy of a bigger cause,' and made the house miserable with their ceaseless bickering" (ix). At his most desperate moment left alone with three children in a foreign land, Colonel Munro sent the children to England to protect them from the rigours of colonial life in Burma. Because, "[r]eceived wisdom deemed it

dangerous for white children to grow up in a tropical climate, especially without a mother. Their father was sending them away from fevers, diseases, a trying climate, and a lack of "suitable" companions and "decent" schools. [However], [h]e [...] [was sending] them to hell" (Byrne, *The Unbearable Saki* 3). The house with the aunts was a real hell as they "were strong characters who dominated the children's lives," and prohibited everything including playing with other children except readings and church goings (Byrne, "The Short Stories" 157). However, these sisters were not only strict against the children, they were also "sworn enemies, both of them immensely powerful characters" (Waugh viii). For instance, as Sharpe posits, "[i]f Aunt Tom liked, wanted or did something, Aunt Augusta liked, wanted and did the exact opposite" (9). Under these circumstances, the Munro children "were caught in the cross-fire of this intersororal warfare, and, since Aunt Augusta was the nastier of the two, they soon learnt to appear to do what she wanted. In fact, they created their own private world, and Hector gave his affection to pet animals" (Sharpe 9). Thus, the profound influence of the aunts and his friendship with animals inspired Saki to draw wicked aunt characters and animal protagonists in his stories. As Byrne posits, "[p]laying with other children was not allowed, other than at one annual party, and diversions mostly consisted of drawing, reading and churchgoing" ("The Short Stories" 157). As the children were not allowed to be friends with other children, they were friends only with a few animals:

> Persecution drove them in on themselves. Forbidden to play with other children, they formed an unusually close comradeship against the outer world, seeking in animals the love that adults denied them. Cats, cocks, hens, tortoises, rabbits, doves, and guinea pigs were their pets and allies, also a retriever which the aunts kept chained in an outhouse and exercised (Ethel alleges) 'perhaps twice in the year'. (Carey x)

According to Ethel, like Conradin, the protagonist of Saki's famous short story "Sredni Vashtar," Munro had a Houdan cock and a pig. The Houdan cock was put down by the aunts although its illness might have been saved by a veterinary surgery: "Hector once owned 'a most intelligent Houdan cock' which got something wrong with its leg and had to be destroyed. The children believed a vet could have saved it, but the aunts

would have considered that a sinful extravagance. Such lapses were not forgiven or forgotten" (Carey x).

As a weak child, Saki was educated at home by his aunts along with Ethel till the age of 12 (Byrne, "Saki" 366). However, only then, he was sent first to Exmouth School. Yet, after a short time in this school, he "was sent to Bedford School, but remained there less than two years" (Byrne, "The Short Stories" 157). As Colonel Munro was retired at that time, he took Ethel and Hector to a continental tour "to Normandy, Germany, Austria and Davos Platz, in Switzerland" (Waugh viii) before he settled in Devon. Hence, Saki could not finish his formal education, but his "informal studies continued during extended trips to Europe" (Byrne, "Saki" 366). After this continental tour, at the age of twenty three "Munro entered into his first paid employment," in the Burma Police force (Byrne, "The Short Stories" 157-8).

On these grounds, for Byrne, "[a]s a young man, [...] [Saki] dutifully upheld the family tradition and *imperialist values* in colonial service before becoming a chronicler of another empire" (*The Unbearable Saki* 6, my emphasis). Yet, interestingly enough, as Byrne contradictorily remarks further, instead of upholding imperialist values, Saki stayed there to avoid disappointing his father (*The Unbearable Saki* 6), because he was not happy to be there as might be understood through his letters that he sent to Ethel. Yet, despite that, his letters nonetheless "convey[ed] a taste for adventure, pride in his smartness and uniform, and facetious affection for the natives" (Carey xiv). Besides, as Byrne argues, in Burma, he "spent most of his time investigating, and adopting, the flora and fauna of his district" ("Saki" 366). Arguably, he was not happy to be in a colony serving the empire, but he was making most of it by petting exotic animals and living among them: "The opportunities for extending his pet-collection engage much of his spare time. He acquires a silver-grey squirrel and a tiger kitten, whose endearing combination of tameness and wildness, quite on the Saki model, yields endless amusement" (Carey xiv- xv). However, Munro was still not happy there and his health was not good, either. He suffered from fever for several times, and finally was sent back to England after thirteen months due to his malaria as he was thought to die soon (Byrne, "The Short Stories" 158). However, Munro immediately recovered, and began

to conduct research in the British Museum for three years while being financially supported by his father. After his three year research in the museum, he produced in 1900 his first book *The Rise of the Russian Empire*, a nonfiction about Russia, though he had never been there before. Despite being his first book, it was not Saki's first work. One year earlier, before the publication of the book, he had published a short story entitled "Dogged" in *St Paul's* magazine in 1899 under the name of H.H.M (Byrne "The Short Stories" 158). Although Munro began to write political sketches for the *Westminster Gazette* through the influence of the political cartoonist Francis Carruthers Gould at this time, he later began to work for "the *Morning Post*, whose high Toryism was more suited to his political inclinations than those of the Liberal *Westminster Gazette*" (Byrne, "The Short Stories" 158). Although "he began his career as a political satirist in the *Westminster Gazette*" (Spears vii-viii), he later became a foreign correspondent, and went to Macedonia in 1902. Between the years 1902 and 1907, Saki reported uprisings, battles, explosions, murders, massacres, and political news from Vuchitm, Belgrade, Sofia, Uskub, Salonica, Warsaw, and St Petersburg as a foreign correspondent (Byrne, "The Short Stories" 158). However, as Goldsworthy remarks, "Saki's journalistic career in the Balkans ended with a major scoop followed by an important failure" (120).

Finally having returned to his country, "[b]y 1909 he had settled down to the life of a full-time writer" (Carey xix). As Byrne puts it, when Saki settled in London at the age of 40, he was known "as a writer of polished *black comedy in upper-class settings*" (*The Unbearable Saki,* 6, my emphasis). However, soon after his settlement to London as a writer, the First World War was declared. As Drake posits, "[a]t the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Munro, though he was forty-four at the time and not of robust constitution, falsified his age and enlisted in the ranks, consistently refused a commission, went to France, and was finally killed on November 14, 1916, at the battle of Beaumont Hotel" (7).

As previously stated, although Saki's writing career began as a political satirist writing political sketches for the *Westminster Gazette* (Spears vii-viii), after returning from the Balkans, he became a full-time writer. He later collected his political sketches in a

collection entitled *The Westminster Alice* influenced by Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. He continued to write political sketches which were collected in *Not So Stories,* with parodic reference to Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories.* Saki's mastery, however, came with the last two story collections, *The Chronicles of Clovis* and *Beasts and Super-Beasts*. In addition to his satirical approach and humorous style, especially in these collections, Saki's interest in animals is also revealed.

Although he is generally known as a short story writer, Saki also wrote a few novels and plays. Yet, these works are not thought to be as successful as his short stories. However, "[a]lthough one of the most popular of popular short story writers, Munro has hitherto never served as the subject of a serious study" (Spears 7). As "[h]is sister Ethel destroyed all of his papers after his death" (Waugh vii) for an unknown reason, and wrote her own account of his biography, many things are sketchy about Saki. Due to this vagueness about him, "Saki has attracted a few critics' attention" (Drake 6). Thus, as Drake further argues, "[f]ew writers of the twentieth century who have brought so much pleasure to discriminating readers have suffered the same critical neglect as Saki (Hector Hugh Munro). No books have been written about him, and the serious critical essays on his work may be numbered on the fingers of two hands" (6).

In most of the studies such as Gibson's "Beastly Humans" and Spears' "The Satiric Art of H.H. Munro," Saki is generally taken as a satirist criticising the hypocrisy and the pretensions of the upper-class Edwardian people. Although most of the critics of Saki tend to refer to him as a humorous satirist of the upper-class Edwardian settings, an in-depth study of his short stories in almost all of his collections, namely, *Not So Stories* (1902), *Reginald* (1904), *Reginald in Russia* (1910), *The Chronicles of Clovis* (1911) and *Beasts and Super-Beasts* (1914), and the posthumously published *The Toys of Peace* (1919), and *The Square Egg and Other Sketches* (1924) reveal Saki's interest in animals, too. In most of the stories, especially those in *The Chronicles of Clovis*, and *Beasts and Super-Beasts*, there are various animals, be they central or peripheral. The presence of the animals as the victorious ones when confronted with the human beings in most of his short stories, and especially in those related with the hunting stories

taking place in the colonised lands, reveals Saki's sensitivity to animals and the ecological issues as opposed to the presumptions of the imperial ideology of his time.

Munro's choice of the penname "Saki" from the eleventh century Sufi poet Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* seems to support this argument. After adopting this penname first in 1900 (Gibson, "Beastly Humans" 10), Saki published his works under this name. As "Saki" is the cupbearer boy in the *Rubaiyat,* Munro's "penname Saki is thought to derive from the golden boy or catamite of that name in FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat*" (Waugh vii). For Gibson, in the *Rubaiyat*, there is no one type of reference to the cupbearer boy as Saki: "In the Sufi poem, the bearer of the cup of life is a "Saki," also referred to as "my Beloved" (line 81) or the "Eternal Saki" (183)" (Gibson, "Beastly Humans" 10). As stated before, in the words of Gibson, "[a] "Saki," also transliterated as "Saaqi" or "Saqi," is a wine-serving boy, a symbol of the beloved or spiritual master in Sufi poetry" (Gibson, "Beastly Humans" 10). As the penname Saki was "born in the pages of an Oriental poem" (Gibson, "Beastly Humans" 266), the adoption of an Eastern identity here is significant with respect to Munro's Negative Auto-Occidentalism. To be more specific, one may argue that in constructing his identity as an author, Saki privileges the East over the West and its imperialist ambitions. Through the use of this penname, thus, Saki easily criticises the hypocrisy and the pretensions of the Edwardian society, as "Saki is the satirist, while the displaced, distant Munro is part of the world being satirized" (Gibson, "Beastly Humans" 12).

As a member of the Edwardian upper-middle class society, Saki was well aware of the hypocrisies and the pretensions of these people, and thus he was criticising from within. Thus as Gibson posits "Saki's rebellion is [...] dependent upon the Edwardian upper-middle-class world in which Munro lived, prospered, and published; Saki is a dissident voice in the very world on which Munro depends" (Gibson, "Beastly Humans" 26). However, as H. H. Munro was one of the members of the Edwardian society that Saki criticised, there are also references by some critics to Saki as he is advocating the imperialist ideologies in his works. Yet, for instance, some critics take Saki's novel *When William Came* (1913) as a novel that advocates imperialism, and thus refer to him as an imperialist writer. However, written just before the World War I with "fear of

invasion" as the "dominant anxiety of the period" (Batchelor 129), the novel is basically about the writer's patriotic feelings for his country when it is under German invasion during an imagined war between Britain and Germany. Despite this, Gibson refers to British imperialism in his study of this novel. To quote an extract from his work for instance, he says: "With *When William Came*, Munro-Saki's expression of natural, fiercely unorthodox sexuality lurking in a far-from-idyllic English countryside is gone, replaced by an idealized, rural heart of white, imperial England" ("Beastly Humans" 113). Moreover, Gibson's criticism is not limited to his reference to Saki's *When William Came*; he also criticises Saki to be imaginatively colonising Russia in his *The Rise of the Russian Empire*:

> [I]n writing his history of an unseen land in the heart of the British empire, Munro was prejudging, creating, and colonizing Russia in his imagination. Munro's book, then, is a quintessential example of Edward Said's "Orientalism," as outlined in the book of the same name, whereby to 'have such knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it.'("Beastly Humans" 232-3)

In addition to these, even his love for animals is thought, by some critics, to be a part of his imperial heritage. For Joseph S. Salemi, for instance, Saki, "was a denizen of an actively imperial Britain, for which elephants, camels, tigers, and all the fauna of Africa and the Orient were objects of both pride and enchantment" (424).

However, contrary to the above mentioned claims, a close examination of most of Saki's short stories reveals him to be doubtful, critical and at times antagonistic towards imperialism especially with respect to the exploitation of the natural resources and the animal species. To this end, it will be argued that the use of children and animals in most of his short stories is the basis of his criticism of the imperial ideology of the period and his position which may be referred to as Negative Auto-Occidentalism. Unlike the colonial discourse of the period which refers to the colonised people as children, savages and animals, Saki uses animals and children in his short stories, who are rewarded while the abusive adults, who are the representatives of the hypocritical and pretentious upper-middle class British society of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods that teemed with the ideology of imperialism, are punished.

Given the discussion above, it might be argued that Saki is a satirist who "satirises the human mind and the manners of the upper class people of his time" (Köklü 22). In the same vein, as Cheikin remarks, "[h]is stories are saturated with criticism of British society and often have a satiric tone" (122). To this end, the style that he employs in his short stories is important, as he manages to present a successful criticism of the hypocritical and pretentious human beings' follies in a "blackly humorous" (Byrne "The Short Stories" 159) way with

> his understanding of, and love for, animals - frequently in preference to humans - his almost inhuman aloofness from suffering, his first-hand knowledge of house-parties and hunting, his uncanny felicity in satirical nomenclature, his gift for epigram and mordant irony, his penchant for practical jokes, his power of evoking an atmosphere of pure horror, his Dickensian appreciation of food and the importance of its place in life, his adeptness in making capital plot-use of eerie, rustic superstitions, and his inexhaustible repertory of bizarre and startling plots. (Spears 33)

Clearly, one significant characteristic of Saki as he employs in his short stories is the use of house parties in the middle-class and upper-middle class Edwardian society: "the settings of his stories are always the same: London parties and country weekends" (Spears 10). As might be deduced from a close reading of Saki's short stories, setting is always functional in his short fiction. As a member of that society, he was very well aware of the London garden parties in the bourgeoisie people's houses. These parties, as will be mentioned in the analysis of the story "Tobermory," are basically mere hypocritical gatherings where people come together "with their comic names [and] their empty chatter" just to show off to one another (Stevick 34). When somebody reveals their hypocritical nature that is hidden under their social masks as Tobermory does in the story of the same name, they look for ways of getting rid of that person. Thus, ironically enough, while people show off in these parties, Saki makes fun of their follies which are revealed through their pretentions. However, while these elegant tea tables and country-house parties appear as the setting for most of Saki's stories, "[o]ne can never say that London constitutes a "mere" setting for [...] [his] stories. There is often some connection between the choice of setting and the action" (Birden n.p.). Thus, at the other end of the strand "the wild, pagan (sometimes Oriental), supernatural world" appears as the setting for his other stories (Drake 9). Though totally different from each

other, both of these settings are used by Saki to the same end, that is, to criticise the upper-class people's hypocrisy and to reveal their follies.

Saki uses both functional settings and also functional characters in his short stories for his criticism. Especially the house parties are always disturbed with the intrigue of various animals, such as oxen, boar pigs, cats, elks and wolves two mention just a few. However, animals are not alone; they are generally accompanied by children who are also referred to be as untamed and violent as animals by the hypocritical adult human beings. Thus, as Köklü argues, in Saki's stories there are two types of characters used specifically to show and mock the human follies: While the Wildean dandy-like characters constitute the first group, in the second group there are child and animal characters (23). In this thesis, the focus will be on the characters in the second category, especially on the animals. Though animal and child characters are generally drawn to be wild and untamed, they turn out to be the ones who bring justice, and they are the ones who are used functionally to show and criticise the human follies, or who, as in Köklü's words "struggle against adults and reject society with their spontaneous, imaginative, instinctive and innocent aggression" (23).

In conclusion, as might be deduced from Saki's "immersion in the animal kingdom" (Frost 448) in so many of his short stories as opposed to the hypocritical world of the adult human beings, he criticises the exploitation of animals as the reflection of the dominant imperial ideology of his time. Though he is referred to as an 'imperial' person or sometimes an 'imperialist' writer as a product of the age in which he lived, by employing a Negative Auto-Occidentalist discourse, he in fact criticises the dominant imperial ideology of the period with respect to the exploitation of animals. As speciesism is the direct result of the anthropocentric imperialist ideology, in the first chapter, Saki's "Mrs Packletide's Tiger," "Esmé," "Tobermory," "The Penance," and "The Storyteller" will be analysed as the criticism of speciesism as a component of imperialism. In the second chapter, on the other hand, animistic characteristics and animism as opposed to the speciesist and anthropocentric approach of the imperial period will be examined through the analyses of Saki's "Sredni Vashtar," "The Music

on the Hill," "Gabriel-Ernest" and "Laura" to argue that Saki was favouring an animistic worldview as opposed to the anthropocentric norms of his society.

CHAPTER I

SAKI'S CRITIQUE OF SPECIESISM

Saki's specific use of animals, as will be discussed in this chapter, may be considered as the criticism of the society which is shaped by the dominant imperialist ideology of the period. Saki's stories, at this juncture, which are centred on the animal characters, generally present a picture of the animal oppression and their consequent exploitation by the human characters. Thus, it will be argued that Saki's specific aim in centralising animal characters is to criticise the speciesist approaches of the human beings towards animals. To this end, though the animals are the defeated ones in some cases, it is always children and animals that have the last laugh in Saki's stories, while the adult human beings are the ridiculed ones for their petty pretensions and hypocrisies. As explained in the Introduction, the subjugation of animals to human beings and their consequent exploitation as an end for the human "masters" has been one of the results of the imperialistic ideologies of the European nations. As again explained in the previous chapter, Saki was also labelled as being the product of the age of British imperialism. However, "the stories of the white man and woman" (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 21) did not always advocate imperialism, and sometimes even criticised it, on the grounds of the destruction of nature and natural life in the colonies. Saki's short stories that will be analysed in this study support that Saki, as a white male European writer, criticised the dominant imperialist ideology of late nineteenth-century Britain especially through his critique of the speciesist approach of the human beings as an extension of imperialism. It will be argued in this chapter that Saki's critique of speciesism in his short stories is drawn from his representation of English characters, who are typically from those classes of the British society of his age which benefited most from the colonial empire. In developing the argument, emphasis will be placed on their hypocrisy, pretentiousness and lust for material gain, which are explored in contexts that bring together these characters and animals in contrast to one another. In addition to such dialectic commentary, Saki's critique of speciesism seems to be offered also through his deliberate coupling together of the 'child' and the 'animal,' two of the

key words that have been intensively used in the formulation of the European colonialist discourse, again in contradiction to adult human beings in his stories. To this end, in this chapter Saki's critique of speciesism will be examined through the analyses of "Mrs Packletide's Tiger," "Esmé," "Tobermory," "The Penance" and "The Storyteller."

The first story that will be analysed in this chapter is "Mrs Packletide's Tiger," one of the hunting stories in *The Chronicles of Clovis.* Although the story seems to be about a tiger as the title suggests, "[i]t is a story about meanness, upmanship, and blackmail, not a tiger" (Byrne, *The Unbearable Saki* 15). Thus, while on the one hand, big game hunting is criticised, on the other hand, the upper-middle class Victorian society's hypocrisy and pretensions are harshly satirised. The story is about an upper-middle-class British woman who goes to India to hunt a tiger so as to show off in England, because recently one of her rivals, Loona Bimbertoon, has appeared in the newspapers due to her hunting story. However, while she tries to hunt the tiger, Mrs Packletide herself is hunted, because she has nothing to do with hunting. As Mrs Packletide unwittingly kills a goat instead of a tiger, she pays for her foolishness by having to buy a house to her paid companion Miss Mebbin so that she will not reveal the facts to the people. Hence,

> [t]he story shows the much-revered hunt of Victorian times to be foolish, and motivated by one-up(wo)manship. Saki exposes the competitiveness between women, made worse by social status (the petty consumer rivalries between members of the upper-middle class, who had much discretionary income in an increasingly commercial and advertisement-driven society). So it is a delicious twist that a lower-class woman succeeds in extorting Mrs. Packletide and upsetting her plans. (Gibson, "Beastly Humans" 170)

So, the core of the story is Saki's criticism of the hypocrisy and the pretensions of the society which are related to a context in which one also sees the exploitation of animals.

Despite Mrs Packletide's inexperience in hunting, the third person narrator ironically claims that "[i]t was Mrs Packletide's pleasure and intention that she should shoot a tiger" (Munro 115). To this end, Mrs Packletide goes to India to hunt a tiger. However, contrary to her claims, the reason that urges her to go hunting "was the fact that Loona Bimberton had recently been carried eleven miles in an aeroplane by an Algerian aviator, and talked of nothing else; only a personally procured tiger-skin and a heavy harvest of Press photographs could successfully counter that sort of thing" (Munro 115).

Despite her ostentatious remarks in England telling people that she is going to India to hunt a tiger, Mrs Packletide offers "a thousand rupees for the opportunity of shooting a tiger without overmuch risk or exertion" (Munro 115-6). Soon, Mrs Packletide's hunting story appears in the newspapers and she sends the tiger-claw brooch to Lady Bimberton. However, the ostentatious hunting story costs Mrs Packletide a lot as she is made to buy a house for Miss Mebbin, to silence her. Though she is a paid companion, Miss Mebbin blackmails Mrs Packletide not to tell anyone the fact that Mrs Packletide has accidentally killed a goat instead of a tiger, and the tiger died of a heart attack due to the sounds of her rifle.

In the story, there is only an old tiger left in India, the rest of the species having been extinct. This seems to be the criticism of the exploitation of the animals in that land. Because, especially through the end of the nineteenth century, big game hunting in the colonised lands as a pastime activity for the British colonisers in the colonised lands was very common. The hunting games caused the loss of some species in India and many other colonised lands. Thus, in "Mrs Packletide's Tiger," there is only an "old tiger" whose ill health and old age make the indigenous people worried about the sudden death of the animal before the hunting event as they have been offered one thousand rupees for a safe hunting. Thus, they release the best of their livestock goats as a bait to attract the tiger's attention. When the hunting time arrived,

> [a] platform had been constructed in a comfortable and conveniently placed tree, and thereon crouched Mrs. Packletide and her paid companion, Miss Mebbin. A goat, gifted with a particularly persistent bleat, such as even a partially deaf tiger might be reasonably expected to hear on a still night, was tethered at the correct distance. With an accurately sighted rifle and a thumbnail pack of patience cards the sportswoman awaited the coming of the quarry. (Munro 116)

The tiger is so ill and old that it lies down before it could reach the bait. Yet, Mrs Packletide nevertheless wants to be protected and plans tricks to shoot the tiger safely. Finally, when the tiger appeared on the scene,

> [t]he rifle flashed out with a loud report, and the great tawny beast sprang to one side and then rolled over in the stillness of death. In a moment a crowd of excited natives had swarmed on to the scene, and their shouting speedily carried the glad news to the village, where a thumping of tom-toms took up the chorus of triumph. And their triumph and rejoicing found a ready echo

> in the heart of Mrs. Packletide; already that luncheon-party in Curzon Street seemed immeasurably nearer. (Munro 117)

However, despite her happiness, Mrs Packletide immediately learns the fact when Miss Mebbin draws attention to that "the goat was in death-throes from a mortal bullet-wound, while no trace of the rifle's deadly work could be found on the tiger" (Munro117). So the truth was that "the wrong animal had been hit, and the beast of prey had succumbed to heart-failure, caused by the sudden report of the rifle, accelerated by senile decay" (Munro 117). Despite this, the hunting story of Mrs Packletide is told in the *Texas Weekly Snapshot* and in the illustrated Monday supplement of the *Novoe Vremya*. However, as Nooshin Elahipanah argues, these newspapers in which the story and Mrs Packletide's photographs appear are "apparently published in far away countries [which are] unimportant for the British reader" (5). Saki's deliberate choice of these periodicals "belittles Mrs Packletide's much sought after fame. Saki regards European big-game hunters as pseudo-heroes, and that, not in their own countries, but in the unknown or distant lands or empires" (Elahipanah 5). Though minute details, these are quite telling in terms of many respects. Besides the criticism of the colonisation of India by the British Empire despite so much distance, Saki's ironic choice of the "tiger" as the animal that is hunted is worthy of attention, for various reasons. Tiger is the native animal in many colonised lands such as India and Africa. However, especially through the colonial activities, the animal has entered not only into the lives of the colonisers as part of their big game hunting or into their imagination, but also into their literature. Tiger as a mighty animal appears in William Blake's "Tyger" in the collection *Song of Innocence and Experience: Showing the Two Contrary States of Human Soul*, for instance. Written as a complement to the famous poem "The Lamb" as the representative of innocence, tiger stands for danger and predatoriness. However, contrary to such a mighty image of the tiger as in many other literary works such as Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* other than William Blake's "Tyger," Saki specifically chooses an old tiger on the brink of death. Saki's aim in drawing such an ill and old tiger that is about to go extinct is clearly the criticism of the colonial dominion in the colonised lands through the exploitation of the animal species. At the end of the nineteenth century, literally, most of the animal species were on the brink of extinction. However, when symbolically taken, the old and single tiger in India standing for the

land itself stood for also the consumption of the land in the literal sense as a result of the heavy colonial power there. Thus, as put by Buchinger, "[t]he story is classic Saki satire; and the humour lies in the persiflage of the typical Edwardian socialite" (54). Besides, the fact that the tiger hunt is accepted to be a sport by the British in India is also satirised by Saki. As Buchinger argues,

> the British in India regarded the tiger hunt as a sport, although they did not exactly behave in a sportsmanlike manner – resting in the safety of a lavishly decorated howdah on the back of an elephant or waiting on hidden platforms in trees for a tiger to appear, the hunter was never in any danger, but still considered the shoot an act of honour and bravery. (56)

As mentioned above, what Saki criticises is the speciesist approach of the human beings, because the beast within the human beings is more dangerous than a real animal, and might cost a lot to those people as in the case of Mrs Packletide. Because Mrs Packletide's ambitions lead "the penny-pinching Miss Mebbin" (Gibson, "Beastly Humans" 170) to blackmail her not to tell the truth about the hunting story, and thus, Mrs Packletide is made to buy a cottage to Miss Mebbin. The cottage is named as "*Les Fauves*" "which means 'wild beasts', to remind her employer of the hold she has over her" (Elahipanah 5). Although these people show the predatory animals as dangerous and beastly, through Saki's satirical story it is revealed that what is more dangerous than the real animals is the beast within human beings, that is, the beastly passions of human beings.

The wicked character of Mrs Packletide, in fact, is revealed before the hunt, just at the beginning of the story with reference to Nimrod, a biblical character famous as a mighty hunter. As Elahipanah argues,

> Mrs Packletide is compared to Nimrod, the founder of the city of Babylon. 'And Gush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord' (Genesis 10: 8-9) Nimrod captured seven cities and established the world's first, postdeluge empire. He subdued all the people of the earth. It has also been suggested that Nimrod tamed a leopard to accompany him on his hunt for animals. Nimrod was not only the hunter of animals, but also the hunter of men. Mrs Packletide's 'sudden deviation towards the footsteps of Nimrod' (115) indicates Saki's parody of the 'mighty hunter' idea, as well as paralleling the big-game hunting with the exploitation of the empire, as Nimrod was famous for both. (13)

Another symbol associated with the huntress character in this story is the reference to goddess Diana in the Roman mythology (Elahipanah 13). In the Roman mythology, Diana is the hunter goddess, and in this story there is a reference to her as Mrs Packletide goes to a costume party with a Diana costume, ostensibly to show off with her recent hunting story. Yet, despite her ostentatious appearance, the ironic situation of Mrs Packletide reveals her wicked and dark character. Upon her wishes, Diana's equivalent Artemis in Greek mythology, "was revered as the goddess of chastity, the hunt, and wild animals" ("Artemis" 136). She is depicted in Greek mythology "as a young woman carrying a bow and arrows. She is often shown with a stag to symbolize her role as the *patroness of hunting*" (Wilkinson 41, my emphasis). Besides being the patroness of hunting, as further argued by Wilkinson, Diana is "the protector of the weak" (41). However, ironically enough, contrary to the attributes of Diana, Mrs Packletide is a weak character and does not protect the weak. In this respect, as Edith Hamilton states,

> [i]n the later poets, Artemis [Diana] is identified with Hecate. She is "the goddess with three forms," Selene in the sky, Artemis on earth, Hecate in the lower world and in the world above when it is wrapped in darkness. Hecate was the Goddess of the Dark of the Moon, the black nights when the moon is hidden. She was associated with deeds of darkness, the Goddess of the Crossways, which were held to be ghostly places of evil magic. (32)

Thus, Mrs Packletide's Diana costume refers to the dark side of Diana when she is associated with Hecate more than the mighty huntress figure that is on the side of the weak. In this light, what Saki criticises in this story is the speciesist approach of the human beings to satisfy their ambitions and desires. As set in the colonial India especially with reference to big game hunting, Saki here underlines the speciesism/racism nexus, as well. Although the colonisers refer to the colonised people as savage and justify their colonial activities with such claims, the colonisers' colonial activity is the real savagery. Especially the hunting activities of the Europeans as part of colonialism show how thoughtless and hypocritical they can be. Though they claim to hunt the animals seemingly to protect the natives there, their real aim is showing off to people in England. What creates danger to the indigenous people in their land is the white colonisers more than the wild animals who are on the brink of extinction. Thus, while criticising the speciesist approach of the human beings, Saki also draws attention

to the colonialism in the background. The main issue in this story as mentioned above is the criticism of the upper-class people's pretensions and hypocrisies. While on the one hand, these people's hypocrisies and pretensions are criticised, on the other hand, the exploitation of animals is dealt with respect to speciesism. For the exploitation of animals is the outcome of the imperial ideology of the period which is sustained by these hypocritical and pretentious upper-class people.

The same racism/speciesism nexus is seen more clearly in another hunting story entitled "Esmé." Similar to the previous story, "Esmé" is also centred on the criticism of the hypocritical upper-class British people who cannot stop their beastly feelings for material gains. Although this story also seems to be another hunting story, it is "underneath its surface equanimity, a savage indictment of the depravity of human nature" (Spears 35). The story tells the hunting story of the Baroness and Constance Broodle, who find a hyena when they are lost in big game hunting. Though there are some other points highlighted with respect to racism and speciesism, the recurrent theme is the criticism of the speciesist approach of the human beings in the hunting games, and also the racist approaches of the Europeans towards the people who are referred to as the "other." Like the former hunting story in "Mrs Packletide's Tiger," the hunting story in "Esmé" is centred on the bestiality of human beings when compared with animals. Although the name seems to be a human name, the eponymous Esmé is a hyena. As in "Mrs Packletide's Tiger," there are huntress figures in this story, as well. These are the Baroness and Constance Broodle. Yet, contrary to "Mrs Packletide's Tiger," instead of a fake huntress figure, in "Esmé" there is a group of aristocratic people who are really after big game hunting. However, the focus of the story is the approach of the women to the hyena in various conditions, and their racist approach to a "gypsy" child (Munro 103).

Although they do not have difficulty in keeping the first flight as they are well mounted, towards the finish, the Baroness and Constance Broodle lose their hounds and they are suddenly miles away from the rest of the company. However, soon they see the rest of the company miles away through the voices of the hounds hunting an animal. Eventually, they realise that it is not a fox, but a hyena which is thought to have escaped from Lord Pabham's Park. Despite the efforts of the hounds and the hunters, the hyena

suddenly escapes, and the Baroness and Constance Broddle find themselves along with the company of the hyena. They are afraid of the animal, and they do not know what to do as it is getting dark, and they are alone in a foreign land in the company of an animal. Despite its carnivorous nature, the hyena does not damage those in its company. Although they find the animal ugly, they soon decide to name the hyena as Esmé, which is generally done to the pets. The naming issue in the colonial context is important in that the one who does the naming has the power, and thus has dominion. This approach of the women towards the animals shows the complex and the contradictory relationships of the human beings with animals.

Likewise, on their first encounter the women find the animal very ugly: "It was certainly no mortal fox. It stood more than twice as high, had a short, ugly head, and an enormous thick neck" (Munro 102). However, soon they like the idea of making the animal their pet. Following the footsteps of Adam as he does according to the creation narrative of the book of Genesis, the Baroness and Constance decide to name the animal that they have found. In the biblical account, what Adam names the animals, they are called after that name and soon the dominion of Adam over every kind of animals begins. Thus, the Baroness and Constance Broodle decide to name the animal as "Esmé." However, when their first thought about the animal is taken into consideration, the name that they give to the animal is quite ironic. Esmé "means "esteemed" or "loved" in Old French" ("Esmé"). However, contrary to the name that they give to the animal, the hyena is not loved by them, but still they establish their dominion over the animal especially as observed in the car accident when the story nears its conclusion. Just before the end of the story, the hyena is killed in the dark in an accident. Yet, despite their first thought about the animal, the Baroness succeeds in using the animal as a means for her flirtation with the owner of the car. Speciesism is clearly seen here as the Baroness claims the hyena to be her pet dog. Thus, the man apologises to her:

> "'You have killed my Esmé' I exclaimed bitterly.
>
> "'I'm so awfully sorry,' said the young man; I keep dogs myself, so I know what you must feel about it I'll do anything I can in reparation.'
>
> "'Please bury him at once,' I said; that much I think I may ask of you.'
>
> "'Bring the spade, William,' he called to the chauffeur. Evidently hasty roadside interments were contingencies that had been provided against. (Munro 104-5)

Thus, while the animal would not have reached such a ceremonial funeral if it had died as a hyena, it received such a funeral as the Baroness' pet dog.

In this respect, as Esmé is claimed to be the Baroness' precious pet, the man feels responsible for the Baroness as the owner of the so-called dog. Besides preparing a kind of ceremonial funeral for Esmé, the man later sends the Baroness "a charming little diamond brooch, with the name Esmé set in a sprig of rosemary" (Munro 105) as an atonement. However, this brooch makes two friends at odds with each other for material gains. As in the former story, this one also sheds light on the bestiality of human beings when compared with animals. As a wild animal, at the beginning, the women are afraid of the hyena. However, when they realise that the animal is harmless, they begin to exploit it. Despite their first claims about the ugliness of the hyena, the women tell the man that the animal is their pet. By doing this, in fact, the author shows the readers the beastly ambitions of the women, as they use the carcass of the animal both to get material gain and also as a means of flirtation between the Baroness and the man.

In addition to the speciesist approach of the human beings to the animal as previously stated, the racist approach of the Europeans towards those in the colonised lands is worth examining in "Esmé." The racism/speciesism nexus is very much interrelated. After naming the animal "Esmé," the two women continue seeking the rest of the company as they are lost in an unknown place in the company of an animal that they do not know and that they are afraid of. Here the approach of the coloniser to the colonised lands is clearly seen in the comment of the Baroness. Constance tells her that she does not want to stay there as it is getting darker, and they are in an unknown place in the lands of the others:

> "'What are we to do?' asked Constance.
>
> "'Well, we can't stay here all night with a hyena,' she retorted.
>
> "'I don't know what your ideas of comfort are,' I said; 'but I shouldn't think of staying here all night even without a hyena. My home may be an unhappy one, but at least it has hot and cold water laid on, and domestic service, and other conveniences which we shouldn't find here. We had better make for

> that ridge of trees to the right; I imagine the Crowley road is just beyond.' (Munro102-3)

In fact, these minute details with respect to the thoughts of the women about the land seem to be quite telling about their imperial ideologies. First of all, the colonisers try to justify the colonisation of the other lands by bringing civilisation to these places. "Hot and cold water," and "domestic service" are thought to be the means of civilisation. Lost in the middle of the forest along with a hyena, at her most desperate moment the Baroness claims that despite her unhappy marriage, she would rather be at home as there is "hot and cold water" and "domestic service" at least in their house. Thus, what Saki does here is to punish the pretentiousness of the characters.

In line with this, the women's racist approaches appear when they see a "gypsy child" picking some berries. Although they name the hyena as Esmé the moment they find it, the Baroness and Constance refer to the "gypsy child" as "it," as if s/he is an animal or a nonliving object: "'There was still sufficient daylight for us to distinguish wayside objects, and our listless spirits gave an upward perk as we came upon a small half-naked gipsy brat picking blackberries from a low-growing bush. The sudden apparition of two horsewomen and a hyena set it off crying'" (Munro 103).

As they do not value the life of a "gypsy child," when the animal holds the child in its jaws to take him/her behind the bushes, they do not try to prevent the hyena from devouring the child. Except a few minor attempts to stop the animal from eating the child, they do nothing at all, and the animal eats the child.

In this respect, the categories that Cary Wolfe makes in his *Animal Rites*, with reference to the discourse of species in his analysis of Demme's film *The Silence of the Lambs* might be helpful. For Cary Wolfe, there are "animalized animals," "humanized animals," "humanized humans," and "animalized humans." As Wolfe posits,

> [a]t one end there are *animalized animals.* This pole is, as it were, wholly assumed and is linked to the ongoing practices of violence against nonhuman others [...]. It is useful here to recall [...] the term "speciesism," for it suggests [...] not only a logical or linguistic structure that marginalizes and objectifies the other solely based on species, but also a whole network of material practices that reproduce that logic as a materialized *institution* and rely on it for legitimation. [...].

> Second, there are those *humanized animals*—pets, primarily—that we exempt from the sacrificial regime by endowing them with ostensibly human features. [...].
>
> Third, there are *animalized humans*, perhaps the most troubling category of all, since all manner of brutalizations carried out by cultural prescription can serve to animalize humans, as can reminders of human beings' mammalian, or even merely bodily, organic existence.
>
> Finally, at the other end, there is the wishful category of the *humanized human*, sovereign and untroubled. (101)

Although Esmé seems to be an "animalized animal" at the beginning of the story when the ladies found it, after being named as Esmé, it reached the status of humanised animals as the Baroness' so-called pet. In fact, though after the ladies named it as Esmé, their approach was not so different, they were still approaching it as inferior to them as an ugly creature. Only with the accident, the hyena transferred to the category of the "humanized animals." For her material gains and also as a means of flirtation, the Baroness referred to the animal as her pet, and thus, the animal was respected by the man who killed the animal in the accident. According to Cary Wolfe's categorisation, while the hyena is a "humanized animal" as the so-called dog of the Baroness, the "gypsy child" who is referred to as "it" by both of the women, is an "animalized human." The racist approach of the women towards the child meets somewhere with speciesism, as the women reduce the child to the status of an animal, and thereby the consequent exploitation of the animalised human being is justified, because, animality for the speciesists is the base for the exploitation and marginalisation. This approach of them is clearly seen in the following lines:

> "Constance shuddered. 'Do you think the poor little thing suffered much?' came another of her futile questions.
>
> "'The indications were all that way,' I said; 'on the other hand, of course, it may have been crying from sheer temper. Children sometimes do.' (Munro 104)

As the Baroness and Constance value their profits over and above everything else, a little child's death counts nothing for them, because the child is already the 'other' due to his/her race for them. Thus, in the words of Salemi,

> "Esmé" is, of course, a grim satire on the callous indifference of the rich to anything other than their own comforts and interests. The rapaciousness of the hyena is simply a mirror image of the coldness and selfishness of the two women, whose petty squabbling over the diamond brooch reveals their predatory characters. In the story, Saki does not contrast noble beast and ignoble humans, but instead establishes a frightening identity between an animal's relentless hunt for food and the human desire for comfort and money. (425-6)

As mentioned above, Saki criticises the racist approach of these hypocritical upper-class women, whose animality is underlined through their indifference to the death of a little child in a hyena's jaws. Thus, to conclude, in this story Saki does not only criticise the speciesist approach of the human beings against the animals, but also deals with racism as the animalised humans are sometimes treated worse than animals by speciesist human beings.

Saki's cat story, "Tobermory" might be another example to underline another speciesist approach to animals. Contrary to their classification by Descartes as "dumb animals," in this story the reader enjoys reading the clever dialogues of the eponymous Tobermory with human beings in a house party. As they are prejudiced against the possibility of a speaking animal, all the human beings in the party including the owners of the cat are shocked to see a talking cat. Yet, though shocked with the abilities of the cat speaking the human language, the human beings are now afraid of him as they think that this cat might teach the human language to other animals and thereby they might be dethroned. Thus, as Waugh posits, "Tobermory, the speaking cat, immediately exposes the vanity and vice of human beings who have been patronizing him. Their reaction, to have him killed, is a perfect commentary on our normal response to unwelcome truth" (xi). However, unluckily, before they manage to poison Tobermory, he is killed in a fight by a tomcat from the Rectory.

As Derrida argues in his article "The Animal That Therefore I Am,"

> [a]ll the philosophers [...] (from Aristotle to Lacan, and including Descartes, Kant, Heidegger, and Levinas), [...] say the same thing: the animal is deprived of language. Or, more precisely, of response, of a response that could be precisely and rigorously distinguished from a reaction; of the right and power to ''respond,'' and hence of so many other things that would be proper to man. (32)

In this respect, for almost all the philosophers, animals lack language and thereby they are deprived of a soul and consequently they are not conscious. The most notorious claims about the lack of language and thereby consciousness in animals were made by René Descartes as explained in the introduction. For him, animals were mere machines of nature. Thus, based on the dualistic view of the Cartesian thought, as language and reasoning have been accepted to be the realms of human beings, animals have been marginalised as the opposite of human beings, and thereby the exploitation of them by their human "masters" is legitimated. Although, with the developments in the cognitive ethology, it is known that animals are conscious beings, many people still disregard this fact.

Though it is known by everybody that animals cannot speak the human language and they have their own way of communication, the use of a talking cat by the author is important in that a talking animal dethrones the human beings' assumed superiority, which was explained in the Introduction with reference to Descartes' ideas. Because, for many years, the animals have been thought to be thoughtless brutes, and thereby they have been ruthlessly exploited by human beings. As Robertson posits, "[w]ith the imagery of talking animals ubiquitous in societies East to West it is evident that humans utilize anthropomorphism to translate complex ideas about politics, society, and personhood" (2). The anthropomorphised talking cat, with respect to Robertson's comments, is important in this case as it is used as a means by Saki to criticise the society's hypocrisy. Thus, when Tobermory learns to speak their language, "[f]rom being the family pet, Tobermory is suddenly an outcast and, in revealing the hypocrisies of the house-party and scratching below the thin veneer of cordiality and politesse, shows not only that he is superior to the human being but also that he knows it" (Pringle 99). In attributing human speech to Tobermory, Saki seems to be creating a gap in the speciesist discourse which was based mostly on the Cartesian separation of humans and animals.

Though the guests do not believe that a cat might speak human language, when Tobermory enters the room with a cynical behaviour, the guests are all shocked to see a talking animal that manages to make meaningful sentences even better than human beings, at times. In fact, what Tobermory does is more than speaking some certain

phrases or sentences taught to him to imitate; he can ask questions and can reply the questions that are asked to him. At times, he manages to tease human beings. During the course of the meeting, Tobermory begins to reveal the human beings' follies by telling Mavis that she is very foolish as claimed by the hosts of the house, and then he begins to tell people what they are thinking about one another:

> "What do you think of human intelligence?" asked Mavis Pellington lamely.
>
> "Of whose intelligence in particular?" asked Tobermory coldly. "Oh, well, mine for instance," said Mavis, with a feeble laugh.
>
> "You put me in an embarrassing position," said Tobermory, whose tone and attitude certainly did not suggest a shred of embarrassment. "When your inclusion in this house-party was suggested Sir Wilfrid protested that you were the most brainless woman of his acquaintance, and that there was a wide distinction between hospitality and the care of the feeble-minded. Lady Blemley replied that your lack of brain-power was the precise quality which had earned you your invitation, as you were the only person she could think of who might be idiotic enough to buy their old car. You know, the one they call 'The Envy of Sisyphus,' because it goes quite nicely up-hill if you push it." (Munro 111)

As might be deduced from the quotation above, Tobermory does not only talk, but also knows the cultural codes and he seems to be quite an intelligent animal, because he even knows the myth of Sisyphus while some of the guests are unaware of who Sisyphus is. Finally he reveals the implied sexual affairs of one of the guests upon the question of that person about the sexual intrigues of Tobermory:

> "How about your carryings-on with the tortoiseshell puss up at the stables, eh?"
>
> The moment he had said it every one realized the blunder.
>
> "One does not usually discuss these matters in public," said Tobermory frigidly. "From a slight observation of your ways since you've been in this house I should imagine you'd find it inconvenient if I were to shift the conversation on to your own little affairs." (Munro 111)

After all of these scandalous dialogues between Tobermory and the guests, when all the people in the house party, including the hosts, are disturbed with what Tobermory reveals, they want to send him away and they offer him to go out to have his food. Yet, interestingly enough, despite the so-called human rationality, an animal turns out to be

cleverer than them. Upon their offer to send him to eat his food, Tobermory quite cynically remarks:

> "Would you like to go and see if cook has got your dinner ready?" suggested Lady Blemley hurriedly, affecting to ignore the fact that it wanted at least two hours to Tobermory's dinner-time.
>
> "Thanks," said Tobermory, "not quite so soon after my tea. I don't want to die of indigestion."
>
> (Munro 111)

Upon this, one of the guests remarks that cats have nine lives. Tobermory's reply to this remark is very sarcastic: "They might have nine lives. One liver only" (Munro 111).

Though Tobermory does not want to go outside upon their offer, he leaves the room when he sees Tom, the Rectory's cat. The human features such as talking attributed to Tobermory create a danger for the human beings (Borges 11). Thus, in the absence of Tobermory, all the people in the party decide to kill Tobermory by poisoning him as they are afraid of the possibility that he might teach the human language to other cats, and maybe then even to other animals, as well. As Tobermory is his first student, Mr Appin rejects poisoning him. Upon this, other people suggest him to conduct his experiment at the zoo with the elephants that are claimed to be more intellectual. However, later it is heard that Tobermory is killed in a fight with another cat. After that, the owner Lady Blemley ostensibly announces her unhappiness. Thus, "'Tobermory' tells, in a delightfully facetious way, *how the frank honesty of bestial manners can never coexist with the hypocrisy that makes civilization possible*" (Salemi 427, my emphasis).

Though the human beings deny language to animals and thereby marginalise them, when the possibility of a talking animal is seen, they want to get rid of that animal, as language belongs to the human realm, and thereby a talking animal would turn their assumed superiority upside down. Thus, though a talking cat is not so important, as we are already familiar with such personified animals in the fables, animations and cartoons, what is significant in this story is what the cat says. In this respect, as Robertson points out, "[t]he anthropomorphic animal has long functioned as a useful metaphor for the human condition, allowing us to see a reflection of ourselves and yet place a convenient distance between us and the mirror by virtue of our fundamental

human/animal difference" (3), because, through what he says, Saki subverts the conventions, and thereby diverges from the norms of society. What is presented to us in this story is the criticism of the oppressive people's approaches to animals.

Like Saki's all other animals, this anthropomorphic cat in this story is specifically used to show the real identities of human beings. Despite their social masks, their real identities are hypocritical. Thus, as Salemi posits, like Tobermory, all the animals in Saki's fiction,

> represent what human beings would be like without the veneer of etiquette and social grace – in fact, what human beings really are beneath the surface of upper-class manners, bourgeois respectability, and feigned solicitude for others. No wonder then, that the author kills off the errant zoologist at the end of "Tobermory" – in Saki's view, the playful conflict between man and beast represents the more serious and unremitting conflict between what we are and what we strive to seem. (426)

Soon after Tobermory's death, the news about Mr Appin's death is heard when he is experimenting with the elephants in the zoo:

> Tobermory had been Appin's one successful pupil, and he was destined to have no successor. A few weeks later an elephant in the Dresden Zoological Garden, which had shown no previous signs of irritability, broke loose and killed an Englishman who had apparently been teasing it. The victim's name was variously reported in the papers as Oppin and Eppelin, but his front name was faithfully rendered Cornelius. (Munro 115)

While experimenting with animals, finally Mr Appin was killed by one of them. In line with this, the second important point in the story is the use of animals in experimentations by human beings. As the speciesist human beings see animals as properties, they use them in various kinds of experiments. Although the method Mr. Cornelius Appin uses when experimenting with animals to teach them the human language is not so cruel and dangerous, he still exploits them, and thereby the animals are annoyed as might be understood from his death while teaching the human language to the elephants.

To conclude, Saki criticises the society's hypocrisies and the pretentions in this story, by using a cat, who is given the ability of human language, and thereby disrupting speciesist assumptions that were part of Western civilisation. As Robertson propounds,

the deliberate use of such anthropomorphised animals in stories is done to present complicated issues about society and other issues (2). Thus, by using such a talking animal character in his story, Saki reveals the so-called civilised people's hypocritical identities and hence criticises their petty pretensions. Therefore, to hide their hypocritical approaches, the human beings decide to kill the animal. As it is an animal, they do not value its life, and decide to kill it as the outcome of a speciesist approach, which was an extension of contemporary imperialistic worldview.

The next story that will be analysed in this chapter is Saki's "The Penance," another cat tale. It is "another revenge story with its chilling atmosphere and cold and revengeful child protagonists" (Köklü 47), first published in the *Westminster Gazette* on September 24, 1910 (Gibson, "Penance" 334). Similar to Saki's other stories, in this particular story the "tragicomic explorations of the gap between imaginative children and conventional adults" have been dealt with profoundly (Gibson, "Penance" 334). Narrated by an all-knowing third person narrator, the story is basically about three unnamed children's sense of justice whose cat has recently been killed by Octavian Ruttle who wrongly believes that cat is the murderer of his chickens. However, contrary to his wrong assumption, the murderers of the chickens turn out to be rats rather than the children's tabby cat. Although Octavian Ruttle's guilty conscience disturbs him, he still tries to deceive the children by buying chocolates to them. However, the children are stubborn and they want Ruttle to do penance, and to this end, they take Octavian Ruttle's two-year-old daughter Olivia to the piggeries to throw her to the pigs. Thus, when his daughter's life is compared to the dead cat's life, Ruttle understands his mistake and accepts to do penance, and stands for half an hour holding a paper written 'I'm a miserable Beast.' The next morning Ruttle finds a paper near the wall on which was written: "Un-Beast."

As mentioned at the beginning of the story, Octavian Ruttle's "soul's peace depended in large measure on the unstinted approval of his fellows" (Munro 422). As a hypocritical person, Ruttle "is more concerned with keeping up appearances than anything else" (Pringle 12). Yet, on the other hand, he does not hesitate to kill a tabby cat. For Marti Kheel, "killing animals is the establishment of man's superiority over animals" (58), and this is directly related with speciesism. Although Octavian kills the cat to protect his

benefits, the act of killing an animal is something that "he scarcely approved himself" (Munro 422), as he wants to keep up appearances. Thus, "he was glad when the gardener had hidden the body in its hastily dug grave under a lone oak tree in the meadow, the same tree that the hunted quarry had climbed as a last effort towards safety" (Munro 422). In fact, while killing the cat, Octavian is aware of the fact that the children will not like the idea of their cat being killed; yet, so long as it is hidden there is no problem: "'The children will mind, but they need not know'" (Munro 422).

Despite Octavian's efforts in trying to learn the children's names, ages and the dates of their birthdays, "[t]hey remained, however, as non-committal as the long blank wall that shut them off from the meadow, a wall over which their three heads sometimes appeared at odd moments" (Munro 423). In fact, for Gibson this wall was specifically used by the writer to separate the hypocritical world of the adults from that of children:

> Saki is an expert illustrator of the difference between adults' and children's worlds, exemplified here by the "high blank wall" between Octavian and his unnamed juvenile opponents, a barrier that "would not be more impervious to his explanations than the bunch of human hostility that peered over its coping. As in the better-known "Sredni Vashtar" (published just four months earlier) or "The Lumber-Room" (1913), children's private, devoutly animist rituals and beliefs eclipse their public ties to family, friends, or neighbors. The children morally equate humans and beasts by suggesting that Olivia's death is compensation for their cat's and telling Octavian that he is a "Beast." (Gibson, "Penance" 334).

As Gibson further argues, "'[t]he standing puzzle' of this intelligent, moral child-force reveals the blandness, immorality, and hypocrisy of an unfeeling, hidebound Edwardian society" ("Penance" 335).

As this high wall both symbolically and also literally separated the children's lives from that of Octavian's, he did not have enough knowledge about them: "They had parents in India- that much Octavian had learned in the neighbourhood; the children, beyond grouping themselves garmentwise into sexes; a girl and two boys, carried their life-story no further on his behoof" (Munro 423). The only knowledge both Octavian and the readers know so long as the selective omniscient narrator tells is that these are three children whose family is away in India probably due to their family's assignment in the Empire's biggest colony. Though minute, these few details about the children are quite

telling in fact. Besides criticising Octavian Ruttle's hypocrisy, Saki at the same time brings the question of imperialism to the fore with these details. These three unnamed children, a girl and two boys, with their families in India seem to be the small Munro children who were left with their aunts in England while their father was in Burma assigned as the colonel in the Burma Police. Moreover, the children's anonymous identity might also be taken as criticism of imperialism as these children might be any children experiencing the same things at that time due to the imperial ideology of the empire. Because, the Munro children and these unnamed children in the story were not the only children left in the mother country on their own as their families were serving in the colonies, they were, in fact, just one representative of the rest of them who were sometimes in worse conditions. However, unlike the Munro children, these children were not locked up in the house.

Despite his struggle, Octavian cannot manage to hide his murder from the children, and they call him "Beast." Actually, as Köklü argues, the children are like the conscience of Octavian (47), they are always there whenever Octavian commits a sin. Besides, as Pringle posits, in this story,

> [a]s in "Sredni Vashtar", Saki uses a curious blend of Christian and pagan imagery throughout to illustrate the conflict between the illusions of the adults and the children's superior ability to separate reality from the appearance of truth. The title itself and the form that the penance takes are Christian but the three children are likened to the Parcae Sisters of classical mythology. (9)

As Edith Hamilton remarks,

> [v]ery important but assigned to no abode whether in heaven or on the earth were THE FATES, *Moirae* in Greek, *Parcae* in Latin, who, Hesiod says, give to men at birth evil and good to have. They were three, Clotho, the Spinner., who spun the thread of life; Lachesis, the Disposer of Lots, who assigned to each man his destiny; Atropos, she who could not be turned, who carried "the abhorred shears" and cut the thread at death. (48-9)

In this respect, especially the children's presence wherever he goes, and their ominous knowledge about the cat's tragic death put them into a godlike position judging him. The children's godlike presence everywhere makes Octavian aware of the sin that he has committed; and hence, so as to keep up appearances, Octavian wants to deceive the

children. To this end, two days later he goes to "the best sweet-shop in the neighbouring market town for a box of chocolates that by its size and contents should fitly atone for the dismal deed done under the oak tree in the meadow" (Munro 423). However, interestingly enough, the first two specimens that are shown to Octavian are quite significant as if someone is reminding him of his sin: "one had a group of chickens pictured on its lid, the other bore the portrait of a tabby kitten" (Munro 423). Rejecting the first two of them, Octavian accepts the third sample which was "bedecked with a spray of painted poppies" (Munro 423). Maybe as a foreshadowing, Octavian hails "the flowers of forgetfulness as a happy omen" (Munro 423). Yet, contrary to what he believes, ironically enough, it turns out to be a bad omen, because while Octavian is picking flowers for the children, they take his small daughter Olivia "to the roof of the nearest sty" (Munro 425) in the piggeries.

Contrary to Octavian's assumptions, the children do not accept Octavian's blood money, and he is surprised with the scene in his garden the next morning:

> [t]he greensward for considerable space around was strewn and speckled with a chocolate –coloured hail, enlivened here and there with gay tinsel-like wrappings or the glistening mauve of crystallized violets. It was as though the fairy paradise of a greedy-minded child had taken shape and substance in the vegetation of the meadow. Octavian's blood-money had been flung back at him in scorn. (Munro 424)

However, besides this, as the chicks were still carried off after the death of the tabby cat, "it seemed highly probable that the cat had only haunted the chicken-run to prey on the rats which harboured there" (Munro 424). Upon learning this fact "[t]hrough the flowing channels of servant talk" (Munro 424), the children send a copy-book paper on which is written: "'Beast. Rats eated your chickens'" (Munro 424). With this fact, Octavian begins to look for ways of being apologised by the children more willingly as he does not like this nickname: "Beast". Thus, he looks for "an opportunity for sloughing off the disgrace that wrapped him" (Munro 424).

Later he decides to apologise by taking his two-year-old daughter Olivia with himself. When he takes Olivia there, he asks them whether they like flowers or not. Surprisingly, for the first time, they reply to him by nodding. Upon Octavian's question on which flowers they like, they all reply: "'Those with all the colours, over there'" (Munro 425).

As Octavian sees this as an opportunity to please the children, he does not oppose to the idea of going to the farthest flowers to pick up. However, not surprisingly, the children in the story, similar to other Sakian children, are wild and cleverer than the adult human beings, and they do this on purpose to make Octavian go away. On his return, Octavian finds "the blank wall blanker and more deserted than ever, while the foreground was void of all trace of Olivia" (Munro 425). The children take Olivia's go-cart to the piggeries as they want to teach Octavian a lesson by comparing a human being's life to that of an animal's. Despite Octavian's efforts, the children reach the piggeries earlier than him and take Olivia to the roof of the nearest sty. As these are old buildings, Octavian cannot dare to follow them up to the roof, and asks them what they will do to Olivia. To his questions, the children give quite logical answers displaying their knowledge:

> "Hang her in chains over a slow fire," said one of the boys. Evidently they had been reading English history.
>
> "Frow her down and the pigs will d'vour her, every bit 'cept the palms of her hands," said the other boy. It was also evident that they had studied Biblical history. (Munro 425)

Upon realising that the children are serious, Octavian accepts to do penance "in a white sheet by the grave" (Munro 426) holding a candle and saying, "'I'm a miserable Beast'" (Munro 426). After this agreement, they release Olivia, and that same evening Octavia takes his position "as penitent under the lone oak tree, having first carefully undressed the part" (Munro 427). After this event, the next morning he is "gladdened by a sheet of copy-book paper lying beside the blank wall, on which was written the message 'Un-Beast'" (Munro 427).

As in all of the stories examined in this chapter the story ends with the victory of the children and/or the animals. Although Octavian is a hypocritical person, as he does not want to be seen as a bad person not only in the eyes of the public but also in the eyes of the children, he tries to hide his wrong doings. However, "[u]nlike the wicked Mrs de Ropp or the domineering kill-joy "aunt" in "The Lumber-Room", [as] he is not essentially evil" (Pringle 19), Octavian is not punished with death. He is taught a lesson by three innocent children who act as a judge and teach him that the life of a cat is as important as the life of a human being. Thus, a hypocritical and speciesist man learns

that a cat's life is as important as that of a human being's. As children are away from the hypocrisies of the adult human beings, and as they are also badly influenced by the oppressive imperialist power, they are on the side of the animals.

The last story that will be analysed in this chapter is "The Storyteller," first published in *The Morning Post* on 2 September 1913, and then in *Beasts and Super Beasts* in 1914. Although there are not real animal characters, the focal point in this story is the approach of the human beings to animals as they narrate in their stories, and their hypocrisy. As Robertson aptly argues, "[a]nimals have long played a part in the delineation of human identity. Whether totemic or tutelary, symbolizing the purity or the ferocity of nature, our non-human companions have provided a vast array of metaphors for us to deploy in our story-telling and meaning-making" (1). In this story, there is a story within the story. As such, Saki reverses the traditional approach of human beings to animals by criticising them. In the traditional stories told to the small children since the earliest ages the speciesist approach of the human beings is openly stated, in which animals are shown as the enemy of the human beings and thereby they are punished at the end of the story. In Saki's "The Storyteller," on the other hand, interestingly, at the end of the story, it is a human being that is punished by an animal.

The story is basically about the story that a young man tells to three little children in a train compartment when they are dissatisfied with the story that their aunt has told them. Similar to "The Penance," in this story, there are three little children, two little girls and a little boy. Reminiscent of both Saki's childhood experiences and also that of most of Saki's child protagonists, these children are travelling with their aunt not with their parents, and there is no mention of their families. The guardianship of another aunt in this story seems to be the criticism of the general imperial ideology of the period, as in many other stories. Thus, as Tom Sharpe aptly argues, "[t]he literary influence of Aunts in the Age of the empire [...] was clearly of major importance. The children of colonial administrators placed in the care of aunts at Home in much the same callous fashion as Spartans are said to have left their newborn sons on the roof overnight to see if they were fit to survive" (8). Similar to other Saki aunts, the aunt in the story is very strict and self–controlled, and thus, "[m]ost of the aunt's remarks seemed to begin with 'Don't,' and nearly all of the children's remarks began with 'Why?'" (Munro 349).

When tired with the children's questions, the aunt decides to tell a story to the children. She begins to tell a "deplorably uninteresting story about a little girl [who] was good, and made friends with every one on account of her goodness, and was finally saved from a mad bull by a number of rescuers who admired her moral character" (Munro 350). The aunt's story is so dull and hypocritical that the children begin to question her story. They ask her: "'Wouldn't they have saved her if she hadn't been good?' demanded the bigger of the small girls. It was exactly the question that the bachelor had wanted to ask" (Munro 350). Contrary to the children's surprise, the aunt reservedly continues to say that the girl was saved as she was a good girl.

When the children find the aunt's story dull and uninteresting, the bachelor in the same compartment tells that her story was very boring. For Köklü, "[a]t this point, Saki demonstrates the dullness and hypocrisy of the oppressive adults contradicting with the unlimited, reasonable and interesting world of children" (53). After the aunt's uninteresting and boring story, the bachelor begins to tell the story of another good girl, but this girl different from that of the first one, is "horribly good," which suggests a different pattern in fact as will be shown in the following lines. For Köklü, with these two different stories, "Saki presents the discrepancy between the hypocrisy of the adult world and the sincerity of childhood" (53). Though the bachelor's story begins in the same fashion as that of the aunt's, it soon attracts the children's attention, especially with the use of the words "horribly good," which is something different from the usual usage and thereby suggestive for them.

Different from the good girl in the aunt's story, the girl in the bachelor's story, Bertha, is rewarded with three medals each of which are given her for her good deeds, and she wears them all the time. Besides the medals, Bertha is also rewarded with the allowance of the prince to enter into his garden which is forbidden to other people. However, besides these interesting points about Bertha's characteristic, there are some other peculiar things that must be mentioned in the story. The garden in the story, for instance, is very different from any other gardens. Because, there are no flowers in the garden due to the prince's choice of the pigs over flowers when he is made to choose between them.

When the story nears its conclusion, it becomes more and more interesting both for the readers and also for the children in the story. Soon, a wolf, as the enemy of the children in most of the children's literature, comes to the garden to eat a pig. Though Bertha hides behind the bushes when she sees the wolf, she is immediately seen by the wolf due to her medals. When she trembles with fear behind the bushes, Bertha's medals clink and the wolf sees her. Contrary to the aunt's hypocritical story, the bachelor's story ends with Bertha's death. After the wolf devours the little girl, the remaining are only her boots and the medal. Similar to three little children in "The Penance," the little children act like three judges in this story, as well. They like the bachelor's story rather than the aunt's hypocritical and uninteresting story. Basically, in this respect, the story is about the criticism of the stereotypical specisesist approach of the human beings towards animals and their hypocritical behaviours and pretensions especially with respect to spinning a yarn to children (Borges 11).

As Köklü remarks, the bachelor in "The Storyteller" is different from the rest of the adult protagonists in most of Saki's stories in that "unlike most Sakian adults, [he] knows the nature and desires of children very well" (51). Different from the other adults in Saki's stories, he is not hypocritical. In this story, like the rest of his stories, Saki shows his understanding of the children against the insincere world of the adults. Thus, as Mais argues:

> "The Story-Teller," in which Munro shows his complete understanding of the children ought to prove invaluable to those who want to know how to hold the attention of small boys and girls: the flick of the satiric whip at the end of the story when the aunt stigmatises the stranger's fable as "improper" is delightful. (qtd. in Köklü 51)

In conclusion, in all the stories analysed in this chapter, the anthropocentric approach of the human beings as part of the dominant imperialist ideology of the period leads them to exploit animals ruthlessly. In doing so, the speciesist approach of adult human beings is clearly seen, as animals are worth nothing for them, and they easily kill or exploit them whenever necessary. However, children's approach to animals is very different from that of the adult human beings. While the adult human beings exploit the animals, the children are always in collaboration with animals. Besides, they are wild and untamed like the animals. Thus, while the innocence of both children and animals are praised in the stories, the hypocrisy and the pretensions of the adult human beings are

criticised. In this respect, while animals along with small children are the protagonists in the stories, the oppressive, hypocritical and pretentious adults and especially aunts are the antagonists of them. That is why, at the end of each story while children and animals are rewarded, the antagonists are harshly punished. All of these suggest Saki's deliberate and systematic criticism of speciesism.

CHAPTER II

ANIMISM AS REFLECTED IN SAKI'S SHORT STORIES

As the exploitation of the natural resources and the animal species is the direct result of the anthropocentric approach, besides his criticism of the speciesist approaches of human beings, what attracts attention in Saki's many other stories is his use of animism as a tool to criticise the wrong doings of human beings against animals. As the reflection of the Cartesian dichotomy, despite the developments in the field of ecology, cognitive ethology and the posthumanities, animals are still thought to be lacking souls, and thereby their exploitation is legitimated. An animistic belief, as opposed to the dualistic viewpoint, attributes spirits not only to human beings but also to more-than-humans, that is, animals and other living entities, as well.

Etymologically, as defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word animism is derived from the Latin world *anima* meaning "life and soul." In this respect, it means "[t]he attribution of a living soul to inanimate objects and natural phenomena" ("Animism"). However, such a definition of the word leads to another dualistic thought in that the attribution of a living soul to inanimate objects or nonhuman others directly underpins a dualistic thought. This dualistic approach to animism is directly related with the definition of the word with reference to anthropologist Edward Tylor's theory of animism as a pre-religious state as he thoroughly discusses in his papers which were later compiled in the collection *Primitive Culture*. As Caroline Rooney argues, animism's "use as an anthropological term was promoted by E. B. Tylor in *Primitive Culture* (1871) to designate a non-monotheistic primitive religion of spirits" (8). As Nurit Bird-David argues, Edward Burnett Tylor "took his notion of animism from the 17th - century alchemist Stahl, who had himself revived the term from classical theory" (S69). According to Mattar, "[a]nimism, as Tylor defined it, was a savage stage of development, the very purpose of which was to be outgrown" (138). In this respect, for Edward Tylor, as he contends in his *Primitive Culture*, "[a]nimism is, in fact, the groundwork of the Philosophy of Religion, from that of savages up to that of civilized men. Although it may at first sight seem to afford but a bare and meagre definition of a

minimum of religion, it will be found practically sufficient; for, where the root is, the branches will generally be produced" (385). This older usage of the term is more related with the religious beliefs. In this respect, the definition of 'old animism,' as Graham Harvey posits,

> refers to a putative concern with knowing what is alive and what makes a being alive. It alleges a 'belief in spirits' or 'non-empirical beings,' and/or a confusion about life and death among some indigenous people, young children or all religious people. Sometimes it is party to the assertion of a confusion between persons and objects, or between humans and other-than-human beings. It may also be part of a theory about the origins of religions and/or the nature of religion of religion itself. The newer usage refers to a concern with knowing how to behave appropriately towards persons, not all of whom are human. It refers to the widespread indigenous and increasingly popular 'alternative' understanding that humans share this world with a wide range of persons, only some of whom are human. (xi)

However, another definition of the word animism in the dictionary is totally different from that of the first one, and similar to the definition of the term as it is used by the critics as 'new animism': "Extended polemically to: the belief in the existence of soul or spirit apart from matter, and in a spiritual world generally; spiritualism as opposed to materialism" ("Animism"). In this vein, the term animism, briefly, refers to the idea of respecting of all life forms, and adopting a holistic worldview as opposed to the anthropocentric worldview which is based on dualistic views. Thus as Harvey posits,

> [a]nimism is lived out in various ways that are all about learning to act respectfully (carefully and constructively) towards and among other persons. Persons are beings, rather than objects, who are animated and social towards others (even if they are not always sociable). Animism *may* involve learning how to recognise who is a person and what is not – because it is not always obvious not all animists agree that everything that exists is alive or personal. However, animism is more accurately understood as being concerned with learning how to be a good person in respectful relationships with other persons." (xi)

In this respect, central to the theme of animism, as it is based on the idea of respecting the living world, is to "understand worldviews and life ways that are different in various ways from those typically inculcated and more or less taken for granted in Western modernity" (Harvey xi-xii). As respecting all life forms is the central idea,

contrary to the dualistic view as in the anthropocentric approach, there are pluralities in the animistic belief. Thus,

> [i]nstead of crying 'One!' or 'Two!,' animists celebrate plurality, multiplicity, the many and their entwined passionate entanglements. Instead of the hero who struggles against one or other side of things in an attempt to discern the underlying truth, animist stories present tricksters who multiply possibilities in increasingly amusing ways. (Harvey xv)

In this respect, personhood is recognised not only in humans, but also in other-than-humans/more-than-humans. However, such an approach is completely disregarded in the anthropocentric worldview, and thus, animals, let alone other life forms, are denied not only personhood but also right to life. The ruthless exploitation of animals is the direct result of such an approach. Thus, it might be argued that animism can be used as a tool in literary works to present a critique of the anthropocentric approach which takes for granted the exploitation of the animal species for human needs. In this respect, the use of animism in Saki's short fiction at a time when British imperialism was at its peak is significant in criticising the oppression of animals through the influence of the imperial ideology of the time. As mentioned in the former chapters, animals were influenced by imperialism in ways worse than human beings. Thus, in most of Saki's stories there seems to be a criticism of these approaches of human beings. While in some of his stories, the speciesist approaches are criticised, in others, his preference of the animistic cultures seems apparent.

By turning away from the imperialist and colonialist discourses and projects of his time, Saki creates a world of his own in which there are more-than-human entities that have been attributed animistic features. Thereby, by attributing such characteristics to his unusual characters, he not only actually steps out of the traditional stereotypes of his time, but also criticises them by deconstructing the dominant Western notions which has always privileged the human subject while subjugating the rest of beings to him/her.

On this background, the first story that will be analysed in this chapter is Saki's "Sredni Vashtar" which appeared in *The Chronicles of Clovis* in 1911. It is "a revenge story of the child Conradin" (Köklü 25). Perhaps the most chilly revenge story of all Saki stories, "Sredni Vashtar" is Saki's most famous and the most anthologised short story. The plot of the story is briefly centred on Conradin, a ten-year-old ill boy, who lives

with his cousin and guardian Mrs de Ropp. As Mrs de Ropp is very strict towards Conradin for an unknown reason, Conradin hates her, and formulates an animistic pagan religion for himself and begins to secretly worship his polecat ferret god in the tool shed of his cousin's house. However, when the presence of an animal is discovered by Conradin's guardian, she decides to take away the animal. Yet, when she is planning to take the animal out of the tool shed, the animal causes the death of the woman. From the viewpoint of a third person narrative, the narrator tells all the details about not only the child but also the cousin. That is why the reader can easily understand the unnecessary and ruthless coldness of the cousin towards the child. Although the narrator is a third person omniscient narrator, he/she seems to be on Conradin's side. Thus, especially the last scene, that is the exit of the great polecat ferret from the tool shed with blood around its throat openly suggesting the death of Mrs de Ropp is told from Conradin's viewpoint. In other words, in this critical moment in the plot, Saki seems to be privileging the child and animal, and their agency as a victorious response to the anthropocentric adult cousin. As was explained in the Introduction, the coupling together of the child and the animal was Saki's deliberate choice to form a critical tool to refute the assumptions of white European imperial ideology. Therefore, "Sredni Vashtar" seems to represent a very good example of Saki's critical strategy in this sense, also.

Influenced probably by Saki's aunt Augusta with respect to her strict and wicked character (Waugh viii), Conradin's guardian Mrs de Ropp is a very strict woman not only towards Conradin but also towards the animals as the reader realises when the plot unfolds through the end of the story. Although such strict and hypocritical aunts or female characters are apparently present in most of the Victorian literary works, such a model is epitomised in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*, in which such a very strict and unloving 'aunt' figure meets Aurora Leigh when she is orphaned at the age of 13 and thus made to live with her. On their first meeting, Aurora realises the coldness of the aunt for an unknown reason:

> She stood upon the steps to welcome me,
> *Calm, in black garb*. I clung about her neck –
> Young babes, who catch at every shred of wool
> To draw the new light closer, catch and cling
> Less blindly. In my ears, my father's word

> Hummed ignorantly, as the sea in shells,
> 'Love, love, my child.' She, black there with my grief,
> Might feel my love – she was his sister once,
> I clung to her. A moment she seemed moved,
> *Kissed me with cold lips, suffered me to cling*, (Book I, 313-322, my emphasis)

Coming from Italy to her aunt's house in England, after her mother's death, Aurora Leigh expects a warm welcome from her aunt; yet, contrary to her expectations, the aunt is a very strict and cold person not only towards the child but also towards herself. Similar to that of Aurora Leigh's aunt, Conradin's guardian Mrs de Ropp is very strict towards Conradin, and she hates him for an unknown reason. Though not mentioned in detail, just at the beginning of the story, the third person narrator tells the reader that Conradin is an ill boy, and according to the doctor, "the boy would not live another five years" (Munro 136). Other than this remark just mentioned at the beginning of the story, there is no detail about Conradin's illness. However, Conradin's illness is the biggest reason that Mrs de Ropp uses to forbid everything to the child "for his good" (Munro 136). Though she claims to think of his health, the reason for all her restrictions seems to be the reflection of her hatred towards him. However, despite her coldness and almost cruelty toward the child, Mrs de Ropp does not openly articulate the fact that she does not like the child. However, contrary to her hypocritical approach, Conradin openly states his dislike of her:

> Mrs. de Ropp would never, in her honestest moments, have confessed to herself that she disliked Conradin, though she might have been dimly aware that thwarting him "for his good" was a duty which she did not find particularly irksome. Conradin hated her with a desperate sincerity which he was perfectly able to mask. Such few pleasures as he could contrive for himself gained an added relish from the likelihood that they would be displeasing to his guardian, and from the realm of his imagination she was locked out—an unclean thing, which should find no entrance. (Munro 136-7)

The reason why she takes care of the child is not stated in the story. However, the possible reason for her to look after the child seems to be one of the following two: either the child is the owner of a huge amount of money, or the woman takes care of him to be seen as an appropriate person by society. As mentioned above, Saki's aim in

these stories was to criticise the hypocrisies and the pretensions of the people. That is why the third person narrator seems to be on the side of the child while at the same time criticising the woman and her hypocritical stance.

As Auberon Waugh remarks, "[t]he boy in [...] [the] story is dying [...] and we are given to understand that he is dying because his imaginative life is being stifled by the pestering boredom and domination of his terrible female guardian" (viii). What kills the little boy is the boredom and the sterility of their house and their garden. The sterility of their life is reflected in the garden of their house. Similar to the childhood experiences of the three Munro children, Charlie, Hector and Ethel; Conradin leads a very unfruitful and boring life in this house, away from all the other children and people. As stated previously, Conradin is not only prohibited to be friends with other children, but also forbidden to amuse himself on his own, yet "for his good" (Munro 136) as Mrs de Ropp would say. The garden is depicted by Saki as follows:

> In the dull, cheerless garden, overlooked by so many windows that were ready to open with a message not to do this or that, or a reminder that medicines were due, he found little attraction. The few fruit-trees that it contained were set jealously apart from his plucking, as though they were rare specimens of their kind blooming in an arid waste; it would probably have been difficult to find a market-gardener who would have offered ten shillings for their entire yearly produce. (Munro 137)

Despite the dullness and the sterility of the garden, there are some important details which draw Conradin's attention. As the author puts it, there is a forgotten 'tool shed' in "a forgotten part" of the garden, and this tool shed turns out to be a "haven" for Conradin:

> In a forgotten corner, however, almost hidden behind a dismal shrubbery, was a disused tool-shed of respectable proportions, and within its walls Conradin found a haven, something that took on the varying aspects of a playroom and a cathedral. He had peopled it with a legion of familiar phantoms [...]. In one corner lived a ragged-plumaged Houdan hen, on which the boy lavished an affection that had scarcely another outlet. Further back in the gloom stood a large hutch, divided into two compartments, one of which was fronted with close iron bars. This was the abode of a large polecat-ferret, which a friendly butcher- boy had once smuggled, cage and all, into its present quarters, in exchange for a long-secreted hoard of small silver. [...] And one day, out of Heaven knows what material, he spun the

> beast a wonderful name, and from that moment it grew into a god and a religion. (Munro 137)

As mentioned in the quotation above, despite the dullness of both their lives and also the garden, Conradin manages to bring some colour to his boring life. Again as reminiscent of Saki's childhood experiences, as he is said to have had a Houdan hen and guinea pigs, Conradin experiences different feelings in this forgotten tool shed. Immediately, the tool shed turns into a sacred place more than a tool shed in Conradin's own world, and he formulates an animalistic religion with an animal god. In fact, "Conradin was dreadfully afraid of the lithe, sharp-fanged beast, but it was his most treasured possession. Its very presence in the tool-shed was a secret and fearful joy, to be kept scrupulously from the knowledge of the Woman, as he privately dubbed his cousin" (Munro 137). This awe-inspiring situation probably stimulated Conradin, and thereby he soon formulated his animalistic religion soon after naming the polecat ferret as "Sredni Vashtar." Conradin's animalistic religion appears here as opposed to the cousin's Christian belief. As stated earlier in this chapter, according to Graham Harvey, in animistic beliefs, there are pluralities and multiplicities, and the animists celebrate these pluralities (xv). That is why, with reference to Conradin's newly-found religion, one may argue for Saki's sympathy for animistic religions or at least an animistic worldview.

Thus, Conradin is very happy with his pagan religion and celebrates this plurality by paying ritual visits to his animalistic god, the polecat ferret, on Thursdays: "Every Thursday, in the dim and musty silence of the tool-shed, he worshipped with mystic and elaborate ceremonial before the wooden hutch where dwelt Sredni Vashtar, the great ferret" (Munro 137). Although there is a Houdan hen in the tool shed besides the polecat ferret, the animal which is worshipped by the child is only the polecat ferret. As defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a polecat is "[a] small dark-brown coloured carnivorous quadruped" and a polecat ferret is "a brown variety of the ferret" ("Polecat Ferret"). Probably due to the polecat ferret's carnivorous feature, Conradin chooses it as his animal god when compared with the Houdan hen which is generally known as domestic poultry.

With the formulation of the animalistic religion, the animistic features emerge in the story. As can be remembered from the explanation provided earlier in the Introduction, in Western philosophy, animals are denied soul and thereby their agency is consequently disregarded. However, contrary to this belief, by deconstructing the dominant Western notions, Saki does not only attribute soul to the polecat ferret but also makes it a god. As Harvey argues in his *Animism*, "[a]nimists are people who recognise that the world is full of persons, only some of whom are human, and that life is always lived in relationship with others" (xi). As Conradin recognises the personhood of the polecat ferret, which is reminiscent of an animistic attitude, he begins to respect it, and makes the ferret his god. His worshipping of the ferret finally leads to the destruction of Mrs de Ropp at the end of the story.

Contrary to Mrs de Ropp's hypocritical approach, Conradin is very sincere not only in his feelings but also in his approach to religion and his ferret god. Conradin's rituals included

> [r]ed flowers in their season and scarlet berries in the winter-time were offered at his shrine, for he was a god who laid some special stress on the fierce impatient side of things, as opposed to the Woman's religion, which, as far as Conradin could observe, went to great lengths in the contrary direction. And on great festivals powdered nutmeg was strewn in front of his hutch, an important feature of the offering being that the nutmeg had to be stolen. [...] On one occasion, when Mrs. de Ropp suffered from acute toothache for three days, Conradin kept up the festival during the entire three days, and almost succeeded in persuading himself that Sredni Vashtar was personally responsible for the toothache. If the malady had lasted for another day the supply of nutmeg would have given out. (Munro 138)

As might be understood from the quotation above, the agency of the animal is not only stated at the very end of the story when the animal kills the woman. Just from the very beginning, the boy is aware of the power of the animal that for instance when the woman suffers from a headache, Conradin celebrates this event by offering nutmegs to his god. However, the frequency of Conradin's visits to the tool shed soon attracts Mrs de Ropp's attention and, she learns the presence of the Houdan hen there and again ostensibly 'for Conradin's health,' she says: "'It is not good for him to be pottering down there in all weathers,'" she promptly decided, and at breakfast one morning she announced that the Houdan hen had been sold and taken away overnight" (Munro 138).

Here once again, Mrs de Ropp's hypocrisy is underlined. By claiming to think Conradin's health, she decides to sell the animal. However, the ironic situation makes the readers sure that the reason for her to sell the animal is nothing more than to upset Conradin. However, contrary to her disrespectful behaviours towards the more-than-human lives in nature, Conradin respects them.

As Nedelcut points out, "[t]he culminant moment when Conradin turned himself into a fervent believer took place after Mrs. De Ropp announced that she had sold the Houdan hen, since then the boy obsessively asked for one thing from his God" (106). After this event, Conradin begins to chant the same thing to Sredni Vashtar believing that as an omnipresent god, Sredni Vashtar will do what he wants:

> "Do one thing for me, Sredni Vashtar."
> The thing was not specified. As Sredni Vashtar was a god he must be supposed to know. And choking back a sob as he looked at that other empty corner, Conradin went back to the world he so hated. (Munro 138-9)

To this end, he continually chants the same lines:

> Sredni Vashtar went forth,
> His thoughts were red thoughts and his teeth were white.
> His enemies called for peace, but he brought them death.
> Sredni Vashtar the Beautiful. (Munro 139)

Surprised by the fact that Conradin's frequent visits to the tool shed does not cease, Mrs de Ropp grows suspicious: "'What are you keeping in that locked hutch?' she asked. "I believe it's guinea-pigs. I'll have them all cleared away.'" (Munro 139). In fact, through these claims Mrs de Ropp's approach to the animals is once more underlined. As animals are not estimated important by human beings, their death for trivial reasons is taken for granted. However, in the animistic beliefs, the animals are respected as they are also believed to be persons. Contrary to what she believes, however, what Conradin feeds there is his ferret god, and this brings Mrs de Ropp's end. Ironically enough, when she goes to the tool shed to remove the guinea pigs there, she brings her own end. In this respect, as Pringle aptly points out "[t]he crucial differences between Mrs de Ropp and Conradin are not only her stupidity and his imagination but her wilful blindness and his intellectual honesty" (40). Unaware of Conradin's animal god, she goes there to remove the guinea pigs, but she meets her destruction there. Thus, Conradin's chanting

comes to an end when he sees the polecat ferret coming victorious out of the tool shed with "dark wet stains around the fur of jaws and throat" (Munro 140). Thus, as in Saki's many other stories,

> it is the intelligent animal who triumphs, and there is always the supposition that, if humans behaved like animals, the world would certainly order its ways more sensibly. Long before the modern zootheism of Lorenz and Morris, and with none of their 'scientific' fervour, Saki was demonstrating a preference for animal behaviour with a refreshing lack of sentimentality. (Sharpe 8)

As Köklü argues, "[a]s a total devotee of his omnipotent and beautiful god, Conradin is finally rewarded as his god does what he desires deep down in his heart and attacks and destroys the woman who made Conradin suffer and who broke into his holy temple without permission" (27). While Conradin is rewarded for his innocence and respect to the living world, the woman is punished for her hypocrisy: "She hypocritically worships a patient god although she is impatient, and thus it is a fitting irony that her death should be meted out by the impatient god" (Pringle 43).

As Eda Köklü points out, "[u]nlike the benevolent and merciful God, Conradin's god is violent and wild" (29). As toast has always been forbidden to Conradin "for his good" (Munro 136) by Mrs de Ropp, to celebrate the destruction of his enemy Conradin begins to make a toast for himself. Unaware of the fact, while the maid cries "'Whoever will break it to the poor child? I couldn't for the life of me!' (Munro 140) on learning Mrs de Ropp's death, Conradin is busy with making another piece of toast for himself. The repetitive use of the word "toast" is also important in that toast has been forbidden to Conradin all throughout the story, but after Mrs de Ropp's death, Conradin celebrates his victory by making himself a toast. Toast, though used here as a food, is used to refer "to drink in honour of (a person or thing)" ("Toast"). Through the use of this pun, Conradin, indeed, celebrates the success of his ferret god, thus, the toast is in honour of Sredni Vashtar.

As might be understood from this particular story, and in many others, Saki sometimes attributes animistic characteristics to the animals in his stories. Thus, through these

features, the animals manage to triumph over the human beings who tyrannically exploit animals. Generally, while doing these, animals are not alone; they are generally in collaboration with children, because like animals children are also oppressed by the hypocritical adult human beings especially in the dominant discourse of European colonial imperialism, one of the pillars of which was a strong sense of Christianity, representing a monotheistic and anthropocentric worldview. As the third person narrator seems to be on the side of Conradin, he and "the narrator celebrate the death of the tyrannical aunt as Conradin's "triumph" is given as a happy end" (Köklü 30).

A similar revenge story is narrated in "The Music on the Hill," which was published in *The Chronicles of Clovis* in 1911. However, contrary to Conradin's major role in "Sredni Vashtar," there is only a boy with a minor role, but he is very functional like Conradin. The common points in both of the stories are the collaboration of animals and the children against the hypocritical adult human beings' oppressions and the restrictions. Similar to the former story, "The Music on the Hill," is also a chilling revenge story resulting with the death of Sylvia Seltoun who does not respect the worship of the pagan god Pan.

Sylvia Seltoun is married to Mortimer Seltoun, who is referred to as "Dead Mortimer" (Munro 161) by his enemies. Although Mortimer is said to be not so good at in his relationships with the women, Sylvia manages to get married to Mortimer, and they begin to live in Yessney at the farm of Mortimer. As there is a chilly atmosphere and there is a sense of mystery just at the beginning of the story both the reader and the protagonist, namely Sylvia Seltoun soon realise that the people in that country worship Pan. She is disturbed to see people believing in nature-god Pan. One day while looking out of the window, Sylvia realises this:

> Outside the morning-room windows was a triangular slope of turf, which the indulgent might call a lawn, and beyond its low hedge of neglected fuchsia bushes a steeper slope of heather and bracken dropped down into cavernous combes overgrown with oak and yew. In its wild open savagery there seemed a stealthy linking of the joy of life with the terror of unseen things. Sylvia smiled complacently as she gazed with a School-of-Art appreciation at the landscape, and then of a sudden she almost shuddered. "It is very wild," she said to Mortimer, who had joined her; "one could

> almost think that in such a place the worship of Pan had never quite died out." (Munro 161-2)

As might be understood from the excerpt above, the world that Saki presents is very different from that of the typical upper-class people lead. Thus, as Tom Sharpe puts it,

> [c]ivilization has been overthrown and replaced by a strange supernature and all his worship of instinct comes at us more forcefully because it emerges from the setting of house party and afternoon tea and all the hallowed conventions of Edwardian society. Step out through the French windows and you are in the realm of Pan and liable, unless you pay homage, to pay virtues of middle-class respectability. (8)

As Sylvia is accustomed to the hallow conventions of the Edwardian society, she is shocked with what she has seen, and looks down upon those who believe in this nature religion. Yet, not surprisingly, Mortimer is not shocked to see people worshipping Pan as he is one of those people who believe in the cult of Pan. Thus, he tells Sylvia that the worship of Pan has never died there and that he is one of those people who worship this pagan god:

> "The worship of Pan never has died out," said Mortimer. "Other newer gods have drawn aside his votaries from time to time, but he is the Nature-God to whom all must come back at last. He has been called the Father of all the Gods, but most of his children have been stillborn."
> [...]
> "You don't really believe in Pan?" she [Sylvia] asked incredulously.
> "I've been a fool in most things," said Mortimer quietly, "but I'm not such a fool as not to believe in Pan when I'm down here. And if you're wise you won't disbelieve in him too boastfully while you're in his country."(Munro 162)

Contrary to Sylvia's surprise, Mortimer believes that those who do not worship Pan and who do not believe in him are fools. Thus, he advises her not to disbelieve Pan at least when she is there. However, contrary to Mortimer's warnings, Sylvia nevertheless continues to disbelieve in Pan, and satirises the rituals done in honour of Pan. As Harvey remarks, "[p]aganism labels a diverse but cohesive array of religious activities and affiliations that can also be named 'nature-centred spiritualities' or 'nature religions'" (84). Thus, Sylvia's disrespect is twofold here, as the representative of the oppressive imperialists, she does not only disrespect the beliefs of the people living there but also she disrespects nature. For the imperialist, there is only one truth and it is

their truth. However, on the other hand, in animistic beliefs, there are pluralities, and they respect every single being in nature, and they respect the different beliefs as opposed to the ideas of the imperialists.

According to Edith Hamilton, Pan was

> a noisy, merry god, the Homeric Hymn in his honor calls him; but he was part animal too, with a goat's horns, and goat's hoofs instead of feet. He was the goatherds' god, and the shepherds' god, and also the gay companion of the woodland nymphs when they danced. All wild places were his home, thickets and forests and mountains, but best of all he loved Arcady, where he was born. He was a wonderful musician. (44)

As noted, Pan is the god of the woods and the wild places, and with his half animal body, he was living among the animals. Despite the fact that he was a merry god, he was also a fearsome god for those who were not respectful towards him. Thus, as Hamilton further notes, "[s]ounds heard in a wilderness at night by the trembling traveller were supposed to be made by him, so that it is easy to see how the expression 'panic' fear arose" (Hamilton 45).

In this respect, in this story, as Byrne puts it,

> [t]he horned, goat-legged Pan was the deity of Arcadia, a peaceful pastoral land, but he has come to stand for the spirit of the wild. In his presence both animals and people were overwhelmed by a sense of awe close to terror which would immobilize them, cause them to tremble violently, and lose all sentient thought. The wild in Saki's stories is beautiful but violent and dangerous. It contains no trace of the myths of Nature as nurturing Mother. The supernatural force of the wilderness is associated with the beauty of an animal or a lovely, wild boy. (*The Unbearable Saki* 158)

As Sylvia does not respect nature, she is haunted by the sense of an ominous presence in the country watching her wherever she goes. The animals are very aggressive towards Sylvia, and they avoid her. Thus, it is not surprising to see Sylvia get panic when she sees some animals in the farm and then the laughter of a golden boy, whom she associates with the worker boy of their farm, Jan:

> From a distant corner a shaggy dog watched her with intent unfriendly eyes; as she drew near it slipped quietly into its kennel, and slipped out again as noiselessly when she had passed by. A few hens, questing for food under a rick, stole away under a gate at her approach. [...] At last, turning a corner quickly, she came upon a living thing that did not fly from her. Astretch in a

> pool of mud was an enormous sow, gigantic beyond the town-woman's wildest computation of swine-flesh, and speedily alert to resent and if necessary repel the unwonted intrusion. [...] As she threaded her way past rickyards and cowsheds and long blank walls, she started suddenly at a strange sound—the echo of a boy's laughter, golden and equivocal. Jan, the only boy employed on the farm, a towheaded, wizen-faced yokel, was visibly at work on a potato clearing half- way up the nearest hill-side, and Mortimer, when questioned, knew of no other probable or possible begetter of the hidden mockery that had ambushed Sylvia's retreat. *The memory of that untraceable echo was added to her other impressions of a furtive sinister 'something' that hung around Yessney*. (Munro 162-3, my emphasis)

As she does not respect the living world there, all the animals in the farm as mentioned in the quotation above seem to be Sylvia's enemies. Thus, realising the animals' antagonistic feelings towards her, she wants to get rid of that place. The antagonistic feelings of the animals are the animistic features attributed to them. Contrary to what Descartes claims, animals are not 'the machines of nature,' they feel the approaches of the human beings towards them. Thus, as Sylvia is disrespectful towards the cult of Pan and thereby towards the animals, they approach her with antagonistic feelings.

In this respect, Saki's ironic choice of the name Sylvia is interesting in that Sylvia is derived from "sylvan," which means "a person dwelling in a wood, or in a woodland region; a forester; a rustic." Besides, another meaning of the same word is "an animal, especially a bird, living in or frequenting the woods" ("Sylvan"). Yet, interestingly enough, despite her name, Sylvia does not feel at ease in the woods among the animals as she does not like them. Due to her disrespect to the Pan cult, all the animals seem to be on Pan's side, and they are quite antagonistic towards Sylvia. That is why they bring her death. Despite her panic and discomfort there, she still does not respect the cult of Pan by destroying his offerings put in front of Pan's statue:

> Once, following the direction she had seen him take in the morning, she came to an open space in a nut copse, further shut in by huge yew trees, in the centre of which stood a stone pedestal surmounted by a small bronze figure of a youthful Pan. It was a beautiful piece of workmanship, but her attention was chiefly held by the fact that a newly cut bunch of grapes had been placed as an offering at its feet. Grapes were none too plentiful at the manor house, and Sylvia snatched the bunch angrily from the pedestal. (Munro 163)

In this respect, as Gibson argues, "the impious trespasser's removal of the fruit [...] shows her pettiness, narrow pragmatism and, most important, Sylvia's utter incomprehension and denial of alternative beliefs [...] which, when they briefly confront her heresy in the form of a Beautiful Boy's face, threaten her simply by being unknown, unproductive, and foolish" ("Beastly Humans" 85). In a conversation with her husband Mortimer, Sylvia learns that the grapes were offered to the statue by her husband. On learning that she has destroyed the offerings, Mortimer warns her about the danger that would come to her: "'I should avoid the *woods* and orchards if I were you, and give a wide berth to the *horned beasts* on the farm'" (164, my emphasis). In fact Mortimer does not give suggestions to his wife, he frankly warns her about her coming destruction especially with reference to two important words: "woods" and "the horned beasts." Not only in this story, but also in general, woods are the mysterious places where uncanny events happen. Besides, the woods are the places where Pan lives. Moreover, Mortimer's warning about 'the horned beasts' is also significant in that Pan is a half-goat god who has 'horns.' Thus, the beast Mortimer underlines seems to be nobody else but Pan himself.

However, despite Mortimer's warnings, Sylvia disregards him, and goes to the woods on her own, and she is again disturbed with the presence of antagonistic sounds and animals in the woods. She first hears the piping: "A low, fitful piping, as of some reedy flute, was coming from the depth of a neighbouring copse, and there seemed to be some subtle connection between the animal's restless pacing and the wild music from the wood." (Munro 165). As the piping reminds her of an uncanny power in the woods, she quickly leaves that part of the woods. However, the wind soon brings another kind of music to her: "the straining bay of hounds in full chase" (Munro 165). With the bay of the hounds, she sees a hunting scene on the hills, probably as the foreshadowing of her approaching death:

> Sylvia could presently see a dark body, breasting hill after hill, and sinking again and again out of sight as he crossed the combes, while behind him steadily swelled that relentless chorus, and she grew tense with the excited sympathy that one feels for any hunted thing in whose capture one is not directly interested. And at last he broke through the outermost line of oak scrub and fern and stood panting in the open, a fat September stag carrying a

> well- furnished head. His obvious course was to drop down to the brown pools of Undercombe, and thence make his way towards the red deer's favoured sanctuary, the sea. To Sylvia's surprise, however, he turned his head to the upland slope and came lumbering resolutely onward over the heather.
> "It will be dreadful," she thought, "the hounds will pull him down under my very eyes." (Munro 165)

Just at that moment, despite the fact that the music of the pack dies away for a second, interestingly the wild piping that she has heard at the beginning is heard again and the music comes from the different sides of the hill as if someone is amusing himself with Sylvia's fear:

> [S]he heard again that wild piping, which rose now on this side, now on that, as though urging the failing stag to a final effort. [...] The pipe music shrilled suddenly around her, seeming to come from the bushes at her very feet, and at the same moment the great beast slewed round and bore directly down upon her. In an instant her pity for the hunted animal was changed to wild terror at her own danger; [...] she looked frantically downward for a glimpse of oncoming hounds. The huge antler spikes were within a few yards of her, and in a flash of numbing fear she remembered Mortimer's warning, to beware of homed beasts on the farm. And then with a quick throb of joy she saw that she was not alone; a human figure stood a few paces aside, knee-deep in the whortle bushes.
> "Drive it off" she shrieked. But the figure made no answering movement. The antlers drove straight at her breast, the acrid smell of the hunted animal was in her nostrils, but her eyes were filled with the horror of something she saw other than her oncoming death. And in her ears rang the echo of a boy's laughter, golden and equivocal. (Munro 165-6)

As mentioned in the quotation, Pan is taking his revenge from Sylvia but in a playful manner, amusing himself. Pipe is Pan's instrument, and he is the piper god. However, Sylvia is so ignorant that she cannot foresee the hunting of the stag as mentioned in the quotation will turn out to be her hunting, that is, she will be hunted by those horned beasts. As a disrespectful person not only to the beliefs of other people but also against nature, in the end Sylvia gets what she deserves. She dies a dreadful death with Pan's alluring piping coming from the hills. Thus, as Pamela Pringle points out, "[i]n Sylvia's case it is the wilful disregard of Pan which is the cause of her downfall" (69).

As Sylvia is not respectful towards nature and the animals there, through the animistic features, those that she looks down upon bring her death. Thus as S.P.B. Mais argues,

> [f]rom "The Music on the Hill" we learn that "Saki" held in very considerable awe the power of the great god Pan: his lonely life as a boy in North Devon must have led him to realise that the forces of Nature are relentless and terrible. This fact must have been seared into his heart, for he recurs to it again and again. The doing to death of the young city-bred wife by the hunted stag because of her disbelief In the power of the wood-gods is horribly effective in its irony. (qtd. in Spears 46)

In this light, this "eerie tale" (Spears 46) shows Saki's criticism of the hypocritical townspeople who look down upon the country people and their beliefs and thereby oppress nature. Such a setting in the woods and such animistic characteristics are specifically used by Saki to criticise the dominant imperial ideology of the late Victorian and Edwardian society with the representative figure of Sylvia. Sylvia's oppressive behaviours and disrespect to the beliefs of the others and her disrespect for nature finally bring her end.

The next story that will be analysed in this chapter is "Gabriel-Ernest," which tells the story of a werewolf. "Gabriel-Ernest" is a "slyly rebellious, blackly comic story that unites [...] [Saki's] common themes of sexual ambiguity, metamorphosis, and reminiscent of an Oscar Wilde campiness" (Brian Gibson, "Gabriel-Ernest" 160). It was "first published in the *Westminster Gazette* on May 29, 1909, […] [as] one of Saki's first published stories as a full-time writer, when he had settled in London after six years as a newspaper correspondent in Europe" ("Gabriel-Ernest" 160). Narrated from a third person point of view, the story is centred on the unusual story of a werewolf who one day appears in the woods of Van Cheele drying his wet hair lying on the floor naked. Although Gabriel-Ernest seems strange with his behaviours, Van Cheele does not initially realise the fact that he is a werewolf despite the artist Cunningham's previous warnings of Van Cheele about the sighting of a strange animal in their woods. Though he does not realise that Gabriel-Ernest is a werewolf, Van Cheele is confused by the answers that Gabriel-Ernest gives to him. Although Van Cheele sends him away from his woods, interestingly enough, the same boy appears in his morning room the next morning. Despite his strange air, Van Cheele's aunt Miss Van Cheele thinks that the boy is an orphan lost there. Thus, she approaches him with her motherly affection. The werewolf's real identity appears when Van Cheele is away in Cunningham's house to determine the character of the boy. After determining that

Gabriel-Ernest is a werewolf who turns into an animal at night and feeds on meat especially preferring the human children, Van Cheele is shocked to hear that Gabriel-Ernest is taking the little Toop child home. Van Cheele goes after them, but it is too late, as he hears "a shrill wail of fear,"(Munro 69), and then only Gabriel-Ernest's clothes are found and this wrongly leads to the belief that the child fell into the water and Gabriel-Ernest went after him to save the child.

"Gabriel-Ernest" is another story which shows Saki's interest in animism. In this story, the werewolf, Gabriel-Ernest is attributed animistic features, and "[t]he theme of the beast in man is [...] pursued in 'Gabriel-Ernest'" (Lewis n.p.) through Van Cheele's character. Although Van Cheele and Cunningham see Gabriel-Ernest as a wild beast that can be a danger for them and for the society, the real danger comes from the oppressive and the hypocritical approaches of them. In this story, in a humorous way, Saki deals with cross-species boundaries and shows as in former stories, personhood is not only attributed to human beings but also to animals and other beings, as well. Because, "[a]nimists recognise personhood in other-than-humans and understand that to be a person is to be conscious and self-conscious, to act intentionally, with agency, and to communicate intelligently and deliberately" (Harvey 187). Contrary to Van Cheele, Gabriel-Ernest is aware of his true nature and does not hesitate to tell it to Van Cheele despite Van Cheele's disregard.

For Köklü, "[b]oth the wolf and the boy are Saki's most popular figures as they are untamed" (77). This is an interesting story including both an untamed boy and an untamed wolf besides the animistic element of a werewolf, namely 'Gabriel-Ernest.' The story is centred around the meeting of Van Cheele, a so-called civilised man and the werewolf who is later named by Van Cheele's aunt as 'Gabriel-Ernest,' and the consequent triumph of the werewolf over the so-called civilised man. As the werewolf is free from the pretensions and the hypocrisy of the society in which they are living in, he is honest and acts with his instincts. On the other hand, Van Cheele wants to be seen as a proper person who submits to the norms of the society. However, despite this fact, as Gabriel-Ernest does not conform to their society's norms, throughout the story, Gabriel-Ernest is referred to as 'wild beast' and 'strange.'

As might be deduced at the beginning of the story, from the description of Van Cheele by the narrator, Van Cheele seems to be the quintessence of the hypocritical and pretentious society. For instance, he is interested in natural happenings, yet not for scientific developments but to a different end:

> That afternoon Van Cheele went for one of his frequent rambles through his woodland property. He had a stuffed bittern in his study, and knew the names of quite a number of wild flowers, so his aunt had possibly some justification in describing him as a great naturalist. At any rate, he was a great walker. It was his custom to take mental notes of everything he saw during his walks, not so much for the purpose of assisting contemporary science as to provide topics for conversation afterwards. (Munro 63-4)

In this respect, as Köklü argues, Van Cheele "is a man of pretense who gives great importance to the public image, which Saki and his naturalistic and aggressive protagonists hate sincerely and severely" (78). However, contrary to Van Cheele's seemingly civilised appearance, Gabriel-Ernest, the werewolf of the story, begins to reveal his real nature just at their first meeting with Van Cheele:

> "But where do you sleep at night?"
> "*I don't sleep at night; that's my busiest time*."
> [...]
> "What do you feed on?" he asked.
> "Flesh," said the boy, and he pronounced the word with slow relish, as though he were tasting it.
> "Flesh! What Flesh?"
> "Since it interests you, rabbits, wild-fowl, hares, poultry, lambs in their season, children when I can get any; they're usually too well locked in at night, when I do most of my hunting. It's quite two months since I tasted child-flesh." (Munro 64-5, my emphasis)

As Köklü argues,"[t]he boy follows his instinct and lives instinctively while Van Cheele wears a social mask in his so-called civilised world" (79). From this vantage point, it might be argued that the werewolf which is thought to be the "other" by the so-called civilised Van Cheele, is more honest as he acts with his instincts and does not show off and does not wear a social mask. However, Van Cheele is just the opposite of Gabriel-Ernest; he does not lose any chance of showing off to be the right person of the society. Even this difference might be read as Saki's commentary upon the difference between the so-called civilised people and those animistic ones. While the ones claiming to be civilised are hypocritical and thus wear a social mask outside, the animistic character is

very innocent and away from the hypocritical and pretentious world of the oppressive civilised people.

The difference between the werewolf and Van Cheele, the so-called civilised man, is highlighted just at the beginning of their first meeting: from what he tells to Van Cheele, it is understood that 'Gabriel Ernest' is happy to be in nature as part of it unlike the ostentatious civilised world of Van Cheele:

> "Where do you live?"
> "Here, in these woods."
> "You can't live in the woods," said Van Cheele.
> "They are very nice woods," said the boy, with a touch of patronage in his voice. (Munro 64)

In this light, although after the disappearance of the boy in the woods on Van Cheele's commands, Van Cheele is confused about the boy's identity as his behaviours seem to be rather similar to that of an animal more than a human being. However, he does not want to believe in this reality as he thinks that the presence of a werewolf would cost a lot to him:

> Walking slowly homeward, Van Cheele began to turn over in his mind various local occurrences which might be traceable to the existence of this astonishing young savage. Something had been thinning the game in the woods lately, poultry had been missing from the farms, hares were growing unaccountably scarcer, and complaints had reached him of lambs being carried off bodily from the hills. Was it possible that this wild boy was really hunting the countryside in company with some clever poacher dogs? [...] The child missing from the mill two months ago--the accepted theory was that it had tumbled into the mill-race and been swept away; but the mother had always declared she had heard a shriek on the hill side of the house, in the opposite direction from the water. It was unthinkable, of course, but he wished that the boy had not made that uncanny remark about child-flesh eaten two months ago.
> [...]
> Van Cheele, contrary to his usual wont, did not feel disposed to be communicative about his discovery in the wood. His position as a parish councillor and justice of the peace seemed somehow compromised by the fact that he was harbouring a personality of such doubtful repute on his property*; there was even a possibility that a heavy bill of damages for raided lambs and poultry might be laid at his door*. At dinner that night he was quite unusually silent. (Munro 66, my emphasis)

As mentioned above, Van Cheele is confused with what Gabriel-Ernest has told him. The details that Gabriel-Ernest tells about himself remind Van Cheele of the strange happenings in the neighbourhood which suggest that Gabriel-Ernest caused the death of a child two months before, and devoured some animals there. The idea that Gabriel-Ernest is a werewolf really disturbs Van Cheele as for him "a heavy bill of damages for raided lambs and poultry might be laid at his door" (Munro 66). His thought reveals that Van Cheele is very hypocritical, indeed. The only thing that Van Cheele cares about is his profit. These details might be read as Saki's critique of the dominant imperialist ideology of the period, in the sense that imperialism is based on the idea of material gain through the oppression of the others. Van Cheele is so hypocritical that even after he realises that the boy is a werewolf, and the Toop's child has been taken to the lake by Gabriel-Ernest, Van Cheele prefers to stay silent:

> Nothing was ever seen again of the Toop child or Gabriel-Ernest, but the latter's discarded garments were found lying in the road so it was assumed that the child had fallen into the water, and that the boy had stripped and jumped in, in a vain endeavour to save it. Van Cheele and some workmen who were nearby at the time testified to having heard a child scream loudly just near the spot where the clothes were found. [...] Miss Van Cheele sincerely mourned her lost foundling. It was on her initiative that a memorial brass was put up in the parish church to "Gabriel-Ernest, an unknown boy, who bravely sacrificed his life for another."
>
> Van Cheele gave way to his aunt in most things, but he flatly refused to subscribe to the Gabriel-Ernest memorial. (Munro 69)

As mentioned above, the only person who knows the fact about Gabriel-Ernest and also that the child did not drown but was killed by Gabriel-Ernest, is Van Cheele. However, he keeps quiet even when he is with his aunt, as the death of another child when added to the death of the child as mentioned earlier would cost him much more.

As in Saki's many other stories, "the valuing of nature" and "subversion of aristocratic pretensions" are also seen in "this slyly rebellious, blackly comic story" (Gibson, "Beastly Humans" (61). Away from the hypocrisy and the pretensions of the Edwardian society, "Gabriel-Ernest himself survives, untamed by conformist, conservative Edwardian society" (Gibson, "Gabriel-Ernest" 160-1).

Yet another Saki story which can be analysed with reference to Saki's animistic tendencies is "Laura," published in *Beasts and Super-Beast*s in 1914.The story is about the transmigration of Laura's soul first into an otter and then into a Nubian boy after her death. The issue of transmigration is important in this story, as some of the characters are surprised to hear Laura's belief in reincarnation as they believe that this belief belongs to the Easterners. However, interestingly enough, just after her death, Laura manages to shock those people who do not believe her, by showing her presence in the body of an otter and then in the body of a Nubian boy[2].

At her death bed, Laura is thought to die in a few days. Aware of her approaching death, Laura tells her friend Amanda that she is not upset as she will die soon, because she believes that her soul will transmigrate into an otter:

> "I never said I was going to die. I am presumably going to leave off being Laura, but I shall go on being something. An animal of some kind, I suppose. You see, when one hasn't been very good in the life one has just lived, one reincarnates in some lower organism. And I haven't been very good, when one comes to think of it. I've been petty and mean and vindictive and all that sort of thing when circumstances have seemed to warrant it." (Munro 241)

In fact, Amanda is surprised to hear her friend talk about such kind of things, because these beliefs are thought to belong to the Easterners, and as the Easterners are thought to be inferior to them. Thus Amanda and her uncle look down upon their religions and beliefs. Contrary to what Amanda believes, in animistic beliefs, as Graham Harvey points out,

> [t]here are obvious transformations that take place consequent to death. Animal or plant bodies which have been killed can be transformed into food, shelter or artefacts. Human bodies, and those of plants or animals which die of old age, can be subject to the transformation of various modes of deconstruction or decay. It is possible to celebrate this decomposition of bodies by enabling it to take place, for example, in ways that further the redistribution of nutrients as food for vultures or earthworms, or as compost. However, while the decay of bodies is a marker of the difference between the living and the dead, the fact of transformation itself is what is expected of persons." (117)

[2] "A native of Nubia" (*OED*)

Interestingly enough, contrary to what Amanda believes, soon after Laura's death she is surprised to hear her husband Egbert complaining of the attack of an otter to his animals. Because, before her death, Laura was telling Amanda that after her death her soul would transmigrate into an otter:

> "Four of my speckled Sussex have been killed," he exclaimed; "the very four that were to go to the show on Friday. One of them was dragged away and eaten right in the middle of that new carnation bed that I've been to such trouble and expense over. My best flower bed and my best fowls singled out for destruction; it almost seems as if the brute that did the deed had special knowledge how to be as devastating as possible in a short space of time."
> "Was it a fox, do you think?" asked Amanda.
> "Sounds more like a polecat," said Sir Lulworth.
> "No," said Egbert, "there were marks of webbed feet all over the place, and we followed the tracks down to the stream at the bottom of the garden; evidently an otter." (Munro 243-244)

Although Amanda does not believe in reincarnation, even looks down upon those who believe in it, she is shocked to hear that Egbert's animals are certainly destroyed by an otter. When the hatred between Laura and Egbert is taken into consideration, Amanda feels sure that Laura's soul transmigrated into an otter. Thus, she blames Laura for what she has done: "I think she might at least have waited till the funeral was over," said Amanda in a scandalised voice" (Munro 244).

In fact, what is more striking about the story is not Laura's reincarnation but the hypocritical approaches of the human beings. Just after Laura's death, Amanda says: "So dreadfully upsetting" (Munro 243). Although this sentence is, at first sight, thought to be used by Amanda due to her sadness based on the death of her friend, it is immediately revealed that Amanda utters this sentence not for the death of a beloved friend. What she thinks to be upsetting is that she will not be able to go golfing and fishing:

> "So dreadfully upsetting," Amanda complained to her uncle-in-law, Sir Lulworth Quayne. "I've asked quite a lot of people down for golf and fishing, and the rhododendrons are just looking their best."

> "Laura always was inconsiderate," said Sir Lulworth; "she was born during Goodwood week, with an Ambassador staying in the house who hated babies."
> "She had the maddest kind of ideas," said Amanda; "do you know if there was any insanity in her family?" (Munro 243)

Although they look down upon Laura as she believes in reincarnation, the real identities of them must be criticised here. Contrary to her expectation as she thinks that Laura will die on Tuesday, Amanda plans to play golf and go fishing with a lot of people on Monday. In fact it is not only Amanda but also her uncle Sir Lulworth Quayne, too who also blames Laura of being inconsiderate due to her birth and death dates.

The approach to death in two different perspectives is reflected. Surprised with Laura's calmness at her deathbed and her belief in reincarnation, Amanda tells Laura that death is a serious issue: "'Death is always serious'" (Munro 241), and criticises Laura as she believes in reincarnation. On the other hand, despite her previous remark on the seriousness of death, she does not show respect to the death of her friend Laura. She blames her of being inappropriate as she does not die on the day that doctor tells them, because the earlier death of Laura spoils her golf and fishing programme that she has arranged beforehand. Contrary to Amanda's pretensions, Laura is aware of her sins and thus she believes that her next reincarnation will be probably to an otter: 'I haven't been very good, when one comes to think of it. I've been petty and mean and vindictive and all that sort of thing when circumstances have seemed to warrant it'" (Munro 241).

Contrary to Amanda and the rest of the society, Laura is a self conscious woman. She knows her good and bad deeds, and thereby she believes that her soul will transmigrate first to an otter, and then to a Nubian boy. Not surprisingly, the reincarnation happens, and finally at the end of the story we learn that having experienced all the things that Laura had predicted, "Amanda is seriously ill" (Munro 245).

Like in all other stories of Saki, in this story, "[h]is observations of people and manners are precise and his wit is biting" (Sharpe 7). Through his witty narration Saki both shows his preference in animism, and also criticises the hypocrisies and the pretensions of the upper class people. Thus as Sharpe further argues, "from crude beginnings, [the

stories] spread out into social commentary and are told with a style and an economy that charm us into accepting the most improbable outcome" (7).

In conclusion, in all the stories examined in this chapter, Saki's use of animism to criticise the hypocrisy and pretensions of the late Victorian and Edwardian society as a reflection of the dominant ideology, imperialism, is seen. Animals or the animalised others have been in central roles in these stories, and despite the mystery in them, it is always the animals and the children who appear to be in collaboration with one another. Saki's specific aim in using these animistic features seems to be to criticise the hypocrisy and the pretentions of the society. Through these stories one of the things that Saki seems to be criticising is the oppression of animals, and thereby, through these stories he shows that despite human beings' oppression, animals are the victorious ones, celebrated in one instance by a young boy making a "toast" for the defeat of a cruel guardian and in another by the violent death of Slyvia who disrespects the cult of Pan.

CONCLUSION

Especially after the emergence of the postcolonial discourses, most of the canonical literary works of the English literature have been analysed within the colonial context with respect to the oppressive and destructive power of imperialism over the colonised people. However, due to the essentialist generalisations, the anti-imperialist writers of the period have been wrongly labelled as imperialists, and, based on this essentialist generalisation, their works have been claimed to advocate imperialism. Unlike what Edward Said claimed in both of his books, *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, "the stories of the white man and woman" (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 21) did not always advocate imperialism. Contrary to the criticism of the European writers by Said with an essentialist generalisation, there were also people who were disturbed by their society's faults. Due to the lack of theoretical terminology in expressing this alternative approach, these people have long been disregarded, or in most cases they were generalised as being the same with the rest of the society. However, the term 'Negative Auto- Occidentalism,' recently coined by Sinan Akıllı, might be helpful, as it underlines the fact that some Westerners were critical of the imperialist ideology of their time. An appropriate candidate for a re-evaluation with respect to this counter-discourse might be Saki who criticised the dominant imperial ideology of the time by scrutinising the oppression and the exploitation of animals.

Born into a family with strong imperialist ties in Burma, one of the colonies of the Empire at that time, and having received an education at a school which advocated imperialist values, Saki has been labelled as an 'imperialist' writer due to the essentialist generalisations about the period. However, an in-depth study of Saki's short stories reveals him to be critical and at times antagonistic against the imperial ideology of his time, especially through his critique of the exploitation and the destruction of animals. Unlike many other writers who critique imperialism and its oppressive and destructive power over human beings, Saki focuses his attention on the exploitative and oppressive power of imperialism over animals.

Although Saki's interest in animals is known by his critics, this aspect of the author is generally disregarded. He is referred to as a satirist who criticised the hypocrisy and the

pretensions of the late Victorian and Edwardian society in a humorous and witty way. However, in most of the stories as examined in this thesis, what Saki does is the criticism of the exploitation of animals by hypocritical and pretentious upper-middle class people who constitute the core of the empire, and thus oppress animals through the influence of the dominant imperial ideology.

As a satirist, Saki criticises the exploitation of animals but while doing so, he employs a humorous tone. Thus, the abusers are generally ridiculed through their pretensions and hypocrisies. These ridiculed people are generally those who try to show off to other people with their fake success as in "Mrs Packletide's Tiger." Although she does not have the heart to shoot an ill tiger, Mrs Packletide shows off as if she has killed the tiger, and she is made to buy a house for her paid companion Miss Mebbin as she blackmails her not to tell the fact that she could not kill the tiger but it died of a heart attack.

Besides ridiculing his characters for their beastly passions and hypocritical behaviours, Saki punishes some others with death or teaches them a lesson. While the evil ones, and those who are totally disrespectful to nature and animals are punished with death especially through the agency of an animal as in the case of Mrs de Ropp in "Sredni Vashtar" and Sylvia in "The Music on the Hill," those who learn to respect animals and nature are forgiven after learning a lesson with their faults as in the case of Octavian Ruttle in "The Penance."

As the outcome of an anthropocentric mindset, speciesism is the main reason for the human beings to exploit animals. As discussed in detail in the introduction chapter, speciesism is to privilege one's own species over other species. As human beings believe themselves to be the superior species, and thereby to be at the centre of the universe, they exploit animals as an end for their needs. Such an approach is clearly seen in most of the stories analysed in this study. As the adult human beings, especially through the influence of the dominant imperialist ideology of the period, see themselves to be superior to animals, they oppress and exploit animals. However, perhaps as an early eco-critic, Saki seems to be very critical of these people and their cruel behaviours towards animals. Thus, while animals and children in collaboration with animals are

rewarded in most of the case, the evil characters who tyrannically exploit animals or who are disrespectful against nature are severely punished with death.

As anthropocentrism is the main reason of such a speciesist approach to animals, in some of Saki's other stories, his inclination towards animism is also clearly seen. Contrary to the dualistic view of the universe as in the anthropocentric mindset, in animism, there are pluralities, and these pluralities are celebrated. Besides, personhood is attributed in animism not only to human beings but also to all the beings in the universe. Thus, as animals are accepted to be "persons" in the animistic beliefs, they are also respected. In this regard, as discussed in the second chapter, despite the dominant imperial ideology of the period, which was the culmination of the European anthropocentric mindset in the nineteenth century, Saki criticises the oppression of the animals by making use of animistic characteristics. Unlike the dominant approach of his time, in these stories, he underlines the personhood of animals, whether it be in the person of a polecat ferret, or through the honesty of a werewolf. Besides, he also sheds light on the fact that animals also have souls. Thus, in these stories, those who cannot realise the fact that animals or those more-than-humans have spirits, and they are persons, are severely punished for their oppressive behaviours and for their disrespect.

Unlike his earlier "Reginald" stories, Saki's later stories especially those in the collections *The Chronicles of Clovis* and *Beasts and Super-Beasts*, the representatives of which have been analysed in this study, have been centred on the animal and child protagonists. Although the use of animal characters have been a part of the literary works such as fable and mythological and legendary tales, Saki's use of the animal characters in his short stories as central figures is of great significance. Contrary to the symbolic use of animal characters in fables and some other literary works to give moral message to human beings, in Saki's short stories there are animal characters who are active agents in their own right, and these characters are not used symbolically to give messages to human beings. Besides, they are not used to entertain and amaze human beings as many authors do in the children's books as in Rudyard Kipling's "Mowgli" stories. In Saki's short stories, there are active and agent animal characters, and the author uses these characters both to satirise the ruthless exploitation of animals by human beings, and also to show his preference of animals over human beings as they

are away from the hypocrisies and the pretensions of the adult human beings. Consequently, it might be argued that Saki's fascination with animals is the proof of his sensitivity to the problems of the animals under the dominion of human beings, and thereby his introduction of animal characters as a subject matter in this respect is his contribution to the short story genre.

In conclusion, Saki as a British writer who lived in the late Victorian and Edwardian era was quite critical of the oppression of not only human beings but also of animals as an extension of the dominant imperial ideology. Thus, by employing a 'Negative Auto-Occidentalist' discourse he criticised the imperial ideologies of the British society in many of his short stories. As speciesism is the direct result of the anthropocentric imperialist ideology, in the first chapter, Saki's stories were analysed as the criticism of speciesism with reference to imperialism. In the second chapter, on the other hand, animistic characteristics and animism as opposed to the speciesist and anthropocentric approach of the imperial period were examined in the analyses of Saki's stories. Thus, it might be argued that though not named as such at that period, Saki was "ahead of his time" (Coward xiii) at least a century due to his ecological sensitivities.

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