

1-1-2012

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Franz Marc as an Ethologist

by

Jean Carey

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
Department of Art History
College of The Arts
University of South Florida

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Date of Approval: June 13, 2012
Keywords: *Animalisierung*, *Einfühlung*, Ethology,
Expressionism, German Modernism, Painting

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ABSTRACT

In this study I deploy the perspective of ethology to examine Franz Marc's paintings of animals. To perceive animals ethologically means acknowledging that animals feel, think, experience, and imagine the world. Ethology has come to include interpretive pursuits as well as traditional field studies, and as I show, Marc's practice encompassed both aspects of this evolving discipline. To establish the presence of ethology in the humanities I give a "case study" of what I call "retroactive ethology" in the work of J.M. Coetzee. I present an account of Marc's deep knowledge about real live animals. I offer an assessment of the inspiration Marc drew from Post-Impressionism and Egyptian art and show how Marc modernizes animal painting by demolishing long-standing conventions of the genre. I offer some ideas to more fully explain two important terms Marc uses, *Animalisierung* and *Einfühlung*. Throughout my paper I keep conceptual and historical observations closely tied to Marc's own words and images. Thus by reading and looking closely, we are able to see Marc as a dedicated and innovative ethologist whose implicit environmental commitment offers great comment upon contemporary discussions of the representation of the animal.

INTRODUCTION

It is a tribute to the complexity of Franz Marc's oeuvre that most discussion of his life's work tends to compartmentalize the artist and his ideas, thereby failing to do justice to the unifying mission of his major project, paintings of animals set in rhythmically luminous facets of color. In fact Marc's use of color, his association with abstraction, and interests in theology and philosophy have been studied often. In this paper I propose focusing upon the *subjects* of Marc's paintings, animals. Closely studying these animal images will allow us to look at Marc's paintings using a different and new perspective, that of ethology. Ethology refers to the study of the behavior of animals, but as this relatively young discipline matures and evolves, ethology has come to include creative and interpretive pursuits as well as traditional field studies, as I will clarify in a moment. An ethological position accepts that the birds and mammals Marc concerned his work with are endowed with a secondary consciousness¹ – an awareness of their senses and

¹ One of the problems facing what might be thought of as establishing a concrete basis for the existence of levels of animal awareness is obviously that, while there is an abundance of published work from experimental neuroscience that uses ideas or technologies from neuroscience to shed light on animal behavior and cognition, the overwhelming majority of this information has been procured using methods which are highly invasive and very cruel. However, while Jaak Panksepp's *Affective Neuroscience: The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) is about affective as opposed to cognitive neuroscience, Panksepp builds a convincing scientific argument for animal consciousness and sentience. Of course the "proof" of consciousness is of great speculative interest to ethologists. But in terms of ethology and deep ecology, this aspect of livingness alone is not the crucial factor for ascertaining, as humans, an arbitrary value to animals. The earlier criteria set forth by Jeremy Bentham in the 1832 edition of *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* still holds the best guidance for the larger cause: "It may come one day to be recognized, that the number of legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum*, are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate [as slaves and condemned criminals]. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps, the faculty for discourse?... The question is not, Can [animals]

existence – inextricable from their condition of being alive. To perceive animals ethologically means acknowledging the mindedness, cognition, and experience of animals, confirming what humans have intuited for millennia – that animals feel, think, experience, and imagine the world²– and that there is much that is not distinctive about the *Homo sapiens* species.³ My claim is that Marc himself held and expressed – verbally

reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?” (Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (New York: Hafner Publishing, 1948) 311.

However, what I am trying to show in this paper is how Marc thought the animals he depicted exhibited an awareness and mindedness, and that we may interpret his work in this manner using a contemporary perspective from the field of ethology. Therefore, for the purposes of this argument I am mostly considering ethological studies and scholars who consider the same issues as Marc but within a relatively contemporary framework. In the 1990s and in subsequent publications Mark Bekoff wrote out many of the ideas that constitute the “platform” of modern ethology, proposing, from the perspective of a biologist who wished to study animal behavior, to consider as a given in animal studies the notion of a type of animal consciousness in which animals possess a range of first-order senses and also an awareness of these senses. (Marc Bekoff and Colin Allen, *Species of Mind The Philosophy and Biology of Cognitive Ethology*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997.)

² Philosopher Bernard Rollin gives an historical account of the debate over the consciousness of animals in this book: *Putting the Horse Before Descartes: My Life’s Work on Behalf of Animals* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011).

³ Both evolutionary biology and cognitive ethology have proved Charles Darwin right: that the difference between *Homo sapiens* and the other animals is, biologically, a difference of degree rather than kind. Other animals have memories and feelings, fall in love, experience loss, mourn their dead, suffer, reason, have distinct cultures, use tools, communicate with one another and on and on. A study about mandrills from 2006 analyzes their complicated behavior in groups revealing some mandrills to be scheming and devious while others are altruistic, thoughtful, and aware of future consequences, as the following sentence indicates: “Second, because food elicits calling, unambiguous definitions exist for ‘honesty’ versus ‘manipulation’: honest signalers will call upon discovery of all shareable resources where manipulative signalers will not,” from: “Manipulation without Mind-Reading: Information Suppression and Leakage during Food Discovery by Mandrills (*Mandrillus sphinx*),” Mark E. Laidre, *Behaviour*, Vol. 143, No. 3 (Mar., 2006): 387. This issue of animal sentience is actually no longer a going concern in the zoological sciences, the Cartesian “noisy machine” gambit having long since been quashed. In fact the cooperative work of ethologists and zoologists in some quadrants is focused on organizing the various types of data about animal consciousness, which itself is taken as a given, into formats of systemic presentation. See: Stan Franklin and Sidney D’Mello, “A Cognitive Model’s View of Animal Cognition,” *Current Zoology* 57, no. 4 (August 2011): 499-513.

Even armed with this overwhelming scientific evidence, the animal rights movement has largely failed in its goals to stop the extinction of wild animal species and cease the horrible fates dealt to domestic livestock. Some ethologists are beginning to frame this failure to motivate humans to action as a political issue, a problem of late capitalism, and ineffectiveness of marginalized scholarship.

Philosophers John Sanbonmatsu and Steven Best criticize quadrants of society ostensibly amenable to animal rights, letting the air out of the “locavore” movement, for example, in their respective recent publications and lectures. See Steven Best, “Minding the Animals: Ethology and the Obsolescence of Left Humanism,” *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring 2009) and John Sanbonmatsu, *Critical Theory and Animal Liberation* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2011).

and visually – views considered ethological in our own time and that these characteristics can be found in his work.

Marc himself obviously could not use what I am calling ethological methods before these methods were defined as such. Thus in my thesis I underscore Marc's pragmatic knowledge and observation of animals in the guise of physical presence. I describe how Marc's commitment to animals helped him devise a pictorial program that would show critical aspects of the vitality of animals. As someone who has spent a lifetime being amazed by animals and wanting to learn more about their livingness⁴, I find in Marc's paintings both striking likenesses of the particularities of species and an evocation of the life force of animals that is both mysterious and familiar. Getting a sense of Marc's personality through an ethological framework will enable us to see the painter and his words and images as organic and integrated, offering in turn a way to consider the sentience of other beings.

Contemporary Ethology

The modern practice of ethology is wide-ranging, encompassing everything from investigations of the echolocation language of beluga whales to the literary analysis of Virginia Woolf's "biography" of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's cocker spaniel, Flush. The interpretive dimension of ethology has grown through the participation of artists and writers whose fiction and created images allow for imaginative exploration and contemplation of the animal as beings in possession of subjectivity, and of their own imaginations. Brett Mizelle, an historian at the University of California at Long Beach

⁴"The quality, condition, or fact of being alive or living; vigour, vivacity, vividness," *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "livingness, n." accessed March 15, 2012, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/view/Entry/109360?redirectedFrom=livingness>.

and the founder the Animal Studies Network, describes ethology as “the pursuit of an understanding of the causes and consequences of behavior [of animals] from the integrated consideration of developmental, ecological, evolutionary, and physiological variables.”⁵

Understood this way, ethologists undoubtedly can come from the humanities and are not necessarily field- or lab-trained zoologists. Ethologists try to understand and describe how and why animals behave as they do.⁶ So even though Marc was a painter navigating the avant-garde art and literary cultures in the first decades of the 20th Century, not a scientist gathering data for publication, studying his animal images as well as his biography makes clear, I argue that he closely observed and made attentive studies of animals as a modern-day ethologist would. To make my interpretive framework more clear in terms of what it lends to the concrete examination of Marc’s paintings, I want to offer right away an example of the way I propose to understand Marc as an ethologist. Marc’s observational data and knowledge about animals filters into what at first might seem to be quite a fanciful image of an animal often close to the lives of humans in every way *but* sight, *The Yellow Cow* (Figure 1).

Cows are often scorned because of what we deem their low level of reactivity. We rationalize our characterization of cows by saying they are stupid, not intelligent enough to feel much of anything: just look at that vacant stare. But this interpretation is purely

⁵ Brett Mizelle, “The Disappearance (and slight return) of Pigs in American Cities,” *Antennae, The Journal of Nature and Visual Culture*, Spring 2010, Vol. 12, p 79.

⁶ The work of ethologists sometimes involves closely observing animals to further knowledge about a particular species or to answer particular questions. Animal behaviors and appearances are recorded along with the social and environmental conditions under which they occur. The Austrian zoologist and ornithologist Konrad Lorenz set out the parameters of ethology understood this way in *Motivation of Human and Animal Behavior: An Ethological View* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1973) and *The Foundations of Ethology* (New York: Springer-Verlag New York, 1981).

anthropocentric and not ethological. It overlooks an interesting fact about cows. Cows have a rigid facial musculature that prevents a range of expression; we interpret this as impassivity. The cow's blank look does not denote obliviousness at all, though: It is we who are oblivious to the cow's proper nature.

A farmhand, however, might legitimately argue that cows are not so passive. Cows are stubborn and resourceful. Let them loose and they will find forage just about anywhere. They can get by on the thinnest, coarsest grasses, the most pitiful shrubs – even bark when all else fails. For the Bavarian Fleckvieh cows Marc knew, cold weather has to be extraordinarily cold to be a problem: In this breed, contents of the rumen, the first stomach, ferments at 40 degrees Celsius, providing these cows with a central heating system so that they do not need to generate extra heat by shivering or eating more. Fleckvieh calves are extraordinarily hardy; born in a blizzard, they are soon up and cavorting around like fawns delivered in May. They are tough, with a physical endurance that any animal would be proud to match. At the time Marc was making *The Yellow Cow*, he had live Fleckvieh from whom he drew reference.⁷

Marc realized that despite the lack of facial movement, cows' bodies were very expressive, as cows in family groups and herds often cavort and leap in play. *The Yellow Cow* is thus an excellent example of Marc's reportage on mammal interactions down to delightful details – darting up from the lower edge of the canvas is Marc's dog Russi – combined with an elegant symbolic gesture that is also based on the forms and realities of

⁷ The Fleckvieh is the breed of dairy cow common – still – in Bavaria. Photographs of the Müllers' Staffelalm herd clearly show these types of cows, so they are certainly the breed with which Marc was familiar. In addition to daily cow care, such a herd is moved from mountain to valley in the fall; in fact this seasonal activity is what the famous Bavarian ceremony *Viehscheid* honors. Breed identification from: James Kavanagh and Raymond Leung, *Cattle & Horses: A Simplified Visual Guide to Familiar Breeds* (Chandler, Ariz.: Waterford Press, 2002).

bovine behavior. The sickle shape of the “Yellow Cow” embeds and echoes the cow’s curved horns. Viewing *The Yellow Cow* as an interpretation that the cow is exuberating *as a cow* enriches our appreciation of Marc’s paintings as expressions of animal emotions. In a small sheaf of notes to himself from around the time the painting was made in the spring of 1911 (published posthumously) Marc wondered:

[Can we get a picture to show us how animals see nature?] Is there a more mysterious idea for artists than the [idea], of how nature is reflected in the eyes of an animal? How does the world look to a horse or an eagle, a deer or a dog? How pathetic, [yes] soulless is our [custom] convention, of putting animals in a landscape that belongs to our own eyes instead of us sinking into the soul of the beast, [so that we would know his view the world] and be able to do more than guess about the picture. [This consideration should not be idle causerie, but should lead us to the sources of art.]⁸

Marc’s own words here help us interpret his intentions, in equal measure practical and conceptual, as being aligned with the modern ethological concerns described in this paper so far. In fact these private musings are important to understanding Marc’s mission as an artist in representing the animal’s experience of being, which he says is crucial, and particularly because Marc says clearly he believes animals have souls.

In organizing my thesis I continue to keep conceptual and historical investigations related to the artist tied closely to Marc’s own words and images. After further establishing the presence of ethology in the humanities and giving an account of a “case

⁸ “[Können wir uns ein Bild machen, wie wohl Tiere uns und die Natur sehen?] Gibt es für Künstler eine geheimnisvollere Idee als die [Vorstellung], wie sich wohl die Natur in dem Auge eines Tieres spiegelt? Wie sieht ein Pferd die Welt oder ein Adler, ein Reh oder ein Hund? Wie armselig, [ja] seelenlos ist unsre [Gewohnheit] Konvention, Tiere in eine Landschaft zu setzen, die unsren Augen zugehört statt uns in die Seele des Tieres zu versenken, [daß wir das seinen Blick Weltbild] um dessen Bilderkreis zu erraten. [Diese Betrachtung soll keine müßige causerie sein, sondern uns zu den Quellen der Kunst führen.]” Franz Marc, *Schriften* (Köln: DuMont, 1978) 99-100. In this passage the square brackets are by Marc, who used them in his unpublished notations.

study” of what I am calling “retroactive ethology,” I present an account of Marc’s knowledge about real live animals, which I maintain is crucial to understanding him in an ethological mode.⁹ To assess what inspiration Marc drew from Post-Impressionism and Egyptian art I offer an interpretation of those interactions. Comparisons between Marc’s work and paintings by Albrecht Dürer and Bruno Liljefors show how Marc’s version of naturalism demolishes long-standing conventions of animal painting. In his own words about what is required to make paintings in which animals are shown as embodied subjects imbued with the breath of life, Marc associates two terms with his project – *Animalisierung*¹⁰ (animalization) and *Einfühlung* (empathy). The letter in which these words occur has been reprinted often but has not been well-analyzed, so a section of the paper is devoted to doing just that. In fact *Animalisierung* and *Einfühlung* contain a dense nexus of complex ideas and my thesis is woven throughout explaining their connection to Marc’s animal painting project to the best of my ability.

⁹ The matter-of-fact methods and observations of Elizabeth Marshall Thomas (*The Hidden Lives of Dogs*, 1993; *The Social Lives of Dogs: The Grace of Canine Company*, 2000; *The Hidden Lives of Deer: Lessons from the Natural World*, 2009) and the tenor of the writing of Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (*When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Lives of Animals*, 1995; *The Pig Who Sang to the Moon: The Emotional World of Farm Animals*, 2003) are particularly persuasive on the subject of domestic animals. Of contemporary painters Lucian Freud’s many portraits of the whippets Eli and Pluto seem to incorporate ethology in a manner approaching Marc’s.

¹⁰ *Animalisierung*, the term Marc devises, has been used in translation as “[the] animalization [of art]” by Judith Bernstock, Peter Vergo, Mark Rosenthal, Brigitte Pohl-Resl, and Barbara Eschenburg in books and in scholarly journals. See for example: Brigitte Pohl-Resl, *A Cultural History of Animals in the Modern Age* (Oxford: Berg, 2011), 167; and Marc Rosenthal, “Franz Marc’s ‘Animalisation of Art’,” *The Connoisseur*, 215, no. 815 (1980). An important part of my thesis is pressing this word for enriched meaning and understanding.

“RETROACTIVE” AND INTERPRETIVE ETHOLOGY

Ethology has already found a place in humanities scholarship and academic forums. In fact it is the animals’ “sensation of being” that J.M. Coetzee invokes as his alter-ego Elizabeth Costello in *The Lives of Animals*, chapters from which formed Coetzee’s contribution to the Tanner Lectures on Human Values, which he gave during the 1997-1998 session at Princeton University.¹¹ In reading *The Lives of Animals* I realized Coetzee had presented the idea, and the opportunity, of identifying ethologists retroactively.¹² Specifically of interest was that Coetzee had chosen to recast not a scientist but a creative personality from the past – Franz Kafka – who lacked the definition we now have to identify his own mode of expression as “ethological.” Like Marc, Coetzee creates a new way to consider animal consciousness within – but in a manner that refracts – an existing framework and medium – in Coetzee’s case, writing. In *The Lives of Animals*, Coetzee’s character, Elizabeth Costello, is invited to speak at a university based upon her renown as a postmodern novel writer; she surprises her hosts and audience by giving a

¹¹ J. M. Coetzee and Amy Gutmann, *The Lives of Animals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). Like the character Elizabeth Costello, in the expository interviews included in *The Lives of Animals*, Coetzee grounds his claims for compassion in a mandate that we take our feelings as moral data. For the text of the Tanner Lectures, see also J.M. Coetzee (reading as Elizabeth Costello), “The Lives of Animals,” *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values: Vol. 20*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999): <http://tannerlectures.utah.edu/>, accessed March 7, 2012. For an overview of the chronology of the character Elizabeth Costello and an account of Coetzee’s “performance” as Costello at the Tanner Lectures, see: Robert McKay, “Metafiction, Vegetarianism, and the Literary Performance of Animal Ethics in J. M. Coetzee’s *The Lives of Animals*,” *Safundi* 11, no. 1/2, January 2010): 67. The Tanner Lecture series takes place on a rotating basis at different schools around the United States and Great Britain.

¹² Coetzee has a longstanding interest in and admiration for Franz Kafka, a preoccupation he reflects upon intermittently in a collection of essays: J.M. Coetzee, *Stranger Shores: Literary Essays, 1986-1999* (New York: Viking, 2001).

straightforward talk about animal rights presented nonetheless from a philosophical and ethical approach. At the Tanner Lectures, Coetzee inverts and mirrors this tactic: he deliberately addresses the issue presented to him as a speaker on “ethics” and “human values” as his novelist character, Costello, confounding expectations and yielding imaginative freedom to explore beyond the contentious scoldings these types of discussions tend to produce.

Within this self-reflective narrative fiction, Coetzee-as-Costello avoids reciting a list of horrific animal abuse cases, instead citing a short story by Franz Kafka, “Report to an Academy,” about the ape Red Peter who himself presents a paper to a group of scholars. Costello finds Kafka’s story – in which Red Peter describes not just cruel experiments but a deep loneliness and isolation – disturbing, dangerous, and as resonant as when it appeared in the beginning of the 20th Century. Costello points out that it is Kafka, not scientists studying apes at the same time, who was the better observer of certain truths about animals that enable readers to suspend self-awareness, irony, and disbelief and instead truly feel for the living animal.¹³

Marc’s images revise as they reinforce Elizabeth Costello’s claim that “there is no limit to the extent to which we can think ourselves into the being of another.”¹⁴ Coetzee

¹³ What opening up the definition of ethology to include disciplines outside zoology does for the nascent field is to show that it is possible to use narrative, painting, allusions, and open-endedness to help us see animals not as an abstract concept but as real beings – subjects – with a host of differences, realities, and forms. Affiliating with something like a cause, one that can nonetheless be represented somewhat indirectly and thus provocatively and subtly, in turn benefits artistic practices by teaching sublimation and restraint in the service of the cause at hand, the better to avoid do-gooder oversimplification. One of the reasons I think Marc’s work is particularly well-suited to help define “creative ethology” is that Marc, for all his apocalyptic statements, also thought that art could cause change.

¹⁴ J.M. Coetzee reading as Elizabeth Costello, “The Lives of Animals,” *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values: Vol. 20*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999): 133: <http://tannerlectures.utah.edu/>, accessed April 1, 2012.

himself sets a precedent for contemporary ethology – as a maker of imaginative but fact-based work who has both access to the lexicon of animal studies and his own abundant knowledge of animals from which to draw – to recognize and identify such a commonality in the past. I am extending this type of study to include the semantics of painting, similarly using intuition, imagination, and knowledge about real animals. But I do also more. In addition I integrate all of this with the well-tested practice of contextual interpretation and visual analysis, and close reading of text and images.

THE MISSING ANIMAL

Many studies address Marc's animal paintings. However ethological issues have not been well-considered in existing literature on Marc and require more clarification. Marc's project has been historicized in a manner akin to literature or philosophy, for example, in the context of the *Blaue Reiter*, through Marc's reading of Plato or Friedrich Nietzsche, or as a part of the canon of German Romantic painting.¹⁵ Studies of Marc's experiments in painting have sometimes given the impression the artist was on a trajectory to disregard all aspects of animals' physical characteristics. The emphasis placed upon Marc's association with nonobjective painting has limited the attention given to an understanding of Marc's knowledge of real animals.

Why has the ethological perspective in its effect on the pictorial surface been thus far overlooked? The most likely answer is that scholars have been inhibited by their lack of knowledge about animals. Even though our exposure to the animal kingdom is now enriched by film, television, and the Internet, it is likely that for most art historians today prolonged encounters with animals such as the horses, cows, deer, and foxes who populate Marc's paintings are uncommon.

While there are no volumes implicitly dedicated to Marc and ethology, many words have been devoted to his images of animals. Some valuable scholarship on Marc

¹⁵ In his book chapter "In Search of Paradise Lost: Runge, Marc, Beuys," Peter-Klaus Schuster investigates the theme of regaining a lost utopia in the work of Philipp Otto Runge, Joseph Beuys, and Marc. Keith Hartley, ed.; *The Romantic Spirit in German Art 1790-1990* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994).

overlooks ethology and omits deep consideration of how Marc's written statements inform what he does with his painting. Given the novelty of the ethological perspective this is to be expected, so the overview of literature presented here is by no means comprehensive nor is it intended as criticism. An indispensable aid to Marc studies has been the publication of a catalogue raisonné, *Franz Marc: The Complete Works*¹⁶, compiled and written by Lenbachhaus curators Annegret Hoberg and Isabelle Jansen. The catalog *Franz Marc: Kräfte der Natur: Werke, 1912-1915*¹⁷ is defined by its timeframe and despite its name it says little about the painting of animals and has more to do with the historical development of abstraction. Klaus Zeeb, a veterinarian, reports on the horse behavior shown in Marc's drawings in the catalog *Franz Marc's Horses* (2000).¹⁸ Marc's animal paintings have been studied in order to gain insights about the artist's religious beliefs.¹⁹ Sometimes analysis of Marc's animal art skews toward understanding its role in

¹⁶ *Franz Marc - the Complete Works: Volumes 1-3* (London: Philip Wilson, 2004-2011).

¹⁷ Chapters on *Birds* (Figure 2) and the mural Marc made with August Macke called *Paradise* (Figure 3) give technical accounts of the production of these two works. Peter Klaus-Schuster's "From Animal to Death: On the Ideology of the Spirit in Franz Marc's Work," a chapter in the same catalog, looks at Marc's interest in concepts of purity and does not delve into the physical beings of animals. The chapter by Annegret Hoberg concentrates on the human figures in Marc's 1912 paintings of shepherds and bathers. Thus the animal is missing even in this thoughtful collection. Erich Franz and Andrea Witte, *Franz Marc: Kräfte Der Natur : Werke, 1912-1915*, (Ostfildern: G. Hatje, 1993).

¹⁸ "The Horse as a Living Creature" by Klaus Zeeb in *Franz Marc, Horses*. (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2000) 258-269.

¹⁹ For example John Moffitt's "Fighting Forms: The Fate of the Animals: The Occultist Origins of Franz Marc's 'Farbentheorie,'" though written in 1985, continues to be widely cited on the alleged influence of Theosophy upon Marc. Moffitt gives a one-for-one correlation of the colors of animals in paintings to their auratic or gendered "vibrations." John F. Moffitt, "Fighting Forms: The Fate of the Animals: The Occultist Origins of Franz Marc's 'Farbentheorie,'" *Artibus et Historiae*, Vol. 6, No. 12 (1985): 107-126. This article is cited in John Gage's book *Color and Meaning: Art, Science and Symbolism* (2000) and by David Morgan in his classic 1996 article "The Enchantment of Art: Abstraction and Empathy from German Romanticism to Expressionism." (David Morgan, "The Enchantment of Art: Abstraction and Empathy from German Romanticism to Expressionism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57 no. 2 (1996): 317- 341.

However there is not much reason to think that Theosophy had any direct impact whatsoever on Marc. The formula from Marc in a letter to August Macke contains a sort of rule about the "principles" of red, yellow, and blue, it is a snippet of dialogue that read alone mischaracterizes the conversation. The

developing empathy in its kindred incarnations of compassion and imagination.²⁰

Although not explicitly about the animal Maria Stavrinaki offers extremely helpful guidance in the analysis of Marc's written thoughts in a preface to 2006's *Franz Marc: Écrits et correspondances*.²¹ Stavrinaki's project of delving into the philosophical underpinnings of Marc's thoughts through analyzing his writing is extremely valuable but generally in her scholarship places Marc within the larger context of the European avant-garde.²²

Klaus Lankheit's *Franz Marc: Seine Leben und seine Kunst*²³ showcases Lankheit's commitment to cataloguing Marc's work in hagiographic fashion. Because Lankheit takes pains to associate and integrate the personal with the artistic, Lankheit's cultural biographies²⁴ of Marc are valuable resources for my work and have inspired me

intense discussion about color theory and its relationship to music culminates in some historical asides and then devolves into a series of non-sequiturs. Marc's own statements about color principles and his lack of adherence to them makes it possible to question this interpretation. Looking at Marc's paintings (for example images of foxes and deer discussed later) shows that there is no monolithic color code given to the animals. The letter can be found in: *August Macke, Franz Marc: Briefwechsel* (Köln: M. DuMont Schauberg, 1964) 121-123.

²⁰ In "An Epistemology of the Clinic: Ludwig Binswanger's Phenomenology of the Other," Susan Lanzoni reports her research on psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger's use of Marc's art in a therapeutic setting. Using the tranquility of Marc's horse paintings as models of embodied sympathy for his patients to meditate upon, Binswanger suggested that consideration of others is a mindset that can be learned, taught to others, and practiced in a quantifiable, controlled manner. This practice of contemplating the horses would result, according to Lanzoni's interpretation of Binswanger's work, in empathy with other people, though, as opposed to a sustained engagement with the animals themselves. See Susan Lanzoni, "An Epistemology of the Clinic: Ludwig Binswanger's Phenomenology of the Other," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Autumn, 2003): 184.

²¹ Franz Marc, *Franz Marc: Écrits et correspondances*, ed. Maria Stavrinaki, trans. Thomas de Kayser (Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 2006), 9-57. Stavrinaki offers a great explanation the idea of the predicate, an important issue in consideration of Marc's work that nonetheless is not central to the points I am trying to make in this paper.

²² Maria Stavrinaki, "L'empathie est l'abstraction : réflexions sur l'art et la vie de Franz Marc," *Pratiques. Réflexions sur l'art*, No. 16, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, spring 2005, 35.

²³ Klaus Lankheit, *Franz Marc: Sein Leben und seine Kunst* (Köln: DuMont, 1976).

²⁴ In an earlier work (*Franz Marc: der Turm der blauen Pferde* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1961)), Lankheit demonstrated great awareness of both Marc's famous 1913 painting of the same name and of live horses.

to learn much more about Marc's life with animals. Other documents of great value are Marc's correspondence with August Macke, partially collected in *August Macke, Franz Marc: Briefwechsel*²⁵, and August Macke's and Helmuth Macke's stories about their interactions with Marc in *August Macke in Tegernsee*²⁶ and *Helmuth Macke: Tektonik der Farbe*²⁷.

²⁵ The books published by the August Macke Haus in Bonn are precious resources for the Mackes' observations of their times with Marc. The Mackes' verve as raconteurs sustained this reader on many occasions. August Macke and Franz Marc, *August Macke, Franz Marc: Briefwechsel* (Köln: M. DuMont Schauberg, 1964).

²⁶ Peter Dering and Margarethe Jochimsen, *August Macke in Tegernsee* (Bonn: Verein August-Macke-Haus, 1997).

²⁷ Peter Dering and Margarethe Jochimsen, *Helmuth Macke: Tektonik der Farbe* (Bonn: Verein August Macke Haus, 1999).

PRACTICAL PANTHEISM

One of the main operations required in conceiving of Marc as an ethologist is to consider the amount of time he actually spent around animals watching and caring for them – which was a lot. The events detailed in this section surely shaped Marc's ethological outlook and enhanced his awareness of the sentience of animals, his concern for how animals were treated, and his response as an artist to how the livingness of the animal could be conveyed in painting. Handling animals in a cooperative manner requires patience, and attentiveness to their habits and mindedness, something Marc began learning as a teenager caring for cows and horses.

Starting in 1894, when he was fourteen years old, Marc worked each May until mid-October tending dairy cows owned by Hans and Lina Müller.²⁸ As late as 1913, Marc spent part of the summer tending the animals at the Müllers' farm. He visited them while on leave from the Army in 1915.²⁹

²⁸Marc's chores included feeding, milking, and herding the cows, as well as observing their social practices, delivering calves, and providing ad hoc veterinary care. Even as an adult in the full flush of his writing and painting activities, Marc continued to help out at the farm. See Franz Marc to Hans Müller, correspondence about methods for delivering calves; herding cows with the assistance of horses and dogs; and dogs, 1906-1911, Germanisches Nationalmuseum (from now on GNM). Franz Marc acquires the *Ovcharka* he will name Russi Marc from the Müller farm and in the fall of 1906 transports the puppy in a backpack from the mountains all the way to Munich. Toward the end of Russi's life, and Marc's, in early 1916, the dog returns to stay with the Müllers. In a letter to his mother about the death of Russi, Marc describes, in restrained grief, the idea of a very conventional afterlife for the stubborn white dog, including honoring Russi with a traditional Bavarian grave marker; Marc, *Aufzeichnungen*, 175.

²⁹See Franz Marc to Hans Müller and Lina Müller, correspondence about care for the horses and cows and taking Russi to stay on the farm, 1915-1916, GNM.

Though the Müllers had a few guide ponies at the farm, winter of 1899 coincided with Marc's first intensive exposure to the animals he would become so closely associated with – horses – as a farrier during a year of compulsory military service with the Royal Bavarian Field Artillery Regiment in 1899.³⁰ Marc learned to ride well and to provide for the horses as he had for the cows - feeding, watering, grooming, bathing, and fitting horseshoes. Marc made many studies and drawings of animals during this period at the turn of the century. Between 1895 and 1910 Marc methodically decorated the Müller's farmhouse, tackroom, and barn (and also his own dwellings and studios) with weavings, brass fittings, stencils, and paintings of animals, a feat he repeats during 1911 and 1912 at the Bonn home of August Macke, for whose children Marc also made animal-adorned tiny furniture.

Later, during the war, Marc gives many accounts of his chestnut mare Eva. Their adventures include several derring-do missions of great speed and endurance. Based upon Marc's letters from this time, horse and rider averaged about 24 miles per riding day, for about 70 riding days out of three months. As any equestrian will aver, this is quite a feat, and shows that Marc's lifetime experience of working with horses and competence as a rider was evident even in exigent circumstances.³¹

For a few years after deciding to become an artist in 1899, Marc created prosaic paintings of animals in landscapes and domestic settings and devoted a considerable

³⁰ Klaus Lankheit, *Franz Marc: sein Leben und seine Kunst* (Köln: DuMont, 1976) 163.

³¹ Franz Marc, *Letters from the War*, ed. Klaus Lankheit, trans. Uwe Steffen (New York: P. Lang, 1992) 92-95.

amount of time to both anatomical studies of animals and to copying³² and reinterpreting the work of other artists.³³

Marc generally limited himself and his animals to a specific habitat, the foothills of the Ammergauer Alps where he spent most of his life. He was familiar, over seasonal changes and the life cycles of the animals he knew, with the data acquired through these field studies. Thus Marc was equipped with both the information and the technical skills necessary to make nature pictures ethological in many aspects.

Between 1899 and 1908, Marc filled sketchbooks with drawings of animals.³⁴ He also began to think about how to express their behavior and qualities of their livingness that extended to their *inner* lives. Marc saw the key to a break with the artistic past – templates supplied by the Renaissance and the more recent traditions of animal genre painting³⁵ – paradoxically lay in his experiential knowledge about animals and his close

³² Marc spent a surprising amount of time and effort copying art he had seen in person and reproduced in books and journals even after he had developed a very distinctive style of his own. In a letter dated May 22, 1913, to August Macke, Marc wrote that he had been practicing many hours making copies from a Czech magazine with abundantly illustrated articles on French painting given him by Bruno and Paul Cassirer (August Macke and Franz Marc, *Franz Marc, August Macke: Briefwechsel*, [Köln: DuMont, 1964], 159-162). His habit of copying shows that Marc found the tradition of observation, drafting, and representation was necessary to his animal painting. Marc indicates clearly in his correspondence that he does not consider the process of woodblock printing to be “copying”, in the sense that for him “copying” is done both mentally and directly *by hand*. See Annegret Hoberg and Isabelle Jansen, *Franz Marc: The Complete Works, Vol. 3, Sketchbooks and Prints* (London: Philip Wilson, 2009) 323.

³³ Ursula Heiderich and Erich Franz, *August Macke und die frühe Moderne in Europa* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2001). Macke was also a devotee of a very intensive type of copying. There are many illustrations of his copies of Marc’s work in this book.

³⁴ Marc’s recently repaginated sketchbooks indicate he also drew hundreds of sketches of animals throughout his adult life. Marc’s writings and sketches are collected, partly, in some of the following works via which developments may be compared: Franz Marc and Klaus Lankheit, *Schriften* (Köln: DuMont, 1978.); Franz Marc and Günther Meissner, *Briefe, Schriften und Aufzeichnungen* (Weimar: Kiepenheuer, 1989); and *The Complete Works, Vol. 3, Sketchbooks and Prints* (London: Philip Wilson, 2009).

³⁵ Marc organizes his ethical and optical objections to academic nature painting in the essay “Die konstruktiven Ideen der neuen Malerei,” *Pan* 2, no 18 (March 21, 1912): 527–531.

observation of their appearances and habits.³⁶ Having become thoroughly devoted to live animals and practiced in observing and recording their behaviors in a way we can consider ethological, Marc was prepared for the next phase of activity, making images of animals that carefully balanced showing both how animals appear, and more.

³⁶ This trait is evident even when comparing Marc's early work to his most experimental phase later in his career. For example in *The Dead Sparrow* (Figure 4), Marc's treatment of the physical attributes of the sparrow – body shape, proportions, species-specific attributes – indicate close and thoughtful study. *The Dead Sparrow* is not an exceptional testimony to Marc's painting ability but commands recognition of livingness in the sense of the terrible reversibility that only something that can live can be dead. *The Dead Sparrow* connects representational painting with elements of abstraction and simplification. The bird's feathers are not reproduced line by line. The sparrow's body is made from patches of color side by side. The pictorial surface is defined by its intimate nature; the limited tonal background restrains the maudlin while reinforcing the feeling of being very close to the tiny subject.

PAINTING THE PRESENCE OF VITALITY

Marc realized that moving painting beyond stiff drawing room animal “portraiture” would require radical stylistic modifications. His proximity to and awareness of, and enthusiasm for avant-garde culture doubtless provided inspiration. Still Marc was careful not to let the drive to make something that appeared wild just for the sake of defiance govern his picture-making. To create animal paintings for the new times, Marc decided to try to incorporate characteristics of the interior lives of animals into images which represented important observable aspects of animal appearances and behaviors. We can infer this because in both his writing and painting, and his writing *about* painting, Marc ascribes rich inner lives, complex motivations, morality, and souls to animals in a way that makes clear he associates animals with a spiritual dimension that is immediately here in the world. Marc demanded that specific tactics in the application of paint be derived to accommodate this situation: “From now on, we have to unlearn how to relate to animals and plants and how to depict our relationships to them in art ... Every thing in the world has its forms, its formula, which we cannot perceive with our clumsy hands, but we grasp intuitively to the degree that we are artistically gifted.”³⁷

Though his dutiful copying exercises show that Marc did not dismiss the value of practice as a means to increase rendering skills, it is interesting that in the last sentence of

³⁷ Gratitude to Stefan Huber for translating this and other passages. Any errors in transliteration and interpretation are mine. “Wir müssen von nun an verlernen, die Tiere und Pflanzen auf uns zu beziehen und unsre Beziehung zu ihnen in der Kunst darzustellen ... Jedes Ding auf der Welt hat seine Formen, seine Formel, die wir nicht mit unsern plumpen Händen abtasten können, sondern die wir intuitiv in dem Grade fassen, als wir künstlerisch begabt sind.” *Franz Marc: Schriften* (Köln: DuMont, 1978) 192.

the quote above Marc associates intuition with a sort of innate ability rather than pure skill. Considering Marc as the same type of creative ethologist as Coetzee imparts an ethical dimension to his painting practice in that Marc was motivated to represent what he believed was the vital reality of “forms” of animals, an agenda we can detect through examining Marc’s images and words. As an artist, though, Marc was committed to transforming painting into a less hidebound medium. So Marc created for himself the interesting problem of how to represent the avant-garde while simultaneously presenting his primary artistic subjects in a manner that depicted them recognizably and rightly, the latter characteristic including crucial qualities of animals that could be intrinsic or behavioral.

For Marc this notion of accuracy included experimenting with how, visually, to evoke the living experiences of his animal subjects. In an aim to learn more about Marc’s thoughts about how he set about achieving this goal and in the interest of general clarification, this section of my paper covers some terminological ground. Knowing as much as possible about what was at stake for Marc will help us better understand his words about these subjects.

Rather than the common deduction that Marc imposed the belief system he longed for upon animals,³⁸ the reverse process is probably more likely: The remarkable qualities of animals – uncanny instincts, unswerving courage and devotion, extraordinary strength and speed, acute senses, and the ability to perform feats of which humans are incapable, such as flight – suggested to Marc that animals possessed some sort of direct connection

³⁸ “The spiritual qualities of the artist’s thinking spread to his animal aesthetics.” Mark Rosenthal, *Franz Marc: 1880-1916* (University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, 1979) 18.

with the divine. But Marc made a clear choice to imagine this connection in the selfhoods of common creatures; implying that such sacred qualities could be found close at hand.

Marc's paintings and drawings thus mainly show domestic animals, which for the artist included the deer and foxes who lived at and around his homes in rural Sindelsdorf and Ried, small villages about 50 miles from Munich³⁹. These at-hand models allow him to carefully reproduce important and recognizable aspects of their appearance and behavior in his paintings. I want to give an example of one Marc's paintings the demonstrates some the attributes described above.

Marc's 1913 oil painting *Foxes* (Figure 5) is on the one hand one of the artist's most assertively experimental pictures, particularly in its departure from conventional illusionistic depth and modeling. Yet this painting is indicative of close observation of living foxes, and shows a certain aspect of truth about these athletic, intelligent mammals. A pair of foxes in a flattened twirl of saturated gold, red, and orange oblongs and triangles demonstrates their flexibility and movement. These foxes convey power and lightness in the torsion and tension of their bodies. In a freeing gesture Marc casts aside all he deems inessential to his ends. There is no depth or background to speak of, just the suggestion of a tree, yet internal lines delimit the various colors of the foxes' pelts. These lines also play another role: they dart through the bodies of the foxes at sharp angles, leading resolutely through to the line of the foreleg of the fox toward the top of the painting, whose bushy tail is deliberately over-stressed. If these lines were not there, and the musculature of the foxes' bodies were more well defined and expressed with

³⁹ The set of drawings Marc made showing an assortment of "exotic" animals including elephants and lions on small boats are from Marc's trip to Greece with Paul Marc in 1906 during which, in a journey from Athos to Salonika, the brothers were in a shipwreck along with passengers who included the members of a traveling circus. See Franz Marc to Sophie Marc, correspondence about a shipwreck, September 1906, GNM.

brushwork, the bodies of the animals would not be as dynamic and the sense of dramatic movement would be eliminated. Yet the forms of the foxes and their inclination to move both gracefully and cautiously are retained in this invigorating portrait of them.

THE LETTER

In April 1910 Marc writes about his intentions toward animal painting in a letter to Munich publisher Reinhard Piper which immediately thereafter is printed in Piper's book project, *Das Tier in der Kunst*.⁴⁰ It has not been fully clear what Marc means in the vocabulary he uses in this statement. I want to improve this state of affairs, and propose in this section of my paper an interpretation of this important document based upon Marc's great regard for animals. But another piece of data – a conversation between Marc and his dear friend August Macke – provides crucial insight into the way in which Marc thinks about animals, art, animal painting, and the way Marc thought about how livingness in art might appear. In particular this conversation illuminates two important terms that emerge in the letter to Piper, *Animalisierung* and *Sichhineinfühlen*.

(In this paper *Sichhineinfühlen* is discussed as its derivative, *Einfühlung*. Furthermore, while it is possible to translate both *Animalisierung* and *Einfühlung* into English, as, respectively, “animalization” and “empathy,” because there is not an exact word-for-word correlation, I am here retaining the German words. *Animalisierung* has an original and personal significance to Marc. *Einfühlung* has a resonance in German aesthetic theory and philosophy to which an English synonym will not do justice.)

⁴⁰ Piper's enterprise often gave voice to the avant-garde. He was also a patron of the arts and in 1909 purchased some of Marc's work, a rare occurrence for the struggling painter. Curious about Piper, Marc dropped in on the publisher. During this meeting Piper agreed to let Marc help illustrate the book – *Das Tier in Der Kunst* – for which Piper was collecting material.

In the letter to Piper,⁴¹ Marc talks about advancing an aesthetic style but also infusing painting with vivacity – as he does often in his correspondence using a reference to blood as a symbol for that which is animated in the sense that it circulates, and as a substance both caused by and essential to life⁴²:

My goals are not along the lines of any particular type of animal painting. I am looking for a good, pure and clear style, which can completely embrace what our generation of modern painters has to say. And that could possibly be a sense for the organic rhythm of all things, to pantheistically feel into [*pantheistisches Sichhineinfühlen*] the trembling and flowing of the blood of nature, trees, animals, air, ...; to make this the “picture” with new movements and [also] with colors that ridicule our old easel image. In France, painters have been enhancing their skills in this matter for more than half a century ... and the latest French painters are engaged in a wonderful race to realize this goal. Strangely enough, they carefully avoid the most natural subject for this type of art: the image of the animal. I fail to see a more suitable instrument for the “*animalization* of art,” [*Animalisierung der Kunst*'] than the image of the animal itself. This is why I am reaching for it.”⁴³

⁴¹ Though Marc had been composing brief ad-hoc reviews of gallery exhibits and shows in Munich and Berlin and made many notes about art he had viewed while traveling, this was also Marc’s first public opinion on his *own* artistic works.

⁴² Marc makes reference to this idea in the midst of an argument via post with August Macke related the limitations of personality, time, and cultural identity; Marc and Macke, *Briefwechsel*, 183-184.

⁴³ “Meine Ziele liegen nicht in der Linie besonderer Tiermalerei. Ich suche einen guten, reichen und lichten Stil, in dem wenigstens ein Teil dessen, was wir moderne Maler zu sagen haben werden, restlos aufgehn kann. Und das wäre vielleicht ein Empfinden für den organischen Rhythmus aller Dinge, ein pantheistisches Sichhineinfühlen in das Zittern und Rinnen des Blutes in der Natur, in den Bäumen, in den Tieren, in der Luft ... ; das zum ‘Bild’ machen, mit neuen Bewegungen u.mit Farben, die unseres alten Staffeleibildes spotten. In Frankreich schult man sich seit mehr als einem halben Jahrhundert auf dieses Thema. ... und die jüngsten Franzosen sind in einem wundervollen Wettlauf nach diesem Ziel begriffen. Nur gehen sie, sonderbarerweise, dem natürlichsten Vorwurf für diese Kunst, sorgfältig aus dem Wege: dem Tierbild. Ich sehe kein glücklicheres Mittel zur ‘*Animalisierung* der Kunst’ als das Tierbild. Darum greife ich danach.” Marc, *Aufzeichnungen*, 30-31. [Emphasis is Marc’s.]

From his experience of being around live animals, Marc was keenly aware of the energy and vitality that only beings who are *truly* alive, in the immediate biological sense, possess, and which nature both generates and imitates – as the circulation of air does that of the bloodstream.

Animalisierung: The Breath of Life

For a proper understanding of Marc’s letter, it is crucial to notice from the outset that though the English “animal” contains as its root the same word – the Latin *anima*⁴⁴ – *Animalisierung*, even though for practical purposes it can be translated as animalization, is *not* a straightforward reference to the animal, but combines references to the notion of livingness and soul in the German term Marc uses. As a matter of fact, the word *anima* implies a reference to “spirit” as in the standard connotation of the English word “soul,” but also something more primal and more physical, harkening to the pre-Christian origins of the word.⁴⁵ *Anima* is connected to “air” and “breath,” in its origin as the ancient Greek *νεμος*, “wind.” My interpretation of what Marc is saying here is that for *Animalisierung der Kunst* to occur, the *painter* must “breathe” *anima* into what will become the “new

⁴⁴ This note shows a German scholar puzzling over the word *Animalisierung* and proposing how to translate it into German. This suggests that Marc did indeed invent the word, and that the term implies not just *Tiere* but *Seele*. Supported then is the discussion of *Animalisierung* as being not just about the animal but containing the *idea* as well as the word “anima.” Kost proposes to translate *Animalisierung* into German as *Beseelung* – which, as explained by Riccardo Marchi, indicates precisely the *process* of endowing something with *Seele* [*anima*], not as *Beseeltheit*, which is the *condition* of being endowed with *Seele*. Kost ultimately addresses *Animalisierung* ontologically without aligning it visually in Marc’s artwork; which is what I am trying to do in this thesis. Otto-Hubert Kost, *Von der Möglichkeit: das Phänomen der selbstschöpferischen Möglichkeit in seinen kosmogonischen, mythisch-personifizierten und denkerisch-künstlerischen Realisierungen als divergenztheologisches Problem* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978) 265-267.

⁴⁵ I thank my adviser Riccardo Marchi for bringing these crucial points about the interpretation of *Animalisierung* to my attention and for much guidance and many conversations about this subject, which have helped clarify my thoughts about the implications of *anima* in Marc’s work.

painting (*neue Malerei*)”⁴⁶, “in a process that we must understand as involving both ensoulment and enlivenment.”⁴⁷ *Animalisierung* as a process thus allows *paintings* to erupt from objecthood to become ensouled subjects themselves. And, says Marc, since animals are already the apotheosis of livingness (and since they are already subjects), animals are ideal to spark the *Animalisierung* process.

In a conversation with August Macke, Marc lyrically examines the etymological implications of the word *anima*⁴⁸ nested in *Animalisierung*. In 1912 while visiting Macke in Bonn, the friends paint the mural *Paradise* in Macke’s attic studio. In response to Macke’s query about *Animalisierung*, Marc comments⁴⁹:

...[n]ot in the abandonment of reality lie spiritualization and abstraction, but in the dynamic penetration of what is real. The ‘animalization of art’ connects soul and corporeality. *Anima* and animal are, like man and wife, reconciled, like in *Paradise*, in the painting...⁵⁰

⁴⁶ I am referring here to the title of Marc’s 1912 famous essay of 1912, quoted on note 35.

⁴⁷ Riccardo Marchi, personal communication, July 11, 2012.

⁴⁸ The Latin words *anima* and *animus*, along with *spiritus*, are cognates and along with the Greek *psyche*, *thymos*, and *pneuma*, all come from verbal roots meaning “blow.” The Oxford English Dictionary, in the entry on *anima*, defines the word as: “The quality, condition, or fact of being alive or living; vigour, vivacity, vividness;” and present it in contrast to *animus* as “The animating principle in living things, the soul; some part or aspect of the soul, esp. the irrational part of the soul as distinguished from the rational mind,” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. “anima, n.” accessed March 15, 2012, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/view/Entry/109360?redirectedFrom=livingness..>

⁴⁹ By the time he was a teenager Marc was already very familiar with reading texts by Plato and Epicetus, as well as more obscure writings such as the Dio Chrysostom *Orations*, in ancient Greek text formats, and could as well read Latin and was generally interested in philology to such an extent that he at one time wished to become a language historian and researcher. So Marc would have been aware of the etymological implications of his invented term *Animalisierung*. Lankheit, *Franz Marc*, 15-18.

⁵⁰ “Nicht in der Abwendung vom Realen lag Vergeistigung, Abstraktion, sondern in der dynamischen Durchdringung des Wirklichen. ‘Animalisierung der Kunst’ verbindet Seele und Körperlichkeit. *Anima* und animal sind, wie Mann und Frau, paradiesisch versöhnt im Bild.” Dering and Jochimsen, *August Macke in Tegernsee*, 38-39.

This passage ties body and spirit, human and animal, abstraction and observed reality in an explanation of *Animalisierung*. “Dynamic penetration” is tidal, then, active but not aggressive, a mode of communion but that can only be engaged in by living beings, since the spirit exists in tandem with the body, here in the world. Thus Marc did intend also for painted animal subjects to be taken as endowed with sentience and livingness. He sought some practical models of painting that showed, to Marc, how to go about this process.

In the letter to Piper, Marc also refers to the work of Vincent van Gogh and Paul Signac, who, by Marc’s estimation, had effectively achieved *Animalisierung*:

What we are striving for, one might call an animalization of artistic perception; van Gogh or Signac turned everything animalistic: the air, even the barge resting on the water, and, above all, the art of painting itself. These images no longer resemble what were formerly called “pictures.”⁵¹

Marc seems to be saying here not that there is something beastly about either the painters or about the objects he mentions in the paintings – which are not alive – but that the *anima* in the animal can even better exemplify the sort of vitality that is needed in new painting, since animals *are* alive. (A subsequent section of this paper will discuss what in particular Marc found so impressive about van Gogh and also Paul Gauguin and how Marc derives a way to further their achievements by focusing on the animal.)

⁵¹ “Was wir anstreben, könnte man eine Animalisierung des Kunstempfindens nennen; bei einem van Gogh oder einem Signac ist alles animalisch geworden, die Luft, selbst der Kahn, der auf dem Wasser ruht, und vor allem die Malerei selbst: Diese Bilder haben gar keine Ähnlichkeit mehr mit dem, was man früher ‘Bilder’ nannte.” Marc, *Aufzeichnungen*, 30-31.

The process of animating painting did not at all entail a rejection of the physical world, but immersion into the sacred aspects *in* the world,⁵² the “pantheistic feeling into” to which Marc refers in the letter. (In an earlier letter Marc makes reference to this urge as “... something that comes over you, you must create gods to whom you can pray.”)⁵³

So Marc refines his explanation of *Animalisierung* in writing over 1910 and 1912 while continuing to ponder the issues he raises in the letter to Piper. During this same time, as I will show in detail later, his paintings echoed efforts to both adhere to and pierce the real, to represent *anima* and the livingness of the animal. In the case of what I think of as Marc’s “winter” phase, distracting colors recede to more fully proclaim the animal as subject in possession of both imagination and perspective. Landscape and atmosphere elements take on the animals’ shapes, colors, and texture. This type of mimicry, trading, and transference amid living subjects, has also to do with “feeling into” – with *Einfühlung*.

The Perception of Penetration

Marc’s conception of *Einfühlung* as partially expressed in the phrase “pantheistically feeling into” lays a finger against the heart of this important idea in German philosophy and art. In fact the way Marc presents the process of “feeling oneself into” seems, particularly in the context of his declarative letter to Piper, to be intended to persuade. My interpretation of this phrase is that Marc thought of this *Einfühlung* as something to *do*, as well as, and perhaps instead of, something that just happened. This

⁵² *Animalisierung* thus does contain a component of what Marc’s devoted biographer Klaus Lankheit defined as the “dethronement of the subjective, self-centered point of view” on the part of the viewer, and perhaps more interestingly, on the part of the painter. However, even Lankheit seemed confounded by *Animalisierung*. In all his writing on Marc this single sentence is the only reference he makes to the word. Lankheit, *Franz Marc*, 270.

⁵³ “Ich glaube, es ist etwas was über einen kommt, man muß sich Götter schaffen, zu denen man beten kann.” Marc, *Aufzeichnungen*, 24.

places Marc outside definitions of *Einfühlung* that were being articulated by influential thinkers during his lifetime.

In 1910 Marc had some awareness of the dialogue amid artists and art historians surrounding *Einfühlung*.⁵⁴ Amid scholars in 19th Century Germany there was an intense interest in the subject, which by Marc's era had turned to focus on discussions about the responsivity of the viewer as opposed to the effects of formal composition.⁵⁵ Theodor Lipps extended *Einfühlung* from art to broader visual stimuli, like optical illusions. Lipps regarded *Einfühlung* as the key to a problem that had long concerned philosophers — how we come to know the mindedness of living things. An essay that encapsulates Lipps's views ("Empathy and Aesthetic Pleasure," 1906) characterizes and categorizes degrees and types of this experience. Though some of these shadings are blurred by the prolix style of the era, Lipps describes *Einfühlung* as active — a viewer's response to visual stimuli embodies a range of physical and psychological reactions related to

⁵⁴ As far as the term goes for the history of aesthetics, *Einfühlung* is about the perception of life and animation in an observed object or subject — including nature, animals, forms, paintings, and so on, and also about perceiving, absorbing, and reflecting emotion, and degrees of emotion, from works of art and from person to person. (For this mode of interpreting what the essential components of *Einfühlung* are I am indebted to Riccardo Marchi, personal communication, April 13, 2012, and I am also incorporating some of the points from the article "Empathy and Aesthetic Pleasure" by Theodor Lipps. (Theodor Lipps, "Empathy and Aesthetic Pleasure," in *Aesthetic Theories: Studies in the Philosophy of Art*, eds. Karl Aschenbrenner and Arnold Isenberg (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965)). August Macke wrote Marc about Wilhelm Worringer's 1908 *Abstraction and Empathy* in late 1910 and undoubtedly mentioned it in conversation, noting in a letter that the book contained "a lot of things for us.": "Franz, kennst Du eigentlich das Buch von Worringer *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*? Ich las es und fand es teilweise recht fein. Sehr viele Dinge für uns." Franz Marc, August Macke, *Briefwechsel* (Köln: DuMont, 1964) 59-60.

⁵⁵ *Einfühlung* was a concern in studies of both aesthetics and psychology, which as disciplines shared more then than they now do. For a comprehensive account of the origins of *Einfühlung* in 19th Century Germany, see: Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou, *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*. (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994.) In the 1870s Robert Vischer wrote his dissertation on "emotional projection" or *Einfühlung*, "feeling oneself into" in relation to art (*Über das optische Formgefühl — ein Beitrag zur Ästhetik* [*On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics*], 1873). Vischer's text is reprinted in this volume.

“achievement,” “power,” and “striving.”⁵⁶ These modes, according to Lipps, activate reflexively in a circuit: You can project into an object whatever internal characteristics you yourself already possess and/or the object/subject elicits – or seems to – a sort of involuntary and immediate reaction instigated by characteristics of what is being seen.⁵⁷ “This mode of relationship of a subject – the viewer – to an object (which can also be another subject) entails the perception of the object as *animated* and imbued with *life*” (whether it actually is – or if it generates this *as-if*-animated type of reaction).⁵⁸

So the twining of visual apprehension, verve, and activity with *Einfühlung* is related to *Animalisierung*. For Marc, however, it seems as though *Einfühlung* had a broader application and that it happened all the time, leaping from the living subject doing the projecting to something observed, or as Marc says, into the air, nature, and animals – animals who, in Marc’s estimation, could also “feel themselves into” since they had their own modes of perceiving. This brings us to the edge of the distinction I detect in Marc’s phrase and overall tone in the letter to Piper. “To feel into” an image of an animal – if the animal has to be understood, as Marc does, as a subject endowed with mindedness –

⁵⁶ Lipps, “Empathy and Aesthetic Pleasure,” 404.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 404.

⁵⁸ This quote is from Riccardo Marchi, personal communication, April 13, 2012. Importantly, in a way that is very different from the way I propose Marc conceives of this process, Lipps sees *Einfühlung*, though biological, in somewhat humanistic terms, as a means for heightened understanding between people, and although he does not use the word, implies that there is an aspect of *Einfühlung* amid evolved humans affected by or appealing to character. In the history of *Einfühlung* this was by no means a “standard” interpretation. *Einfühlung* as both specific and broader term had been used earlier in literary and theoretical contexts. It had been expressed by critic and theologian Johann Gottfried Herder in terms of the appreciation of sculpture and in the verb phrase “sich einfühlen” by Novalis (Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg), the early Romantic philosopher and naturalist, in the latter half of the 18th Century. (This is pointed out by Andrea Pinotti in his edited anthology *Estetica ed Empatia*, Milan: Guerini e Associati, 1997, 26-27. This citation courtesy of Riccardo Marchi.) Novalis’s ideas about *sich einfühlen* are similar to Marc’s in that Novalis thought about the process as a way to transcend the boundaries not just between different types of conventionally alive beings but to comprehend the “forces” of plants, rocks, water, and so on.

requires some degree of intention, and of imagination. No matter how “animated” a picture of an animal might be by the painter, the viewer had to *do* something, too.

This is an important aspect in understanding Marc’s animal paintings within the framework of ethology, because it allows us to understand the artist’s pantheistic⁵⁹ commitment as one resembling what we would think of today as deep ecology,⁶⁰ a philosophy of interconnectivity between living things in which humans are not a pinnacle and other beings are seen to have interests – primarily the interest in being alive. Marc seems to intend for the viewer to “feel themselves into” (a matching phrase is probably Marc’s own “dynamically penetrate” from his conversation with Macke) not just the animated image but in a certain way *the animal’s sense of being*. This might explain why Marc always keeps to a representational format in his paintings, so there is not just a vaguely organic form but also a specific animal “to feel into”.

Based on these reflections, I understand Marc’s focus on the livingness of the animals and on the exhilaration implied in the phrases “feeling into” and “dynamic penetration” as setting up for the viewers of his paintings an invitation to engage themselves in this activity, which experienced properly – “pantheistically” – becomes a deeply immersive experience of imagination.

Michael Fried’s book about another German painter, Adolph Menzel is helpful to describe how this experience functions vis à vis Marc’s paintings. Fried has never written about Marc; in fact his chronological overviews omit the early part of the 20th Century on

⁵⁹ “A belief or philosophical theory that God is immanent in or identical with the universe; the doctrine that God is everything and everything is God. [Frequently] with implications of nature worship or (in a weakened sense) love of nature,” Oxford English Dictionary Online, s.v. “pantheism, n.” accessed March 7, 2012, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/view/Entry/136995?redirectedFrom=pantheism>.

⁶⁰ See Patrick Curry, *Ecological Ethics: An Introduction* (Polity, 2011) for a good overview of the current construal of this term, which, like ethology, is shifting quickly to explore a wide number of interpretations and animal rights and antiauthoritarian interests.

both sides of the bookshelf. Nonetheless, I find Fried's ideas about the "effects of embodiment" to be very useful to apply to Marc's animal paintings. In writing about how Menzel's paintings evoke in the viewer a sense of communion and participation, Fried's term "embodiment" refers simultaneously to the actions of the painter, the viewer, and the objects and subjects within the paintings. This is the type of active *Einfühlung* I take Marc to be describing in his words with Piper and Macke, and, more importantly, *showing* in his paintings of animals.

Fried's "projective imagination" echoes Marc's "dynamic penetration" and describes a combination of attentive looking and immersion in a painted environment, including the figures within the canvas. Fried takes into account the viewer's experience of switching back and forth between the physical reality of the object (the painting), and the imagined identities of the subjects or subject depicted in it (in the case of Marc, I propose, we should be extending this experience to the depicted animal). To have the fullest understanding possible of Menzel's painting, Fried says, it is necessary to "feel into" the living beings depicted in paintings to access private, but still shareable and comprehensible, states.⁶¹

An example of a Marc painting containing such an embodied subject into whom we must decide to imaginatively project is *Dog Before the World* (Figure 6). *Dog Before the World* is a portrait of Russi, the dog who appears frequently in Marc's work and in photographs at his side. Marc had wondered specifically about "what is going on inside"

⁶¹ *Menzel's Realism: Art and Embodiment in Nineteenth Century Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) 256.

Russi⁶² around the time he made this painting, deciding to show the dog sitting quietly contemplating a prismatic landscape.⁶³ In the painting Marc ties Russi's state of reverie to the dog's physical being. *Dog Before the World* is a large canvas and Russi Marc takes up about a third of the painting, so it is easy enough to relate to the size of the dog, taking on his view out into "the world" and mentally mirroring his posture.

The experience of looking carefully at and becoming immersed in *Dog Before the World* takes imagination and time. With Marc's painting in mind, I return to Fried who ponders how this type of engagement with paintings work from the viewer's part in the work of Menzel:

... I want to say a bit more about the mode of viewing Menzel's art elicits and in effect demands. ... [It] extends to the viewer an unmistakable invitation to approach the picture closely, to take as much time as needed to explore the depicted scene, indeed to make a conscious, searching effort, not just to understand the dynamics of the scene as a whole ... but also, in the end more importantly ... to feel one's way projectively into the states of body and mind of the various figures as well as to empathize with an entire world of so called inanimate objects. ... this means imagining as if from within (within whom or what? The depicted figures? Or the implied viewer of the scene? I would like to say both) a wide range of actions, feelings, sensations, response and thoughts, none of which needs to be entirely clear...⁶⁴

⁶² "Ich möchte mal wissen, was jetzt in dem Hund vorgeht," Franz Marc and Klaus Lankheit, *Franz Marc Schriften* (Köln: DuMont, 1978) 11.

⁶³ Despite his facility for showing their defining motions, Marc frequently depicts animals in a way that calls attention to their interior states – sleeping, thinking, and daydreaming. Marc's animals sometimes turn toward one another in absorbed interaction; just as often they have their bodies turned away from the viewer of the painting.

⁶⁴ *Menzel's Realism: Art and Embodiment in Nineteenth Century Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) 256.

I find particularly valuable Fried's caveat in the final phrase that this experience is not marked by a definitive sense of success or anything else. This claims imaginative projection, particularly in the case of imagining the livingness of an animal, is an open-ended experiment (and takes us on a very different path from "achievement," "power," and "striving.")

Dog Before the World presents Russi as a figure for imaginative inhabitation and exploration in a way that makes him a sentient subject (one with enough subjecthood, in fact, to share). The act of sitting and thinking is a marker of the sort of secondary consciousness – the awareness of being aware – that interests ethologists. Sentience, of course, does not automatically coincide with a permanent readiness to communicate, and in this portrait Russi demonstrates a disinterest in engagement. Though there is nothing aggressive or confrontational in Russi's posture, this gentle refusal calls our attention to a component of Russi's subjectivity – his thoughts and opinions are his own.

WHAT IS WITHIN SEEN WITHOUT

Faithful observation of animals was important to Marc's project. So too was incorporating principles from artists who, in Marc's estimation, had achieved *Animalisierung* in some capacity in their own work. Equally critical was dispensing with conventions of animal painting that did not deeply involve the viewer in the élan of the animal subjects. In this section I explain the visual language Marc associates with his *Animalisierung* project and point out the characteristics of some of his important sources for inspiration. These traits include abstraction – which in this context refers to a certain type of flatness and simplification in painting, the use of “essentially descriptive”⁶⁵ color – color that somehow typifies the subject but that can be non-naturalistic or hyperreal, and an adherence to the representational. These characteristics are compatible with seeing Marc as an ethological artist as they are based upon observing and interpreting livingness.

Marc was challenged to come up with a program for showing that there was something mystical about animals that was nonetheless tied to the fact that this “something” inhabited mortal, living bodies. Examining the formal language used to transfer this force into the image and then convey its sense back out to the viewer from Egypt and Post Impressionism shows us how Marc used his own ideas to be able to the same and more.

⁶⁵ Lankheit, *Franz Marc*, 51.

Egyptian Art and Abstraction

The aesthetic problem Marc sets up for himself in reporting his agenda to Piper is difficult: to find “a good, pure and clear” visual language that nonetheless conveyed the complex concept of the osmosis between dimensions of life. Yet an art that had accomplished this task already existed, and it was art that Marc knew well. The images of animals in Egyptian paintings readily communicated to viewers basic identifying characteristics about types of animals as well as specific creatures. Figures in Egyptian art are often clearly outlined and filled in with a single or limited palette of colors. They are shown in a flat, compressed pictorial space yet in a manner that still calls attention to states of animation such running, playing, or hunting.⁶⁶ In Egyptian art depicting animals, the abstraction, abbreviation and elimination of distraction are driven so far and became so sophisticated that papyrus and wall paintings look as “modern” to our eyes as do Marc’s.

Egyptian art presented Marc with promising examples from which to consider the pictorial practicalities of manifesting what he called *Animalisierung*. One characteristic of Egyptian animal painting was to focus upon a distinctive attribute displayed by a depicted animal, such as distinctive fur markings, telltale silhouettes, or typical postures or gaits to indicate which species was being represented. For example, in a detail from a wall painting in the Tomb of Nakht in Thebes showing a cat eating a fish (Figure 7), a strong outline draws attention to the flexion of the cat’s spine and complements the

⁶⁶ There was also plenty of Egyptian art on display in the Louvre in 1903-04, 1907, and 1912 when Marc visited Paris. The Egyptian motif of abstraction in animal painting was one derived over time and was by no means monolithic, but over millenia Egyptian art is consistently conceptual. Thanks to Sheramy Bundrick for her instruction and advice over more than ten years on the subject of the art of the ancient world and for her insights about Vincent van Gogh. See also: Gay Robins, *The Art of Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

stripes of the golden tabby's fur. The pricked ears of the cat tell us that this animal is alert even while maintaining the dainty decorum and balance we strongly associate with cats with a sweepingly curled tail and folded paws.⁶⁷

Marc was devoted to Egyptian art, but he was certainly aware of its contemporary echoes and implications, given his public comments in support of the artists who plied a style that recalled its use of outline and color. (I will be discussing such comments in the next section, which is about Post-Impressionism.) Simplification, or *Synthese*, was becoming a concern in the practice of avant-garde painting, particularly that of Gabriele Münter and Wassily Kandinsky.⁶⁸ In the watercolor postcard *Four Foxes* (Figure 8) Marc draws these influences together, incorporating the jaunty graphic contours and planes of new painting, techniques drawn from Egyptian art, and enlivening details of habitude made from close observation to convey important data about one of his favorite subjects, foxes. The four arrow-faced foxes occupy a shaded outcropping vertically, interleaved with fronds of foliage. This painting Marc made for Wassily Kandinsky is one of the most charming and personal images of Marc's small-format works. The boundaries of the color zones of the orange foxes, spears of plant leaves, blue and green rocks, and the suggestion of a mountain top are indicated by strong black lines. The foxes are arranged

⁶⁷ Marc returned again and again to Egyptian art not just for inspiration but as a guide for imitation; he studied Eduard Meyer's 1908 book *Aegypten zur Zeit der Pyramidenbauer*, from which he copied many animal images into his sketchbooks over the course of his work from 1909 to 1913. See Annegret Hoberg and Isabelle Jansen, *Franz Marc The Complete Works. Volume 1, The Oil Paintings*, (London: Philip Wilson, 2004), 32. Marc also made extensive visits to antiquities collections at the Berlin museums including in 1907 many trips to the Egyptian collections, of which he wrote enthusiastically to Maria Franck. See Marc, *Aufzeichnungen*, 20-22, 25, 27. Marc travels to Berlin quite often in and after 1907, sometimes to see Maria Franck and her family and sometimes to visit the family of Annette von Eckhardt. Marc reports seeing the Egyptian collections 31 times in his correspondence with Annette von Eckhardt. See Franz Marc to Annette von Eckhardt, June 1907-August 1912, GNM.

⁶⁸ Reinhold Heller fully explains this simultaneously abrupt but incremental process in *Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism, 1903-1920* (Munich: Prestel, 1997) 79.

in a vertical (albeit nonhierarchical) register. The superimposition of different configurations of bodies and stances allows their clear demarcation without obliterating any of them. Marc's variation of the outlines of the foxes and surrounding plants and rocks brings more intensity to the total picture; an original sense of imbalance *not* present in Egyptian painting that Marc uses to generate a sense of unpredictability – these curious, wary foxes might *decide* to either flee or come closer any moment. This sense of activity – and the potential for it – is achieved by modeling the bodies of the foxes and the foliage and rocks near them with curves mixed with sharp angles, to bring out the desired animation. Marc is able to absorb and express some particles of the personalities – a mix of canine clannishness and feline diffidence – of the foxes he had watched closely. The fox perched high up on a large boulder and surrounded by a natural curved ridge of the rock leaps to the eye on account of his strong black outline.⁶⁹

To give a vivid impression of the animals, Marc has sacrificed distracting details of their bodies. Their outlines convey those aspects that fortify an impression of livingness. An emphasis is deliberately laid upon the tensed shoulders of the fox on the lower right. Her simplified form allows her to lean forward, head and forelegs are merged into this single line for the sake of conveying the utmost possibility for movement. A smooth convex curve forms the outstretched tail attached at a 90-degree angle to her hind legs. A slightly curved horizontal connects the end with the forward thrust.

Marc's grouping of the foxes, the lack of illusionistic depth and the bright orange

⁶⁹ David Morgan attributes Marc's use of the outline to the artist's intention to show a type of duality: "Marc more frequently expressed ... the opposition of an inner and outer side of objects. The [starkly outlined] figure is indebted to ... Romanticism and physiognomy, but the tension in which Marc engaged the two dimensions was his own contribution. The inner side was a dimension of reality governed by its own laws rather than those of the outer, phenomenal side of things." David Morgan, "Concepts of Abstraction in German Art Theory, 1750-1914," (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1990) 185.

color of their fur, recall the abstraction of the animals in Egyptian art. Their individuated postures and expressions, however, are Marc's invention, the result of close observation of the habits of real foxes who tend to live in family groups of three or four – and who are very alert and nimble. Related to the outline is the use of transparency. The taut outlines restrain the foxes' orange pelts. Everything in this scene is replete with life: we can sense the pulsing blood, as Marc declares in his letter to Piper.

In seeking to show the world of animals is both imagined and given from independent, physical experience Marc had found a successful model in Egyptian art. The Egyptian art Marc studied showed *conceptually* what the Egyptian culture insisted was fully real for all its members. This combination of a reality made present to the senses, but at the same time rendered in a visually simplified and abstracting manner in order to refer to a reality that transcended the transient features of the everyday is what Marc found in common also with the Post-Impressionist painters he admired.

South by South: Van Gogh and Gauguin

As the second decade of the 20th Century begins, Marc develops his animal paintings drawing inspiration from what he deems the exceptional attributes of Vincent van Gogh, whom he lauds in his letter to Piper, and Paul Gauguin. Marc notes the connection between *Synthese* and the “School of Pont-Aven,”⁷⁰ referring to Gauguin and Emile Bernard who worked together in the town of the same name in Brittany at the end of the 1880s. Broadly, the painters' work of this period is hallmarked by emphatic dark lines used to simplify and delineate large swaths of flat, unmodulated color. Despite the fact that their palettes led beyond realism, the paintings themselves, as did Marc's, remained

⁷⁰ Marc, *Schriften*, 219-221.

rooted in reality. Though they felt free in pictorial terms to heighten or exaggerate in order to convey that reality which was embodied in or clothed by external appearances, direct observation was important to both van Gogh and Gauguin,⁷¹ as was an evocation of the permeability of spirituality and life. Though it takes a bit of time for the influence of the Post-Impressionists to manifest in Marc's paintings, and though these influences are visually less apparent than aspects of Egyptian art, he gave the work of van Gogh and Gauguin a great deal of thought in terms of how to go about imbuing his own pictures with the sense of animation he thought this duo had accomplished.

By 1910, when he writes to Piper about *Animalisierung*, Marc had been aware of both van Gogh and Gauguin for a while. During a trip to Paris in the spring of 1907 Marc writes a letter to Maria Franck in which he exclaims: "I barely saw anything other than the two new masters van Gogh and Gauguin!"⁷²

Direct contact⁷³ with van Gogh's paintings allowed Marc to absorb more precisely van Gogh's technical and formal language as shown in a painting from 1909, *Cats on a Red Cloth* (Figure 9).⁷⁴ The subdued contrast of complementary colors -- the red stripes of the fabric intensified by the green grass, the blue-gray spots of one of the cats responding to the orange fur on the other -- recalls van Gogh's palette. Marc would have

⁷¹ See: Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith. *Van Gogh: The Life* (New York: Random House, 2011).

⁷² "Ich sah mir nur wenig anderes an als die beiden großen neuen Meister van Gogh und Gauguin." Marc, *Aufzeichnungen*, 25-27. The painters were only "new" to Marc, since Van Gogh died in 1890 and Gauguin in 1903.

⁷³ Jill Lloyd, Michael Peppiatt, Patrick Bridgewater, Olaf Peters, and Chris Stolwijk, eds., *Van Gogh and Expressionism* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2007) 37-53.

⁷⁴ Owing to his close relationships with August Macke and Helmuth Macke, Marc had ample opportunity to inspect the private collection of Bernhard Koehler, Sr., August Macke's uncle by marriage and also Marc's major patron. Koehler owned a number of van Gogh paintings himself. See Margarethe Jochimsen and Peter Dering, *Helmuth Macke: Tektonik der Farbe*, (Bonn: Verein August Macke Haus, 1999) 63.

seen an example of this use of color at Joseph Brakl's gallery in 1909 in the van Gogh painting *Crab on its Back* (Figure 10).⁷⁵

Marc probably encountered van Gogh's ideas about color theory and the function of art in society, which Emile Bernard had begun publishing in their original French (which Marc could read) in 1893; some were translated into German and published in *Kunst und Künstler* in 1904 and 1905.⁷⁶ Bruno Cassirer published a German-language anthology of some van Gogh letters as a trade book in 1900.⁷⁷ (There are numerous, somewhat coincidental points of contact between Marc and the work of van Gogh which I enumerate in part in footnotes.⁷⁸) However, although Marc was enthusiastic about van Gogh and knew a lot about the Dutch painter, beyond Marc's experimentation with complementary color it is not explicitly clear in a comparison of their work how Marc applied van Gogh's program to his own. Yet while van Gogh's influence is not reducible to a formal connotation, nor to an appropriation of styles and techniques, it is clear from Marc's reference to van Gogh in his letter to Piper and his fervor over van Gogh in the letters from Paris that Marc thought van Gogh had made a breakthrough in transferring that which Marc sought – the urgency of animation and a departure from strict adherence

⁷⁵ Jacob de la Faille, *The Works of Vincent van Gogh: Paintings and Drawings* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1970) 635, cat. F605.

⁷⁶ Leo Jansen, Hans Luijten, and Nienke Bakker, eds., *Vincent van Gogh: The Letters* (London and New York: Thames & Hudson, 2009) vol. 6, 37. Marc does not mention van Gogh until his revelation of 1907, but maybe he needed to see the paintings in person to become motivated by them, and Marc could have then reviewed the available correspondence.

⁷⁷ Vincent van Gogh, *Vincent van Gogh – Briefe* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1900).

⁷⁸ As more biographical information became available about van Gogh, including the Dutch artist's letters to his brother, Theo, and to other artists and correspondents, in the years following his suicide, it seems likely Marc would have been attracted to van Gogh's ardent philosophy on art as well as his theological background and leanings. In fact Marc's friend Paul Klee, with whom he corresponded a great deal particularly from 1914 to 1916, following the death of August Macke, says in his own meandering eulogy for Marc that Marc identified to a great extent personally with van Gogh. See Klaus Lankheit, ed., *Franz Marc im Urteil seiner Zeit* (München: Piper, 1989) 52-53.

to the recreation of the simply seen – to the canvas. In terms of what Marc called *Animalisierung*, though – in the pursuit of bringing the ideal vivacity and energy of the animal life force to the painted surface – it seems what Marc would have most directly responded to was van Gogh’s use of startling color to express how intense interior states affected a perception of life that was nonetheless real. In his letter to Piper, however, Marc says his intention is to express the being of *animals* in a way that would allow them to be shared. Whereas it would take Van Gogh a matter of hours to make a painting, Marc was an exceedingly slow painter who seemed dedicated to getting a certain type of data about his animals *right*; he remained tethered to his ethological practice even as he began to try new painting techniques to better address his *Animalisierung* project.

Marc’s consideration of Paul Gauguin’s methods are more obvious – in adoption as well as dismissal.⁷⁹ Though none exist today it seems Marc made studies of the art of Gauguin, as can be seen in his correspondence with Jean Bloë Niestlé: “I sent you yesterday a copy I made of the Gauguin. I hope you found it favorable.”⁸⁰ Marc looked closely at Gauguin and van Gogh at the same time, but a series of events in 1910 seems to have helped Marc use Gauguin’s motifs to break further with animal painting conventions.

Marc read an article by Maurice Denis called “Von Gauguin Van Gogh und zum Klassizismus” published in *Kunst und Künstler*. This article discussed, among other

⁷⁹ In the chapter “The Yearning for an Unspoiled World: Exotic Motifs in the Art of Franz Marc” Isabelle Jansen gives an extensive account of Marc’s visits to Paris in terms of his exposure there to art from Japan, Cameroon, India, and China. Jansen also compares Marc’s *Nude Lying in Flowers* (1910) to Paul Gauguin’s *Spirit of the Dead Watching* (1892), which supports the notion that Marc’s interest in Gauguin lead to visible traces in his work. See Annegret Hoberg, Helmut Friedel, Barbara Eschenburg, and Isabelle Jansen, *Franz Marc: The Retrospective*, (Munich: Prestel, 2005) 73-89.

⁸⁰ See Franz Marc to Jean Bloë Niestlé, correspondence about drawing, October 1908, GNM.

things, the Nabis and Symbolism, and actually says little about Gauguin.⁸¹ However, the black and white reproductions in the magazine of five paintings by Gauguin represented a source of inspiration for Marc. (In a letter to Maria Franck he described the works in detail.)⁸²

Marc connects Gauguin with an innovative way to suggest spiritual experience in painting through evoking a “dematerialized inwardness of feeling” that was based not in depictions of piety – a common allegorical theme in German painting at the time -- but by allowing “space, rhythm, and color theory” to conjure easily comprehensible but intuitive “spiritualized” interactions⁸³. Marc makes these observations about the Gauguin exhibition at the Galerie Thannhauser in August 1910. The occasion for these words, though, is Marc’s defensive review of the Neue Künstlervereinigung München⁸⁴ at the Thannhauser the next month. Marc adds that until Gauguin and the “School of Pont Aven” this “spiritualization” and “inwardness” was something that 19th Century painters, including the Impressionists, had failed to achieve.⁸⁵

The White Horse (Figure 11) seems to have attracted particular attention from Marc because it offered an idea about showing animals in a landscape who exhibit a sense of presence and subjectivity, interacting with their human companions and

⁸¹ The issue of *Kunst und Künstler* is volume VIII, 1910, p. 85-101. It is mentioned in the Lankheit biography (Lankheit, *Franz Marc*, 51); and viewable online at the German Centre for Art History / Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte Website, <http://www.dtforum.org>, accessed June 5, 2011.

⁸² Marc, *Aufzeichnungen*, 28-29.

⁸³ Marc, *Schriften*, 219-221.

⁸⁴ The NKVM, or *Neue Künstlervereinigung München* [Munich New Artist’s Association] formed in 1909 and to which Marc briefly belonged, was founded by Marc’s *Blaue Reiter* colleague Kandinsky. Heller, *Gabriele Münter*, 80-82.

⁸⁵ Marc, *Schriften*, 219-221.

dominating the composition. In fact a lone, thoughtful horse is the central figure in this painting. Gauguin's horse faces away from both the people and other horses the painting and also ignores the viewers of the painting, seeming to consider something not immediately apparent to as he bends toward a stream. This canvas, though complicated in its program of people, horses, trees, and a flowing stream, nonetheless uses simplified, flowing vertical forms to unify its organic, antediluvian theme.

Marc began work incorporating the Post-Impressionist principles he admired – communicating states of being through simplified forms and languages of color -- in a way that formally enriched and isolated *animals*. But Marc was a bit cautious about using color arbitrarily in a way that could be accused, in a pejorative way, of being “simply decorative.”⁸⁶ In 1909 Marc comes up with a painting in which animals are shown with clearly outlined, streamlined silhouettes. *Deer in the Twilight* (Figure 12) is the first work in which the quest for the simplification of animal forms is successful in a style we can recognize as distinctively that of Marc. The brown and white color of the deer remains realistically descriptive. The deer bodies are shaded, local colors at a new minimum, but flat with scarce internal modeling. This painting dispenses with some naturalistic detail yet we recognize the animals as small deer.

Simplification as one method of reaching for the essential was certainly on Marc's mind, as he had taken the initiative to write an essay for *Im Kampf um die Kunst: Die Antwort auf den “deutscher” Protest Künstler*, published through Piper. In his

⁸⁶ In fact Marc said: “I never make a shrub blue on behalf of the decorative effect, but only to increase the essence of the horse that stands next to it,” Marc, *Aufzeichnungen*, 219. On the positive and unfavorable connotations of the concept of the decorative in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, see: Steve Edwards and Paul Wood, *Art of the Avant-Gardes*, (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press in association with the Open University, 2004) 91. Marc's dismissal of the “merely decorative” suggests that while he appreciated the aspects of decoration associated with, for example, non-Western art, he also thought that painting should not completely abandon a connection to at least partially recognizable “reality.”

commentary, Marc compares French and German art to showcase everything admirable from Paris, wondering, even in his praise for a few Germans, if they would be able to match the innovations across the border.⁸⁷ In his is own work, Marc introduces a more selective palette, beginning in the fall to dismiss local color and instead balancing simplified forms with colors that can be characterized as “essentially descriptive” – Klaus Lankheit’s phrase that insulates Marc from the accusation of being “simply decorative” in the sense that for Marc, painting an animal a non-natural color had to do not with intriguing the eye but with expressing some revelatory aspect of the subject – and telling details about animals. Assessing “essential descriptiveness” is of course tricky, since Marc’s use of fantastic color is, even by his own account, subjectively interpretive.

At first, though, Marc’s iteration of simplification scaled back color values but kept the energy of arabesque lines of Gauguin’s compositions. A photograph from the winter of 1909 shows Marc working at an easel on the painting *Siberian Sheepdogs* (Figure 13) in the snowy courtyard of his mother’s house in Pasing as Russi frolics beside him. In this painting we can see Marc using the Bavarian winter to make a clear-cut separation from the haphazardly colorful “School of Pont Aven.” The snow dressed nature in shades of white, allowing the animal subject – in this case, a doubled view of Russi – to emerge through the purification of color, illuminated by the icy, dazzling reflection. In *Deer in the Snow* (Figure 14) these very simplified animals retain Marc’s careful rendering of the body mechanics and appearance of deer; they bend gracefully, lowering their heads in the fluid arcs common to their species. Their curved, linear bodies

⁸⁷ “... The French are so disproportionately artistic and inward-looking that the German paintings appear immediately as empty and superficial posturing. Is this to be believed? Will the ‘Scholle’ or the ‘Munich Secession’ try to upset the cart?”. “[... Die Franzosen sind so ungleich künstlerischer und innerlicher, daß die deutschen Bilder sofort leer und von äußerlicher Mache erscheinen. Glaubt man das nicht? Will die ‘Scholle’ oder die ‘Münchner Sezession’ den Versuch wagen?”] Marc, *Aufzeichnungen*, 54-55.

show an unprecedented degree of stylization, and their shapes and rhythms echo and reflect out into the landscape. The space is thus like the deer, conveying both a sense of the calm characters of the deer and hinting that this perception of the surroundings may belong to them. Pictorially, for us as viewers, this process begins with the deer forms in the the center of the square canvas and emanates outward – and envelops the deers’ heads in a halo of color. In contrast to the contours and hollows of the white blanket of snow this gives the golden and brown deer a serene glow, their immediate surroundings augmented with blue, purple and a vigorous green. The blue-violet shadows on the snow field in the foreground are intensified by reflective yellow highlights.

After seemingly assuring himself that his scheme for painting was both nondecorative but nonnaturalistic enough to be taken as *new*, and sufficiently elevating of the animal subjects, Marc is able to circle back to the expressive palettes he had been so taken by in the work of van Gogh and Gauguin. A chunky colt in a painting from the winter of 1910-1911 called *Blue Horse I* (Figure 15) shows the first of these famous horses. The short mane and awkward, knobby legs mark this animal as not fully grown; a particular animal at a particular stage in his life. This vertical composition with its streaming forms quotes Gauguin’s *The White Horse*, omitting the people and focusing attention upon the characteristics of the colt, a less proportioned version of the adult horse he will soon become. This is another example of how Marc’s acute familiarity with real horses makes his program work; even though the horse is blue and set within a particularly lush mosaic of “inward” color, we can feel him marking the earth with his translucent hooves, abstract channels chiseled in the moist bank of the “stream.”

Faithfulness, Alteration and Involvement

The interconnections among the Post Impressionists and Egyptian art proved to be rich imaginative terrain for Marc to build upon as he sought ways to couch his ethological observations of animals in the manner he had described in his letter to Piper – a style that was representational but modified enough to reveal the ensouled creature concealed in what Marc deemed the insufficient mode traditional animal painting. But Marc was maneuvering to make room for the painter he was still discovering himself to be – a seeker with the somewhat conflicted task of both reporting accurate data about animals and radically modifying the conventional “Bild” to do so. Marc had told Piper in 1910 that what was required to do this was “a good, pure and clear style,” suggesting that Marc found existing animal painting to be contrived, pretentious, and bad.

To assess and clarify how Marc pursues an ethological way of painting and fulfilling the project of *Animalisierung* via a process of subtraction, rejecting conventional naturalism, presented here are two examples of animal painting: one by Albrecht Dürer, the master draftsman of the Renaissance, and work by Bruno Liljefors, a contemporary of Marc’s regarded at the time as an important genre painter. Though Marc certainly deploys his considerable knowledge of animals and the outdoors in creating his pictures, his project was to reinvigorate animal portraiture through a process of rejecting the *painting* practice of academic naturalism prevalent particularly in German painting at that time.

Dürer's *Young Hare I* and Marc's *Dog Lying in the Snow*

Marc must have seen *Young Hare I* (Figure 16) many times during his life, and it is reproduced in *Das Tier in Der Kunst*.⁸⁸ For Dürer the superiority of “contemporary” art focused on the correct proportions of the human body and perspective systems, which could be furthered by studies of “measurement” mathematics.⁸⁹

Dürer's *Young Hare I* demonstrates this notion of accuracy by its extraordinary detail, down to the animal's “correct” number of whiskers and eyelashes. The hare's tiny shadow gives its otherwise unmoored a body a sense of depth, if not volume. The thing we notice the most about the hare is its fur, or rather Dürer's meticulous rendering of its fur. The painstaking individuation of each filament and the subtle shadings of gold and brown on each hair shift attention to the artist and still the animal's “breath of life.” Dürer's precision suggests that everything that can be known about a hare can be ascertained by its appearance and that increased “accuracy” yields more information.⁹⁰ Painting in such detail denies the rabbit its privacy in a certain way, making it not a creature whose body to imagine being in but instead a discrete visible *object* placed into a void. Without a doubt Dürer's was a master of rendering and the details of the rabbit's eyebrows and velvety ears conjure for the viewer a sense of the animal's inviting texture. To this viewer though there is a sense of finality in *Young Hare I*; it does not seem to

⁸⁸ Marc naturally knew the work of Dürer before perhaps revisiting it in Piper's book. Marc had viewed a few “originals” during his 1903 trip to Paris, which he notes in his journal, (Marc, *Schriften*, 77).

⁸⁹ Jeffrey Chipps Smith, Collectors Circle Lecture: “Albrecht Dürer and the Language of Prints,” The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, FL, January 23, 2009.

⁹⁰ In fact Dürer was not at all deeply dedicated to the idea of first-person observation in the way Marc, who concentrated on animals he had seen and knew, was. For example, Dürer's equally famous (to the hare) 1515 drawing and woodcut of a rhinoceros was made based upon reports about the animal's appearance; see Donald B. Kuspit, “Dürer's Scientific Side,” *Art Journal*, 32 (1972-3) 163–171.

invite the same possibilities to both inhabit and imagine the reality of animals Marc presents. Beyond this impression, Marc must have realized that in the 400 years that had turned between the making of this painting and the state of art Marc found in his own time that Dürer's then-innovative methods had been hopelessly compromised by commercial art.

It is worth interjecting here that for a long time – over the summers of 1905 to 1911 – Marc worked on painting life-size images of horses, ending up destroying these large panels in frustration.⁹¹ For a painter who was used to being around real animals, to convey an accurate perception of them, it would be at least initially unthinkable not to take centrally into account the “fit” between perceiver and perceived. Marc abandoned this tactic, realizing that something besides size would have to help an imaginative transference occur. Still while they are not large enough to contain “actual size” animals, Marc's later paintings (excluding the many postcards which form their own genre) are generally, usually, quite large.

I mention this because a different kind of cognition from that invoked in considering Dürer's *Hare* is mobilized in Marc's *Dog Lying in the Snow* (Figure 17). This is such a large painting – three feet tall by four feet long – that the figure of Russi is in fact nearly dog-sized. The figure of the sleeping dog easily conveys recognition. However the unfinished, simplified aspects of the canvas momentarily confuses and destabilizes the rapid processing of information and creates vulnerability, and our eyes require other senses to be brought in to help interpret the image. In the way that someone learning a language touches a printed page to make out a word, the strong outline of the dog makes us want to trace his outline with our fingertips, to touch Russi the way we

⁹¹ Lankheit, *Franz Marc*, 177.

would a real dog. Marc makes use of Russi's shape and contours – which are rendered with definite dark strokes, leaving the details of the dog's fur tantalizingly obscure. Visually this brings together the precise and the precise and the speculative, suggesting that while there is much we can know about Russi, we cannot know everything – a statement affirming that there is after all something to know. This deeper sensory experience is one of imagination and interiority: ours, and the possible states of mind as we imagine that of the dog, and his slumber. Russi Marc's subjective reality is shown in a way that makes his state evident to viewers, and in this portrait of his companion and frequent artistic subject Marc is especially astute in conveying the intense privacy of the dog.

Russi is reclining on a blanket of snow facing left, his head resting on his left front paw. Exposed tree roots extend at an acute angle from above into the field. Softer forms of shadow play around on the snow field toward the bottom half of the dog. The simple shapes within the painting correspond to a limited color scheme; the vigorous root system in dark green and the shadow-of-the-snow zones in deep blue-violet and the dog in various tones of yellow. Marc uses this color blocking technique to give an extension of intensity to this painting of Russi, to achieve *Animalisierung*, and to convey both a real and imagined truth about the dog's state of being. Attached to the dog but dematerialized, the shapes of color pass into the space of dreams, but as the violet shadow touches the pale dog, both colors are suddenly vivified; an event that can be felt and seen.

As Marc reinforces in his discussion of the use of the prism these pure, spectral colors are not used solely for the sake of being complementary.⁹² Both Russi and the

⁹² We learn how Marc went about conceiving this painting because he writes at length about it in a letter to August Macke in February 1911. Marc reports visiting a university library for the purpose of looking at

snow retain local color, and the dog's body in the foreground of the painting conveys a dominating mass. But it is Russi's slumber that is the subject of the painting, the inaccessibility and privacy of his dream world, as opposed to the simple fact of his existence, as Dürer shows in his rabbit. The dog's still body, a pale, reflective, and yet flat and stolid surface, houses a contemplative ensouled subject who transforms the natural objects in the landscape into subjects as well. So here in fact Marc accomplishes "the pantheistic immersion into ... trees, animals, air" he had described in his letter referencing *Animalisierung*.

Other notable aspect about *Dog Lying in the Snow*, especially over and against Dürer's environment-less rabbit (and in a comparison to Bruno Liljefors who still uses some of Dürer's conventions), is how Marc's simplification of color and form manifests a vision of an integrated world and how the renunciation of violent or aggressive activity make this sort of harmonious unity possible.

The dog, the snowy landscape and the trees are all made from very basic, curved shapes that form an interlocked pattern. Russi seems to be enfolded by his environment which may also be his dreamworld, in the way that dreams are composed of elements from wakefulness. As Marc explains in a letter to Macke, he has only used three colors besides white and black in this painting, yellow, blue, the color of the two primaries

books about art and color theory, information he discards in favor of the simplified overall pictorial program enhancing Russi: "My few superstitious notions about colors in any event serve me better than any of these theories. Only the prism has become indispensable to me. But unfortunately you are deceiving yourself if you think that I am quite clear about its application." Macke and Marc, *Briefwechsel*, 44-48. ("Meine paar abergläubischen Begriffe über Farben dienen mir jedenfalls besser als alle diese Theorien. Nur das Prisma ist mir unentbehrlich geworden. Wenn Du aber denkst, dass ich mir ganz klar über seine Anwendung bin, dann täuschst Du Dich leider.")

mixed, green.⁹³ The eradication of the extraneous – as exhaustive detailing of Russi’s fur, the leaves of the trees, or the striations of the rocks would be – as opposed to the precision we see in Dürer’s hare, draws attention not to Marc’s virtue as a draftsman but rather to Russi’s state of livingness. Showing Russi asleep and dreaming underscores our awareness of the dog’s sentience and subjecthood; certainly the demiworld of dreaming is one of the most rarified aspects of being alive.

The abstraction we find in *Dog Lying in the Snow* helps make this a very intimate picture of a specific dog who, in 1911, Marc had been observing for five years. The lack of detail in Russi’s hair functions on two tracks, on the one hand making think we would have to get much closer, close enough to touch, to see each strand, on the other effectively creating a distancing space of respect for the dog’s privacy. The portrait of Russi nudges us to feel ourselves into the dog’s body, to think about “what is going on” behind Russi’s closed eyes and long lashes, the violet martingale claiming not ownership but rather a gesture that Russi Marc and Franz Marc belong to each other.

The Jagdmaler Liljefors’s Birds and Marc’s Birds

Das Tier in der Kunst includes two paintings by Swedish painter, Bruno Liljefors, who is introduced by publisher Piper in terms of the painter’s then-renown as the *ne plus ultra* of animal painters and unusual achievement of having been elected to the Berlin Academy of Art despite not having been an alumnus.⁹⁴ In a 2006 journal article about Liljefors, Karen Wonders revisits the painter’s career in terms of certain aspects of his

⁹³ Marc says in the letter to Macke that he systematically strengthened the yellow of Russi’s fur incrementally so he got a hue that would hold its own against the blue while showing balance between the dog and the landscape. The shadow beneath Russi’s body and face glow. These small patches of color that are also complementary and prismatic effects add a dimension to the painting of physical sensation of breath and blood.

⁹⁴ Reinhard Piper, *Das Tier in der Kunst*, (Munich: R. Piper, 1910) 177-178.

familiarity with animals. Liljefors was a hunter and specimen collector, and this disseminated information contributed to his reputation and association with academic naturalism.⁹⁵ Looking at Liljefors's work shows the painter still using many of the conventions pioneered by Dürer – and relatively unchanged since the Renaissance. Liljefors's *Golden Eagle With a Hare* (Figure 18), for example, in which the painter renders the fall repose of the autumn landscape, the death of the hare, and the triumphant eagle with identical dispassionate precision, was considered a landmark of nature painting even years after Liljefors's critical prominence and was profiled as such as late as 1978 by the journal *Audubon*.⁹⁶

Looking closely at *Golden Eagle With a Hare*, we notice that Liljefors's textures are uniform irrespective of the represented objects: the surface of the rocks hardly differs from that of the rabbit's fur. The rachis and vanes of the eagle's feathers are painted in the same colors as the ground cover and in a dappled manner reminiscent of Impressionism including a lack of clearly defined outlines.⁹⁷ In this case a limited palette of dark colors – the abundance of brown and the darker shadows beneath the eagle – creates a heavy mass. The diagonal placement of the eagle and the rabbit function as

⁹⁵ In recounting how Liljefors became known in Germany, Wonders reports that Liljefors showed a group of paintings as “part of the 1893 International Art Exhibition in Berlin,” and that “...[h]is most important museum sale came in 1895 when the New Pinakothek in Munich purchased his monumental work of capercaillies [a kind of shore bird like a gallinule] performing their mating rituals on the ancient glacier boulders of a Nordic forest, painted in 1888;” Karen Wonders, “Wildlife Art and the Nazis: The Case of Sweden's Bruno Liljefors (1860–1939),” *Lychnos: Annuaire de la Société suédoise d'histoire des sciences*, (Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm: 2006) 73.

⁹⁶ This article discusses among other things how Liljefors studies Impressionist painting techniques in France and how we was also impressed and influenced by the motion-capture innovations of photography. Martha Hill, “Liljefors of Sweden: The Peerless Eye,” *Audubon*, lxxx/5 (1978), pp 86.

⁹⁷ Wonders adds: “Liljefors's skill as a *Jagdzoolog* (hunter-naturalist), together with his ability to engage the viewer, resulted in a dynamic new approach to painting;” Karen Wonders, “Wildlife art and the Nazis: The Case of Sweden's Bruno Liljefors (1860–1939),” *Lychnos: Annuaire de la Société suédoise d'histoire des sciences*, (Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm: 2006) 83.

planes creating firm volumes. This sense of heaviness interferes with a perception of the eagle as flying. The careful arrangement of the animals follows a rational logic rather than the chaos of living: In the Liljefors, detachment, permanence, depth, and a monumental intention are apparent – characteristics of neither raptors nor the animals who flee them. It could almost be a “still life” paintings in its sense of separation from the life around it – that of the ostensible animal activity and from that of the viewer. The eagle and the rabbit are posed, obviously, in a way that focuses on the capture and cessation of movement.

It is hard to know what Marc, who spurned the training of the art academy in Munich and was in the process of making his opinion of the traditional academies, museum wings, and galleries in Berlin well-known, would have made of Liljefors and Piper’s reference to the *Jagdmaler*. Most likely to Marc Liljefors’s depicted animals would not have been *animalisch* and indeed in Marc’s terms would have come across as already dead. So we can see what Marc does to reinvent the compromised genre of animal painting. In *Birds* as in *Golden Eagle With a Hare*, Marc’s textures are not those of the represented subjects, either, but in fact the flatness of his paintings make a circular definition of a characteristic of Modernist painting. The jittery, sweeping diagonals are countered and complemented by staggered blocks of bright blue, green, and red anchored at the top and bottom by dark undecipherable patches of black. The eye shifts, the planes move in pictorial space, and a tension is set up between rest and unrest, recalling both the habits and movements of birds. Moreover it is precisely these variations, the ripples of color within their strong outlines, the constant breaks, and the possibility of the accidental which breathe the quality of discovery, or surprise – a quality of livingness – into *Birds*.

In the Marc we are aware – both instantly and over the time of close examination – of intimacy and participation, the dynamics of the act of flight. The dove at the left with its distinctive round head and the kingfishers at the top and middle of the canvas, painted as if seen in midair at level, thereby displaying the position of their wings, demonstrate the basis of *doveness* and *kingfisherness* – their forms in tandem with their abilities to both perch and fly.

Birds are no exception to the ethologically observed dog, cats, deer, foxes, cows, and horses we have thus far encountered in Marc's paintings. In fact Marc goes to great lengths constructing and maintaining a wacky assortment of bird houses, bird feeders, and bird baths at his home in Ried and devoted a significant amount of time to birdwatching even during the war. As Marc shows in *Birds* it is possible to present a truth about birds without some sort of fictionalizing dramatic reality, like hunting or being hunted. The reality of being able to fly is sufficiently highly colored.

Instead Marc makes a painting that is about the experience of flight. *Birds* could be a picture of *being* a bird, not a view of one.⁹⁸ This choice of “ordinary” birds as his most frequent subjects – as is the case with “ordinary” domestic animals – suggests another possibility, that Marc, unlike Liljefors, is deliberately avoiding dramatic or violent scenes because of preference but also because, as he shows, common creatures are special *enough*. Since *Birds* has such an open composition with an abundant amount of space and a radical amount of abstraction it is important to note that Marc's approach

⁹⁸ Marc makes numerous studies and drawings of birds who are common species – sparrows, starlings, and doves, for example. Natural-powered bird flight is achieved via the shape and movement of birds' wings, which together generate lift aerodynamically -- a very complex biomechanical process to render. Hovering, diving, and perching movements are distinctive to species and tied to feeding and evasive behaviors. In *Birds* we note these behaviors to identify the birds (as a great cuckoo dove and a pair of malachite kingfishers) and can even determine the birds' orientation in space.

includes much painstaking labor and study, which obviously went into these airily fractured spaces, where a soft light is filtered through countless overlapping planes, suggesting, in addition to the birds, a fluttering wing-movement sensation over the whole activated canvas. In contrast to Liljefors's paintings that show an eagle and rabbit as people observe them, Marc concentrates on imagining the perspective of birds, and the freedom they have in not having to behave with respect to *any* perspective, or gravity.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Birds are able to fly at abrupt angles, looping and diving, but they most often travel horizontally in a slightly meandering fashion. During flight their legs hang beneath them. The majority of Marc's depictions show birds in midair but holding their wings as seen from the side, at angles and attachments particular to these species of birds. The wing movements of most flying creatures are too rapid to be perceived by human eyes, but the flight of large raptors (as Marc noted) can be observed because their wing flaps are comparatively slow. "The eagle overtakes the fluttering sparrow in three slow flaps of his wings," Marc notes poetically but in reference to a real sighting. Marc makes many detailed notes about the birds he observed, some of which were species new to him, in the Vosges. *Franz Marc: Letters from the War*, eds. Klaus Lankheit and Uwe Steffen, trans. Liselotte Dieckmann, (New York: Lang, 1992) 29.

CONCLUSION

This paper provides an enriched comprehension of Franz Marc's animal paintings by identifying Marc as an ethologist. Looking at today's definitions and examples of ethologists and at the concerns and commitments of ethologists, and noting that this term is retroactively applicable frames a discussion of Marc as an expert in animal appearance and behavior who expressed himself outside of the realm of pure science. Most importantly, reviewing the implications of Marc's use of the ideas embedded in and extending from *Animalisierung* and *Einfühlung* in connection with the sentience and livingness of animals shows how important what happens "inside of a dog" and other creatures is to his artistic practice. Naturally these ideas are fueled by Marc's proximity to animals throughout his life. This closeness gave Marc the opportunity to study what characteristics were the chief attributes of species of animals, and he came to know their movements, habits, and personalities. Such a literal and personal identification helped Marc make accurate notes, studies, and deductions that reflected a keen knowledge of animal behavior. Holding these crucial aspects of animals always in mind prompted in some part Marc's admiration for Egyptian art in a formal respect, and to be further inspired by the suggestions of the inflection of inward states in the work of van Gogh and Gauguin. When it became apparent to Marc that the art of his own time was failing in formal innovation and transcendent intentions, particularly in regard to animal portraiture, he countered with his own plan of action.

Thinking of Marc as an ethologist also means there is much more work to be done to fully appreciate his oeuvre. A place to begin – besides, obviously, looking again at the behavior of the animals in the paintings, postcards, and drawings – is to make a closer examination of Marc’s words. Marc’s thus-far published writings consist mostly of his short pieces about art, philosophy, literature and so on. However the Germanisches Nationalmuseum Archiv für bildende Kunst, which holds Marc’s papers possesses more than 900 unpublished letters from Marc (and is acquiring more all the time, and this does number does not even include the letters addressed *to* Marc).¹⁰⁰ Some of these letters *do* contain presumptively quotidian data about Marc’s contact with animals which is of great interest to ethological scholarship.¹⁰¹ To fulfill and expand upon this project Marc’s correspondence needs to be fully reviewed from the ethological perspective, re-evaluating what he had to say not so much about art, which we know, but about the animals he made the subjects of his art.

Marc knew that to shake off the familiar anesthesia of academic painting it was necessary to awaken it with a patient juxtaposition of color, flatness, and simplification. This patience was an extension of Marc’s relationship with real animals, and I think the cheerfulness that permeates so many of his images comes from his knowledge that associating with animals is one of the finest pleasures. Marc knew many animals individually, and was known by them, so they are never *anonymous* – Marc knew who they were – even if, unlike Russi, their identity is unknown to *us*. The attention Marc

¹⁰⁰ The Deutsche-Welle news service reported in September 2011 that the Archiv für Bildende Kunst des Germanischen Nationalmuseums had received 200 *more* letters donated to the collection consisting in part of correspondence between Marc and Helmuth Macke.

¹⁰¹ See Franz Marc to the Müller family, correspondence about animals, September 1904-January 1916, GNM.

gives to the details of each animal's subjecthood announce them as both individuals and part of the world. Visually, the inventive fillips at the margins of reality – dramatic outlines, brilliant colors – those exaggerated little details which nonetheless spring from animals themselves, are the very distinctions that lodge in our minds, offering a chance to make a first step toward imagining real animals.

Marc's animals lend themselves to being imagined with the same degree of extraordinary vivacity they have in the world. As a pantheist as well as an ethologist who brought these beliefs and behaviors to his artistic practice, Marc directed all his imagination and longing to bringing about the livingness of animals and nature inherently present in perception. Why should we, like Marc, be open to take animals as the subjects of the imagination? It is because of all things in the world they are the most amazing, and it expands our imaginations *already* just to consider the possibilities and responsibilities of our shared world.

Marc speaks beautifully about these possibilities: "I saw what the moorhen sees as it dives: the thousand rings that encircle each little life, the blue of the whispering sky swallowed by the lake, the enraptured moment of surfacing in another place. Know, my friends, what images are: the experience of surfacing in another place."¹⁰²

¹⁰² "Ich sah das Bild, das in den Augen des Teichhuhns sich bricht, wenn es untertaucht: die tausend Ringe, die jedes kleine Leben einfassen, das Blau der flüsternden Himmel, das der See trinkt, das verzückte Auftauchen an einem andern Ort, – erkennt, meine Freunde, was Bilder sind: das Auftauchen an einem anderen Ort." Marc, *Schriften*, 209.

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