
I. SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE RECENT DOSTOEVSKY STUDIES

**Review of „Антропологията на Достоевски.
Човекът като проблем и обект на
изобразяване в света на Достоевски“,
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Jonathan Bruce (Independent Scholar, Chicago, Illinois, USA)

After the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church blessed the military operation, claiming that the Russian forces are fighting for a holy united Rus and that this military duty will wash away all sins. Understanding such statements can be informed by the scholarship of participants at the symposium “Man as a Problem and as a Subject of Reflection in Dostoevsky’s World” at the University of Sofia, on the 200th anniversary of Dostoevsky’s birth. More specifically, symposium scholars discussed the topics of cultural identity, destiny and territoriality as “myth as memory” in the production of ideology. Symposium scholars also explored such topics as human nature in the cosmic order, will and existence, alienation and “gnosticism,” confession and “demonism,” and “pneumatology” and theosis.

The importance of Dostoevsky, as complex as human nature itself, points to new syntheses of thought useful for the future in many different disciplines. As Jorge Luis Borges put it: “Like the discovery of love, like the discovery of the sea, the discovery of Dostoevsky marks an important date in one’s life.”

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Cosmic Order and Human Nature

Toefusa Kinoshita addresses the teachings, regarding humble love and the humility of wisdom, of the elder Zosima in the *Brothers Karamazov*, and Seiichiro Takahashi discusses "The Idiot" in the work of Akira Kurosawa. Turning from film to opera, Svetlana Voitkevich examines the opera "The Idiot" by the twentieth-century Russian composer Mieczysław Weinberg. Elena Safranova focuses on Siberia, where Dostoevsky spent four years as a prisoner and five years as a soldier, as a topography and mythologeme of spiritual rebirth, paradise and purification in Dostoevsky's work.

By contrast, Markos Galounis' paper on Charles Taylor and Dostoevsky points to a cultural shift from a sense of a meaningful cosmic order to the notion of a meaningless universe. For symposium participant Olga Bogdanova, we cannot speak of territoriality or a homeland but rather must speak of heterotopic spaces for a living space to reproduce and develop itself. For theoretical support, Bogdanova draws on Michel Foucault and the structuralist notion that language is a tool for constructing reality, not describing it.

Whether or not the notion of "homeland" and ethical standards are authentic in contemporary society, a common theme among symposium participants is that there are no easy answers, and no simple truth. For Andrey Shishkin, not only is the *Brothers Karamazov* a world of elemental and metaphysical forces, less Christian than pantheistic, but "The Grand Inquisitor" contains the deepest universal prophecy about the fate of mankind. In fact, Shishkin discusses a cultural notion that Dostoevsky's novels are a kind of "Russian bible" only comprehensible by Russians.

Sergei Khoruzhy discusses a related notion that a Russian can fully penetrate the soul of any people. This theme of universality touches on the arguably heretical doctrine of ultimate *apocatastasis*, the salvation of all, expressed in the statement of the drunken character Marmeladov in *Crime and Punishment*:

"[Christ] then will judge everyone, both good and evil ... He will also say to us ... 'Come out drunk, come out weak, come out scum!' ... And forgive everything."

But such unrestricted redemption occurs only after a process riddled with individual or collective strife and opposition, for Dostoevsky. Khoruzhy draws a parallel to René Girard and his idea of "*la montée*

aux extremes”—or growing to the limit—by which imitation can lead to real or figurative violence, which can grow indefinitely and cause societal institutions to collapse (or cause inner crises), preventing simple truths and easy answers. That is, before “*resurrection*.”

While Khoruzhy discusses how René Girard relied in part on Dostoevsky’s “Eternal Husband” and “Notes from the Underground” in the development of his theories, Jordi Morillas discusses the Dostoevskian notion that being born with three components of one’s being—spirit, psyche and body—leads to a state of inner contradiction and excruciating alienation from God before a final justification or “*resurrection*,” or nullification of contradiction. Why? Because the three components of being—spirit, psyche and body—are often unreconciled and undeveloped in a person.

According to symposium participant Jordi Morillas, this is the central problematizing factor in Dostoevsky’s all-consuming interest: the theme of man and his destiny. Since man is a microcosm and the center of being, to solve the question about man is to solve the question about God and man’s relation to God. This is made nearly impossible, however, by the complexity and imperfection of the three-part complex of the human being.

Giuseppe Ghini discusses these three being-components in view of a scheme of stratified consciousness based in Orthodox Christianity and a basic feature of Dostoevsky’s character development. While *Dusha* is the center of human feelings, love, empathy, humility, self-sacrifice and a sense of remorse, it is limited to the sensible and phenomenal world. *Dukh*, on the other hand, refers to the upper part of human interiority, where the Self can go out of itself and reach ecstasy. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, *dushevnyj* is connected to feelings and psychology, while *dukhovnyj* is something more profound, a spiritual life when a relationship with God exists.

The interior core of the Dostoevskian hero and his stratified consciousness, then, is at the same time inside him and beyond him. In this context, Dostoevsky’s characters show irrational behavior and make their decisions based on unconscious biases, but the psychological level, even if unconscious, does not prevail over the moral one. Prior to any ethical “*resurrection*,” however, a character such as Raskolnikov in “*Crime and Punishment*,” for example, is caught in “*la montée aux extremes*” of his own mental and ethical imperfection.

For instance, Morillas discusses how Raskolnikov declares to the

character Sonya that he wants to do good, but first he feels he needs power. Raskolnikov turns his murder victim, the grandmother, into part of an arithmetic equation:

“Against one life - thousands of lives saved from decay and decay. One death and a hundred lives in its place - such is the simple arithmetic!”

Because of what is discussed below as his undeveloped self and hypnotized will, Raskolnikov’s abstract notion of devoting oneself to “all humanity” and “the common cause” by eliminating an unworthy, unnecessary, and even harmful person to benefit many is perceived in alienation and ignorance. Raskolnikov’s goal is power, not humanism. Far from having a connection with a truth beyond himself, in his will for power, Raskolnikov meets nothing and no one but his own thoughts. By contrast, Sonya’s living faith in the novel meets Raskolnikov’s cruel and delusional intellectual constructs. Even so, delusion is not the whole story for Raskolnikov, who later wishes to suffer to alleviate his guilt and thereby begin the process of becoming more authentically human.

Another dramatization of contradiction prior to justification is in the limitations of Prince Myshkin in “The Idiot.” Dostoevsky creates his own “Prince Christ” with the characteristics of downtroddenness, fear, humiliation, sadness and the inner conviction that he is an idiot. Myshkin’s efforts to save the people around him fail miserably. “Resurrection,” however, lies in a paradoxical oppositizing process (Grace). The tragedy of Myshkin, which many interpret as the incompatibility of Christian ideals with life, actually proves the opposite. Because life is more complicated than any equation or syllogism, *Christ* is compatible with life in its highest sense.

For symposium participant Julia Sytina, this ethos is consistent with what she discusses as “the rejection of $2 \times 2 = 4$ ” in Russian culture. This rejection, for Sytina, also rejects Hegelian dialectics and the statistical law of large numbers, and rejects the preference for the general over the fragmentary and ephemeral. As Grace is superior to the Law, Dostoevsky affirms the eternal ideal in spite of any “mathematical” refutation of freedom, God and Christ. Morillas points out that Dostoevsky stated that he would rather stay with Christ than with the truth. This statement is not the destruction of meaning, for Dostoevsky, but the creation of cosmic harmony. *If only a madman understands the world correctly, then the world itself is mad.* For Dostoevsky, *Christ*, the highest positive ideal, negates finitude, entropy, and absence of mean-

ing—regardless of any irrationality.

We can understand this Dostoevskian ethos better by considering a counter-example. Looking west and using Thomas Aquinas as a point of comparison, the Thomist philosophical inquiry into moral virtue is more like an approach to an engineering problem. For Aquinas, moral virtue is hampered in its appetitive aspect, i.e. when one overreaches toward what is not practically obtainable. The flow of Thomist conceptual categories out of the Aristotelian mean, then, is not the Dostoevskian “rejection of $2 \times 2 = 4$.”

Rather, we can understand the Thomist approach to moral virtue as “*mean-ing*,” so to speak, or the production of *meaning* from the *mean*, graphable in a Brownian distribution curve on an x/y axis, with the dominant weighting in the center and the statistical outliers at the edges. One’s position in the cosmos begins to get into trouble when located too many standard deviations from the mean: this governs the categorical distinctions between what is virtuous and non-virtuous, and is expressible as a mathematical equation, consistent with the measurement tools of the engineer. Moreover, such systematicity understood in terms of mean reversion and the bell curve is also the hegemonic voice of the totality, that even assumes the authority to enforce the status quo in the categories used to study moral virtue.

The difference between Aquinas, the Catholic arch-theologian, and the Dostoevskian ethos can be seen in how the Grand Inquisitor in the Brothers Karamazov addresses the insoluble contradictions of human nature. Christ only gives an enigmatic promise of freedom, according to the Grand Inquisitor, at our crux in the cosmic order. By refusing to assume earthly power on the basis of his power of the miraculous, Christ requires people to choose good or evil for themselves. People are confused by hope, however, and freedom leads people into a maze. Christ’s truth plants the seed of its own destruction in the average person. The Inquisitor’s impulse, then, is to punish this quality of Christ. The inability to perceive the Whole is characteristic of being a mere functionary within a system (human life) that is both hegemonic and baffling, and intellectual formation is hampered by stunted ethical formation. Looking east to another literary source, the second shloka of the Bhagavad Gita expresses the entropy prior to “resurrection” as this self-generated trap:

“While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops

attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises. From anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost one falls down again into the material pool.”

Consistent with these words of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, the Grand Inquisitor points out that people are not vigilant and intentional about the space they prepare in their complex being and, as a result, become ethical and spiritual nullities. In view of this, the Grand Inquisitor prosecutes Christ and defends the concern and mission of the church:

“And if thousands follow you in the name of heavenly bread and tens of thousands, what will become of millions and tens of thousands of millions of beings who will not be able to neglect the bread of the earth for the sake of heaven?”

If there were anything in the next world, says the Grand Inquisitor, it certainly would not be for them, the masses. By contrast to the masses, even being aware of one’s nothingness, one’s predicament, is for the few.

Moreover, for symposium participant Peter Gregory Winsky, we learn from “The Idiot” that there is no possibility of perfection of the person either in this life or in Dostoevsky’s realism. The tri-hypostatic mode of Divine Being—comprehended by human reason as the communion between three Persons sharing a single Essence—is expressed as a loving self-emptying, or *kenosis*, dynamic in its authentic love. Prince Myshkin, however, is essentially devoid of this dynamism; this lack prevents him from becoming a true person. Rather, he lives as a type, the Sentimental Dreamer or Holy Fool. He is constantly forced to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving; this makes him naive, inert, and unresponsive. Myshkin’s person does not fully contain the likeness of Christ. He is the imitation of Christ, rather than Christ-like. Because of this, Myshkin’s attempts to save Nastasya, Aglaya, and Rogozhin fail, according to Winsky.

Imperfection, however, does not have the last word in Dostoevsky’s Christianity and for his “Prince Christ.” Dostoevsky chooses *Christ* over truth. “Resurrection” follows the most total of losses, at the point at which 2×2 no longer equals 4.

Let us turn now to the literary example of the temptations of Christ in the wilderness (Matthew 4), i.e. in emptiness with only oneself and

wild animals for company. Indeed, all reality is a form of *nirmita* or magical illusion and is empty of essence, in the Buddhist view. There is only oneself, such as one is. The desert of the great tempting enemy spirit is based in this emptiness, or *shunyata* in Sanskrit. To this, we can add the Buddhist principle of *Pratītyasamutpāda*, which holds that all phenomena arise in dependence upon other phenomena: "if this exists, that exists; if this ceases to exist, that also ceases to exist." Nothing begets nothing—or less than nothing, if we consider Matthew 13:13: "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath."

People are unwittingly oppressed and hypnotized by their own undeveloped selves in *shunyata*. This—maybe paradoxically—is the same freedom that Christ offers. As a result—unlike the paralytic at the pool of Bethsaida who walks after being healed in the Gospel of John 5—people become deluded by the Church that they are made free, and lose the thread of memory of what they are, if anything, in eternity. In an entropic, chaotic and delusional state in a scheme of non-dynamic and undeveloped tri-being (spirit, psyche and body), people are trapped by the apparent freedom of emptiness, or ignorance, or illusion. At this level, the Inquisitor and the church cater to this ethical and spiritual mediocrity and laziness of the masses.

But, alternatively, there *can* be "tri-dynamic," interdimensional *shunyata*. Jesus' instruction in Matthew 6:3-4 provides an important clue to how to prevent mortal inertia in the tripartite complex of one's body, soul and spirit—namely, one must not let one's left hand know what one's right hand is doing. The "left hand" (ego/false personality) is one's controlling "demons," so to speak. The "right hand" is one's controlling "angels," so to speak. We can conceive of "demons" and "angels" as cosmic/collective energy confluences/collectives. If you "*think from your demons*," e.g. "I am going to turn stones into bread," "I am going to throw myself down from the temple," "I am going to seek control or power in the world" (i.e. Jesus' temptations in the wilderness from the devil in Matthew 4), the "demons" have tricked you, so to speak: in reality, you never would have been able to turn stones into bread, angels never would have borne you up, and you never would have controlled the world.

The "demonic," or thinking from the left hand, is egoic and self-

centered. Consider the following intention, held by many: “I am going to meditate so I can attain spiritual higher levels.” Such an intention is futile because meditation is not an act at all. Meditation is a state. The mind that still has not yet introduced itself to its authentic self can have no reasonable expectations, including meditation, for that self. Such a mind does not even know yet what it is thinking about, or making meditation plans about.

When one falls short of authentic being, one ends up in the default state of being: *cupiditas*, the “way of the world,” or desire’s reference back to the desiring self, according to Hannah Arendt’s reading of Augustine of Hippo in “Love and Saint Augustine.” This forgetting of primordial being is the path to eternal death, the oblivious and momentum-based follow-through into the lower *aetas*, or hell. According to Paul in Romans 6:23, “the wages of sin is death.” The absence of a choice rooted in reflection is “sin” or *hamartia*, i.e. “missing the mark” (as opposed to Jesus’ statement in John 8:14: “I know where I come from, and I know where I am going.”).

“Eternal life” is “taking up one’s cross” and “following Christ,” so to speak. What does this mean? Such “discipleship” is only possible when there is a “virgin birth” or “new life in Christ” that neutralizes desire’s dualistic reference back to the desiring self. With “right-handed will,” one can begin to know and be something new: the *episteme* of the new birth from the “cross” is *pathein* (“to suffer”), to suffer another’s pain. *Metanoia* or being “born again” is the introduction of the dimension of conscience and empathy, by means of a transcendent/imminent *kairos*, into fate. When Jesus says “I am the way, the truth and the life” in John 14:6, the life he refers to is of a different and higher order than the default life of the so-called natural world and self-referential desire to which the Grand Inquisitor and his church cater.

In “Revelations of Divine Love,” the medieval English mystic Julian of Norwich struggles against the terrifying great tempting spirit with faithfully obedient prayer:

“Pray, even if you feel nothing, see nothing. For when you are dry, empty, sick or weak, at such a time is your prayer most pleasing to God, even though you may find little joy in it. This is true of all believing prayer.”

And:

“We need to fall, and we need to be aware of it; for if we did not fall, we should not know how weak and wretched we are of ourselves,

nor should we know our Maker's marvelous love so fully."

Julian experiences a breakthrough as a result of her work on herself—in prayerful lapse—and expresses her revelation of *apocatastasis* and a scheme of ultimate redemptive eschatology—synchronic and diachronic, managed from above and through time—with these words:

"And I saw that truly nothing happens by accident or luck, but everything by God's wise providence."

This higher-dimensional perspective is ecstatic, past *la montée aux extrêmes*, and enables Julian to speak with the voice of God:

"See that I am God. See that I am in everything. See that I do everything. See that I have never stopped ordering my works, nor ever shall, eternally. See that I lead everything on to the conclusion I ordained for it before time began, by the same power, wisdom and love with which I made it."

A different kind of example is the medieval French mystic Marguerite Porete, the author of "The Mirror of Simple Souls." Porete's *imitatio Christi* is a visceral and reified *montée aux extrêmes*—in her case, getting burned alive for her religious convictions, as if some form of pneumo-somatic totalization is required to attain freedom. Her concentrated, self-oriented reflection in her "speculum" results in the annihilation of her will and even her own life.

Such a kairotic, trans-dimensional leap into unrepresented, first-hand and visceral experience is certainly one way—but perhaps not the best—to resolve the insoluble contradictions of human nature in the desert. This also brings to mind Jesus in the Gospels, who expresses his own eventual violent execution in words, weaving a prophetic intertextuality with real life as one of the texts in his weave/text. The mimesis/meaning that Porete and Jesus both embrace unto their fates is mystical, violently self-directed and heroic.

According to the "Poretian" ethos, starting from the Dostoevskian notion that the ethical norm of Christianity is inapplicable to actual reality in the proverbial wilderness, one must either stake everything to live (and die) consistently with Grace, or get bewildered and mediocre. The price to pay for *kairos*, or access to divinity, is total (perhaps most closely approximated in the auto-vivisection of authentic confession, discussed below). The crux of the matter, according to Hannah Arendt's reading of Augustine, is that desire must get beyond the limited desiring self to escape spiritual death. When desire is not merely self-referential

in an appetitive way, it can remember a primordial past and hope for it in the future, in another *aetas*, or heaven. Knowledge of this happy eternal life exists in memory, because it is a primordial seat of consciousness. Memory preserves this past/future, which is also a transcendent present/presence.

Most important, one must choose this primordial truth, or heaven. To choose primordial being, one must be aware of the choice. One must awaken to it. Awareness of the choice is the result of, and deepens, truly thoughtful reflection, or thinking.

Indeed, according to the *Dhammapada*, all we are is our thoughts. In reflection, one must choose love and wait for it with hope, in Arndt's reading of Augustine. This reflection is and is coincident with *kairos*, or higher-dimensional being made manifest. When *kairos* happens, love of one's neighbor, or *agape*—the expression of the eternal essence in life—is present. The appearance of *agape* as both a choice and a grace rooted in *kairos* causes a shift in one's trajectory—toward heaven, the higher *aetas*, and away from death in self-referential desire, the lower *aetas*. Heaven is for those who engage in the meditative exercise of primordial memory, consciously or not, which results in love of one's neighbor.

2

Will and Existence

Dostoevsky, according to symposium participant Kalin Mikhailov, counteracts the mind that has distanced itself from God and reshaped the world according to its own rationalistically derived laws with *concrete and authentic human presence*, in the space-time of the meeting of what symposium participant Anastasia Koshechko discusses as the “existential triangle” of I, the world, and God. In view of this, when it comes to novel-writing, according to Koshechko, Dostoevsky's methodology is the giving of an account of an event not so much as news but as what of it will *remain*, associated with a *whole idea*. This wholeness rests on the conviction that a person is a capacity that can contain both the world and God.

That is, with Dostoevsky's characters, according to symposium participant Stoyan Asenov, a particular event is universalized; it can happen anywhere and at any time. Time is abolished, and the event is placed in an archetypal place where the frightening eternity of the Sabbath day reigns. Consistent with this, Elena Bystrova discusses the task

of photography as the revelation of what is so hidden in someone that he or she ignored it or kept it in the unconscious. Photography catches a person as he is.

Bystrova, then, discusses the idea of Mikhail Bakhtin that “Dostoevsky never depicts death from within. Agony and death are watched by others. Death cannot be a fact of consciousness itself.” Analogously, when it comes to novel-writing, Dostoevsky's diary prose gives a slice of a person's consciousness at the moment of fixing his psychological state, according to symposium participant Maya Gorcheva, who reads Dostoevsky's storylines as thought experiments and compares Dostoevsky's novels to Kafka's novels, which also unfold like thought experiments that begin with absurd imaginary situations.

In the nineteenth century, individual will as *subjective* self-grounding consciousness becomes more important than *abstract* self-grounding consciousness. In this vein, besides the mystics, Lazar Milentievich points out that phenomenologists and existential psychologists have also been dissatisfied, like the Dostoevskian ethos, with the reductive dualistic anthropology conceived by Descartes. For Dmitry Bosnak, a principle of Dostoevsky is a certain transcensus of the subject that points towards the priority of will over intellectual activity.

To help us understand Dostoevsky, Nietzsche's expression about the death of God should be understood, according to Heidegger, as the sense of the divine as an eternal prototype and immovably resting goal, in connection with the will to power, which is the essence of power. Will points to the unconditional essence of the will which, like pure will, wills itself. The will to power does not have its basis in a sense of lack, but is itself the basis of the most abundant life. Strength of will can be equated with dynamic and authentic tri-partite being.

In contrast to the decadence by which Nietzsche characterizes dialectical reasoning, then, will surfaces in Nietzsche's work as a factor not systematically incorporated into his philosophy but rather as a principle-beyond-principle to which epistemology can submit. Nietzsche questions and devalues so-called systematic rigor in philosophy that can only approach self-knowledge in an (“always already”) “decadent” way.

In the “Genealogy of Morals,” Nietzsche writes:

“We are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge—and with good reason. We have never sought ourselves—how could it happen that we should ever find ourselves? So we are necessarily strangers to

ourselves, for the law 'Each is furthest from himself' applies to all eternity—we are not 'men of knowledge' with respect to ourselves."

Will, by contrast, is a non-dialectical and therefore heterogeneous capacity to arrive at self-knowledge by exploding its inherited conceptual confines. *2 x 2 does not necessarily equal 4*. Rather, for Nietzsche and Sartre, will is an epistemological/methodological factor inseparable from thought which is itself the totality, is itself "always already" consciousness for-itself as it is its own bridge from the in-itself to the for-itself.

On the basis of the Nietzschean notion of will, we can understand the transcensus, discussed by Bosnak mentioned above, in terms of Hegelian sublation, as opposed to Hegelian panlogicism, which the Dostoevskian ethos rejects, according to Julia Sytina. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel illustrates *sublation* with the example "God is Being." The real subject of this proposition "God is Being" is the copula ("is"). The proposition has the same meaning as "Being is God," and the relation between the poles of the opposition (God/Being) is about being itself, the copula, that mediates and encompasses the polar opposition. A primordial ground of being must exist as an actuality, even if dormant in someone or in society. Not only is the mediation between the terms of the opposition in the proposition "God is Being" primordial essence, but religious knowledge is transferred to God himself, that is, to the love-directed redemptive will of God and to his self-revelation, according to Bosnak. Other such examples of sublation are Hegel's statement "the rational is real" in "The Philosophy of Right," Jesus' statement "I and the Father are One" (John 10:30) and "God is Love" from 1 John. By means of this sublation and despite "*la montée aux extrêmes*," the Dostoevskian hero, uniting his will with divine will, is ultimately open to the transcendent, to God's visitation, through which he receives revelation of his inner self and repentance as a gift.

Additionally, symposium participant Alexander Kochetkov discusses the Dostoevskian notion that a person must constantly feel suffering, which is offset by the heavenly pleasure of fulfilling the law of sacrifice. Milentievich argues that, for Dostoevsky, repentance and forgiveness from God oppose the underground man's rotation in the horizontal plane of spiritual hell. Man can exit from his underground with the birth in himself of love for his neighbor, compassion and self-sacrifice.

Most important is that this journey is not ideological. Rather, in the context of the problem of the spiritual-soul-bodily disunity of man,

harmonic fusion with the world requires the realization of one's own self. Authentically being oneself, in suffering and sacrifice, is rooted in the phenomenon of love, on which the early Christian worldview is based. Milentievich explains that the personality may be closed in its loneliness, but love is originally supersensible and trans-vital and descends to one's depths.

From this point of view, it could be said that you do not understand the authentically moral—it understands you. The moral ideal rests on the basis and is a result of “reciprocal love” (*Gegenliebe*)—the love God radiates, directed at the world and at all people. Love for God presupposes and actually requires love for the world which God created from love: *amare mundum in Deo* [to love the world in God].

The “existential triangle” of I, the world, and God, then, is an ontological explosion of dualism. This helps us understand how, for symposium participant Agnes Dukkon, greatness consists in being oneself; any person is capable of this, if she only wills it. Dukkon cites Kierkegaard's “Either-Or,” according to which even the richest person remains nothing until he chooses himself, and even the poorest person becomes everything if he chooses himself. *Only a god-like person is free*. Moreover, it is by means of this sublation that one can perceive another being not as an object, but as another subject. In this vein, Kochetkov discusses Christ as “the complete synthesis of all being.”

Additionally, this synthetic tripartition of authentic being is not to be understood as implying three substances, or even three “faculties,” in man: it is discerned rather as a threefold zone of activity, from the periphery to the center, or, to the “heart.” In a word, dynamism. The inter-dimensional triad overcoming death in a dynamic process is nothing less than the Christian God, accurately understood. *Perichoresis* is the term used by the fourth-century theologians Sts. Gregory and Basil to explain the Trinity and can be translated as “circle dance.” God is an interdimensional dynamic process.

Dynamic *perichoresis*, or God, is not governed by the laws of nature, as long as it remains triadic and dynamic. It does not degenerate and decay under the force of entropy, the worldly default, to the point of death. Rather, it is self-organizing and self-perfecting. As long as it is triadic and not dual, it is negentropic and comparable to extreme states of matter/energy in physics when the four fundamental laws of physics are not fixed and separate but form more of a unity. In such a state, *2 x 2 does*

not necessarily equal 4. These principles help us understand the mechanics of the “Dostoevskian pantheism” discussed above by Andrey Shishkin.

Consistent with this, the unspoken in Newtonian mechanics is that it can be understood in an interdimensional way, or in terms of a dimension beyond the third, free from gravity. From this perspective, Newton’s three laws of motion arguably come much closer to the real significance of the Trinity than the Anglican and mainstream Christian dogma of his time, and ours. After all, Isaac Newton, the theorist of gravity, supposedly was an anti-trinitarian heretic, esotericist and alchemist. Newton *the alchemist* never spoke of what consumed him most, the “great work.” A tenet of the “great work” of alchemy is that ethical formation and intellectual formation are interdependent and hopefully spawn an alchemical synthesis in oneself. The counterexample, of course, is Dostoevsky’s Underground Man, who lacks being-synthesis, for whom, as Kochetkov explains, there is no place in this world, who does not want to merge with the world through action and who remains in metaphysical rebellion against the Creator.

Simone Weil, in “Gravity and Grace,” also attributes a triadic structure to the relationship of grace and “gravity”: creation is composed of the descending movement of gravity, the ascending movement of grace and the descending movement of the second degree of grace, according to which one does not necessarily expect to get anything for oneself from anyone else. To this, we can add the factor of will (of the right hand, not the left). To the extent that we can access will, we, as agents, are responsible for the provision of our own “ground,” or understanding of being-truth; each of us, at an entirely personal level, bears the burden of bridging his or her own gap between the in-itself and the for-itself. We could say that God depends on this.

3

Gnostic Alienation, Ideology and Politics

Symposium participant Dmitry Bosnak discusses the development of the idea in the nineteenth century that a person inevitably comes to recognize himself as the only source of all norms. From the Dostoevskian perspective, then, lack of faith is a sign of intelligible weakness of will, when one cannot make God’s will his own will. For Anastasia Koshechko, existential crisis precedes the experience of a deep religious life in the Dostoevskian hero, who eventually becomes self-aware, even

though he is always in crisis and rebellion. The highest ideal embodied in the person of Christ cannot be fully realized because on earth a person is in a state of transition.

In connection with this, Alexey Kozyrev discusses the “gnosticism” implicit in Ivan Karamazov’s statement “I do not accept this God’s world.” All beings suffer and strive for a better state because they are in an abnormal and unnatural state, expelled from Eden, so to speak. Arguably, it is as if the creator of this world is some sort of (evil) gnostic archon or demiurge. Also, when discussing this in terms of Ivan Karamazov’s feeling of being abandoned to a world alien to him, Kozyrev points out the ideological closeness between gnosticism and existentialism.

Indeed, Inna Gazheva discusses how Dostoevsky’s characters are heroes orphaned on earth and tormented, like their author, by the solution of the main question: the existence of God. Gazheva points to Aglaya’s question to Myshkin in “The Idiot”:

“‘Why are you looking at me like that, prince?’ she said suddenly. ‘It seems to me that you want to stretch out your hand and touch my face with your finger in order to feel it.’”

Gazheva points out that Myshkin’s look is not lustful, not thirsty for possession, but saturated with contemplation itself. His epilepsy enabled him to maintain childish purity and simplicity of heart, and his only need is for contemplation.

Symposium participant Hugo Percy discusses the Dostoevskian rejection of established ethics and morality in favor of some universal understanding, some universal values, some new, dangerous and terrible holiness, similar to those that the Elder Zosima declares, replacing moral and ethical thought with a primordial instinct that equally perceives the power of good and evil. A vehicle for this can be the sacred illness of an epileptic attack. Holiness can also exist alongside what Percy discusses as the “two-facedness” of Dostoevsky’s characters.

Indeed, Rosanna Kazari discusses the Dostoevskian polymorphism of man, the locus of the struggle between *eros* and *thanatos*, and the problematicness of man’s nature that knows no schematization or abstract system in Dostoevsky’s novels. For Elena Stepanyan-Rumyantseva, in regard to “The Idiot”, everything is multifaceted, diverse, and self-contradictory. The world of Dostoevsky is the world of erotic tension, to give one example. Nikita Nankov also points out that,

while love is a recognition of freedom and equality in the “The Player,” a defining characteristic of Dostoevsky's protagonists is that they are both “masters” and “slaves” in the Hegelian sense.

In view of this, not only is the ideal of Christ unattainable by the individual but, because of non-dynamic being, any historical progress at the socio-political level degenerates, or falls back from the triad into the dyad, the default of death. An authentic moral impulse has a revolutionary purity at the beginning of a movement, and a moral movement that is effective conceives a new normative moral concept. When the moral is birthed/conceived into a concept and circulated, however, it becomes ideological.

When the moral becomes ideological, it loses the primordial purity of its original movement. Worse, its form can be converted into its opposite, or at least into something different from what it was at the beginning of its movement. The loss of upward or triadic momentum, a reversal back into dyad, can happen on all cosmic scales. For example, symposium participant Galina Sabat discusses the idea of “forced happiness” in the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor.

Compulsory happiness for Dostoevsky requires the renunciation of freedom, and “paradise for all” in fact requires mass oppression based on malignant legends and myths. In this vein, Dostoevsky's “Demons” expresses the mechanisms, such as *Shigalevism*, for creating Peter Verkhovensky's dystopia, or his “utopia of a new Russia,” i.e. socialist reorganization for total control over people. Symposium participant Christoph Garstka argues that Dostoevsky understood that the nihilists, for example, needed a figure such as Nikolai Stavrogin, a culturally revered but internally dead charismatic leader who enables others to kill in his name.

In return, the leader guarantees the legitimacy and significance of these crimes for a higher purpose. In regard to the establishment of this leader, Garstka quotes Peter Verkhovensky from the chapter “Ivan Tsarevich” of “Demons”:

“We will start legends... [...] Such a buildup will go on, which the world has never seen before...”

To realize his utopia on the model of *Shigalevism*, Pyotr Verkhovensky produces his notion of the “pure, innocent” beauty of Nikolai Stavrogin, the main character in Verkhovensky's invented myth.

Through the lens of the theorist Furio Jesi, symposium participant Alessandra Elisa Visinoni discusses the mechanisms for creating Peter

Verkhovensky's dystopia in light of the strategies of manipulation of collective memory, that convinces the masses to follow the elite. As a strategy for manipulating memories, myth is a Trojan horse concealing that it is a "religion of power" posing as consecrated power. According to Jesi, myth sets itself up to speak with the authority of a sanctified past and is synonymous with "truth." Myth is constructed "memory" in the sense of a relation to the past, that creates forms of knowledge as if they were indisputable truths, and is also a mystification of childhood and innocence. With myth-making, culture is forced to fill the void by creating its own present in constant relation to the past in the form of a self-image of its own canon, a screen onto which one can project one's own unresolved problems.

Let us look west again at another example of ideology-production in the Lutheran revolution in the growth of European modernity. Martin Luther articulated his protestant theology of "*sola scriptura*" on the basis of the notion of the monovalence of the Word of God—*accept it, and you are saved*. Faith is not expressed in terms of spirit and *perichoresis* but is rather a pledge one makes in exchange for membership in an ideology. Arguably, the pre-Lutheran church had already done something similar when, under the Roman emperor Constantine, Christian "faith" became something like a political affiliation, according to which a "Christian" repeatedly recites a creed after baptism. With the rejection of papal authority a thousand years later, something still had to be an absolute infallible in the ideology of the new protestant church. For Luther, the Word of God, not the pope, is infallible.

In this context, the idea that the Word of God may not be understandable by all in the same way is unacceptable. Interpretation of the Bible must be kept under tight control in the attitudes of the community of "believers." After all, increased access to the Bible could lead to close scrutiny, thought and discussion that resist ideological hegemony in the faith-group. Consistent with the idea that those who stray from "God's truth" must be eliminated, much of the Protestant legacy is just as steeped in blood and hypocrisy as the pre-Protestant church. Luther was opposed to Erasmus and the spirit of the Renaissance, and was not opposed to the burning of "heretics."

Founding myths can also be benign as well as malignant, as Socrates proposes in Plato's "Republic" with the idea of the "noble lie." John Winthrop, author of "A Modell of Christian Charity," can found a new

society in America on diversity and mutual respect between the rich and poor on the basis of the word of God. For both Luther and Winthrop, the idea that "biblical teachings" may not be a monolith is subversive, one step away from the idea that the "city on a hill" may not be a "blessed people." Winthrop's notion that a Christian—fully justified by faith in the word of God—is subject to none but also a dutiful servant of all both is psychologically appealing and cements the social order. In view of this, any close and real scrutiny of the Bible is risky, if valid ideology-challenging questions are raised—even if the trajectory of the new Puritan society in America heads just as much toward tolerance, in the long run, as toward ideology.

When we study founding myths that have been successful, we note an uneasy relationship between truth and useful fictions. Much of the modern liberal world was shaped by Lutheran changes or developed in a way parallel to the Reformation. Liberal democracy, the expressibility of the individual conscience and the gradual expansion of the moral consideration circle, hopefully to include animals fully in the future, can be seen to some extent as results of the Reformation. To the extent that religious reform is authentic and serves the conscience, it will bear much good fruit, as the Reformation did in many instances. Nonetheless, the "eternally authentic" mythologeme that avoids any question about itself and hides its own artificiality and groundlessness is still ultimately unstable.

Rahel Jaeggi writes that "[i]deologies are, as Adorno knew, at once both true and false, and they also seem to be simultaneously normative and non-normative." Indeed, as Visinoni explains, "memory" becomes a creative act that takes part more in the present than in the past; present actualities generally tend to reveal that ideology, like totalitarian power, strips truth of its core when it systematizes it. Cultural and socioeconomic changes—in the dialectical processes articulated by Hegel and Marx—provide irrepressible glimpses into how ideology *always already* has brought truth into gravity's orbit and converted it to lies. Simultaneously, the sense of a more fundamental, primordial and authentic truth, however elusive, presents itself to freedom-seekers.

Consistent with this, Nietzsche's understanding of will anticipates Derrida's attention to the asystemic freedom of the "unthought irrational," such as metaphor, in the use of language. For the ethicist and linguist Noam Chomsky, language is a generative source of our thinking and intuitive moral theories; Chomsky draws from the thinking of Mi-

khail Bakunin, Dostoevsky's contemporary, that the anarchist impulse is an instinct for freedom revealed in the creative aspect of normal language use. Because truth and the expression of it are dangerous and anarchic, totalitarian regimes must control authentic speech.

4

Confession and Demonism

Symposium participant Plamen Antov discusses how, in "Crime and Punishment," Raskolnikov's childhood nightmare of watching a drunken coachman, encouraged by a crowd of drunken peasants, beat his weak horse to death foretells the approaching "decadent modernism" of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By contrast, Ivan Esaulov discusses Dostoevsky's embrace of meekness as a means of defeating externalizing categories such as "victory" and "defeat" that transform an "other" into a "thing." In regard to meekness, Takayoshi Shimizu points out that Prince Myshkin, in "The Idiot," does not preach belief in God. He is infinitely modest, because he thinks he is the most sinful being in the world. He does not judge or repudiate others. His soul consists of infinite compassion, without any blame of or reproach against Rogozhin.

Why is he so modest? *Cosmological union*. In an epileptic attack, Myshkin experiences timeless union with the universe. But this same experience is also one of horrible solitude, forlorn in the darkness of the infinite Cosmos, and returns Myshkin into being *the idiot*. Consistently with this, Takayoshi Shimizu quotes Pascal's "Pensées": "True eloquence scorns eloquence, true morality scorns morality... To scorn philosophy is to be a true philosopher."

For Dostoevsky, the birth trauma of expulsion from Paradise is never forgotten, according to participant Pavel Fokin. Symposium participant Philip Kumanov points out that only an immoral person, deaf to remorse of conscience and incapable of repentance, is capable of deliberately slandering relatives and friends. Dostoevskian goodness is primordial and underlies the earthly structure of human life. The task of Dostoevsky as an artist, then, is to *find a person in a person*, in a person's task of overcoming the "original horror" and returning to Paradise.

What, then, is the method for the recovery of authentic identity? Antov cites Bakhtin's statement that only in confessional self-expression can the last word about a person be given that is really adequate for Dostoevsky. Maria Candida Ghidini discusses the Dostoevskian notion that,

in the sacrament of repentance, the very function of the word is sanctified if it is said aloud. Vital confession internally changes the personality. Moreover, the ruthless auto-vivisection of the underground man can be read as an ardent confession of the soul of Dostoevsky himself.

In regard to confession, Ghidini discusses Foucault's study of the genealogy of the modern subject and the modality of its constitution. Confession is one of the techniques of Western culture for constituting the self as an ideal unity of will and truth, according to Foucault. Modern forms of confession tend to assert the I rather than to overcome it. Rousseau, in his confession, completely trusts the transparency of his "I" to himself; self-consciousness, then, is a given, and sincerity is only a matter of will. By contrast, Christian confession like that of Augustine of Hippo was an act of self-consciousness based on the recognition of an inner secret: there is no way out from oneself, despite a yearning for an original state of innocence. In fact, in the tenth chapter of his *Confessions*, Augustine uses the image of the mirror of St. Paul to hint at the opacity of man for himself: "The mind [*but the Latin word is animus, more than the mind*] is too small to master itself." The Christian confessor is reflected in the mirror of his own self but remains a prisoner in his underground.

Confession for Dostoevsky adds an additional factor, i.e. that of being woven into structures of coercion or domination. The Dostoevskian confessing subject moves in a precarious balance between constructing himself and a thirst for dominance over another. Ghidini points out that Valkovsky's removal of his mask and revelation of evil within himself in "Humiliated and Insulted," for example, is not true and sincere self-revelation but a cynical game between predator and prey. Because he enjoys his own decomposition, Valkovsky confirms the ultimate impossibility of sincerity. His self-righteous, shameless denudation is not to discover the truth about himself but to possess and dominate others.

Dostoevsky here diagnoses an entire epoch, according to Ghidini: the fate of modernity lies in tireless self-referential and inauthentic thinking about itself. One digs incessantly in one's own interior, and contemporaries and future generations are called to the role of priests and judges. Dostoevskian confession, then, expands the notion that the roots of the self—in the Christian tradition, following the example of Augustine—are unattainable. In Dostoevskian confession, not only is sincerity impossible because of the masks we wear in front of others, but

the hero of the underground, for example, plunges deeper into his demonic spiral. Confession, however, can be salvific if it leads through "*la montée aux extrêmes*" to dynamic and authentic tri-being.

Let us return for a moment to the classic Christian confession of Augustine of Hippo. Perhaps in an effort to find his way out of himself, in his *Confessions*, Augustine pushes himself into the edges of himself, or into the part of himself that is real, both in the contemporary sense of "being real" and in the Lacanian sense of "*jouissance*" beyond symbol-systems. By revealing even his nocturnal emissions in his writing, he lays himself bare in an effort to find reality through primary experience. He tries to evade the falseness and deceptiveness of the worldly, or the merely partial, and moves toward the truth of the higher whole by embracing the messy pure infinity of his own createdness. This—not theology and a creed—is his redemptive gift to the reader.

Long before the existence of a longstanding tradition of a Christian creed and theology, Augustine fights the deceptiveness of the false world with expressionistic and somewhat schizophrenic jumping-back-and-forth between philosophy and self-revelation. In fact, Augustine relates the etymological origin of "cogitate" to "con-centration" (or the yoking-together of several different "centers" into a unified concept). Derrida uses Freudian terms like "incompatibles" to claim they exist in textual systems to satisfy a desire, e.g. to produce a "truth." The sublation of difference into a whole is like dreams which yoke together heterogeneous and incompatible elements into a unity. The systematization is messy and "violent," because any conceptual moment in a text is both entirely other to any other such moment and also bears the trace of its other in itself, thereby undermining any possible purity of a principle which could ground philosophy or theology.

This is perhaps a *montée aux extrêmes* that brings to mind the term "schizoanalysis" coined by Deleuze and Guattari: in the raw nakedness of being and in the art of schizophrenics, the positive is positive and the negative is also positive. The unhinged and self-revelatory qualities of Augustine's *Confessions* is an atomic explosion, or a big bang. Augustine's *Confessions* is a hot moment of creation/createdness of a system, a religion that is still new, before it has cooled into form, when randomness is still inseparable from form. Augustine is more Jackson Pollock than Michelangelo, and radical alterity can be seen as an originating ground of Christianity. The *Confessions* reveals the creation chaos of

the doctrinal universe that cooled into the stable Trinity and Holy Church doctrine that Dante eventually inherited.

A thousand years later into the Christian era, Dante's dream-world in "Purgatorio" is structured by established church doctrine. A triadic relation between love, punishment and free will means that spiritual consequences are certain in Dante's trinitarian, stable, created universe. Faith is ideological and doctrinal in Dante's world: Virgil and unbaptized children cannot have faith because they never formally embraced the Church's creed (by contrast, faith in the Gospels is an inner state by which one has the power of the miraculous, and faith for the author of Hebrews is a "hypostasis," or substance or understanding). Dante is of course a poet-dreamer and a spiritual seeker, but he is also a bourgeois, unlike Augustine (by Dante's time, the feudal order was declining and the bourgeoisie was rising), and a moral judge who condemns lawlessness and vice in Italy and comments on the Justinian Code.

Consistent with Freud's notion of wish fulfillment in the dream world, Lucia in Dante's fourteenth-century "Divine Comedy" is accessible for one who has remained on the path. On this basis, "Purgatorio" "con-centers"/conflates theology, physics/geography and psycho-spiritual experience to produce meaning. Gravity and the flow of a river are moral failings. There is no spiritual will to climb when there is no light. Dante has to fight not to fall asleep and dream within his dream-experience. Nonetheless, Dante's redemptive/transformative process should be understood in terms of "spiritualized" physics and chemistry, at least in part, in a reliably meaningful universe. In a scheme in which the heavens are above and accessible in a system of reward open to all believers who make good use of their will, Dante can look forward to Beatrice at the top of the mountain. Everything will be okay for Dante in this triadic dream-world or mandala, because he is still alive and there is still time to do and be as he should (his living flesh gives Dante a privileged status in *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*—there is value in this for Dante as well as for Augustine). In short, in his *Divine Comedy*, Dante is supported by a triadic superstructure to scare the hell out of himself, so to speak, but everything will still be okay in the end, just as it was for Ebenezer Scrooge, in Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol," after his 3-part dream-world visitation, in the reliably orderly Christian universe. For Dante, even in the dream world, $2 \times 2 \text{ equals } 4$.

Not so for nineteenth-century Dostoevsky. We can contrast Dan-

te's fourteenth-century "dream-world" in "*Purgatorio*" with Raskolnikov's nineteenth-century dream-world of peasants beating of a horse to death. There is little room for ideological easy answers in Dostoevsky's spiritual universe. Symposium participant Thaís Figueiredo Chaves refers to Dante's "*Inferno*" when explaining that characters like Stavrogin build their own "inferno" by denying the immortality of the soul, by failing to believe in something beyond the surface human experience and by interacting with others in a toxic way. The ruin of Stavrogin, who lacks dynamism in his tripartite being-complex, results from his failure to connect with others and his belief that he could find any redemption. Moreover, for Dostoevsky, Stavrogin's descent in stages into his personal abyss and his decision to kill himself are rooted in the demonic.

Prior to "*Purgatorio*," when Dante descends in "*Inferno*," he reads that all hope should be abandoned: similarly, the radical absence of hope is fundamental to understand Stavrogin's suicide in "Demons." Both Dante and Dostoevsky had obsessions with infernal forces and put hell at the center, according to symposium participant Nina Dimitrova, but Dostoevskian redemption only occurs in and after a paradoxical, irrational and non-ideological process riddled with strife and opposition—"*la montée aux extrêmes*."

5

Pneumatology and Theosis

Outside the humble pursuit of self-awareness, one is subject to the demonic, in Dostoevsky's Orthodox Christian "pantheistic gnosticism." Nothing authentic flourishes in egotism. Pavel Fokin explains that "demons" create the illusion of the integrity of their existence by swarming, finding each other and entering into relationships, grouping into companies and gangs easily and swiftly. Having rejected God, however, they bite and despise each other and live alone, even in their crowd.

By contrast, the meek righteous, for Dostoevsky, are forced to remain in visible social loneliness, searching for kindred souls for a long and difficult time—but God is with them, and this is enough for them to maintain vitality, according to Fokin. The meek, in fact, are the strongest in Dostoevsky's world. They do not know abandonment or separation.

In the end, the “demons” will certainly perish, while the meek ones remain. Moreover, the meek always appear in the story’s plot at the moment of threat of disaster, and give impetus to necessary dramatic and metaphysical development. Beyond this, the meek ensure the survival of the world by consistently cultivating the field of *living life*.

Paradise is impossible with “unfinished people,” explains symposium participant Anastasia Gacheva. Man is fatally limited and, as the elder Zosima says in “The Brothers Karamazov”: “Everyone is to blame for everyone before everyone.” But, as bleak as this statement may sound, it affirms the deep unity of all things and beings. Furthermore, in and through “*la montée aux extremes*,” when one can honestly realize that one has no self-awareness, something angelic can happen for one who still has the capacity for humility (i.e., if “salt has not lost its savor” (See Matthew 5:13-14)). Similarly, in “*Purgatorio*,” after a crack appears in Dante’s sleep-world, an angel appears before a gate.¹ This is *grace*.

Moreover, Gacheva explains that, for Dostoevsky, there is a direct connection between the Incarnation, in which human nature has reached its fullness and perfection, and the coming deification of man. In eastern Orthodoxy, divine light leads to theosis. Lazar Milentievich addresses the steps of truth and progressive ascent in, through and beyond “*la montée aux extremes*.” One level of truth settles down in another: one level could not exist without the other. Man, according to Dostoevsky, is the incarnate Word. The human word is unthinkable without the descent and radiation of the Logos. A person cannot shed light on the Logos, but can only absorb and receive this light: the Infinite and One Logos, from which everything that exists is constantly unfolding. On this basis, conscious adult faith is the acquisition by the individual of the meaning of existence.

To this, we can adapt a familiar model to understand what is not defined by egotism and that exceeds, and underlies, our *montées aux extremes*. Isaac Newton, who produced a multivariable calculus, a law-based mathematics of motion based on *three*—a trinity—was considered a “heretic.” For this reason, Newton had conflict with the fac-

¹ Angels represent aspects of divine experience in the Kabbalah. Also, in connection to Dostoevsky, we can think of how the three-part structure of the Divine Comedy evokes the process of “going down to go up” into light in the Hekhalot and Merkabah literature of the Kabbalah.

ulty at Trinity College, Cambridge because he couldn't honestly say he was a "trinitarian" in the sense of the standard theology of his time. Instead, Newton arguably knew how to understand Trinity as *perichoresis* or interdimensional momentum, and he encoded Trinity in and as his three laws of motion.²

In relation to this, let us consider the example of trading in financial markets. Geometric and harmonic patterns are evident in price patterns. When you understand recurring patterns, you understand that a financial chart translates an "orbit" to one-way linearity of time. That is, a price pattern evokes a higher-dimensional happening/reality. From this point of view, a two-dimensional chart does not portray the three-dimensional spiral orbit of price motion as it really is, but chart reading can translate the linear and two-dimensional to the circular and three-dimensional. Moreover, the same principles of harmonics and vertical multi-dimensionality in financial charts are applicable to all reality and life itself, including dynamism in body-soul-spirit.

The interdimensional relation can be understood pneumatically, i.e. in terms of *Spirit*. Highly random price fluctuations, which traders call "noise," are analogous to the relative, ordinary and undeveloped tripartite self. The unjustified Self, in its non-dynamic dimensional involution, manifests as what the language of the New Testament calls "flesh" and "outer darkness"; this, in turn, is analogous to the absurdity and unpredictability of the quantum scale, as opposed to the order of the macro-world seen, for example, as spiral galaxies through a Hubble telescope. There is a revolution/orbit of you (the Self) in a lower "time frame," a comparative micro-orbit. Lower than that is the personality, the self of which we are conscious. We can call this the "Son." "Spirit"

² Most of Newton's writings were biblical interpretation and thousands of pages of alchemical notations. Conventional understanding cannot grasp how this could be. *How could the greatest scientist who ever lived be involved in such superstitious, anachronistic activity?* In fact, Newton's natural philosophy was only one aspect of what alchemists call the "great work," which they do not just reveal to those who are not prepared to understand it. Renaissance magicians like Agrippa were professing Christian seekers. Indeed, a century before Newton, the alchemist John Dee, who was the court mathematician to Elizabeth I, wrote "He who does not understand should either learn or be silent" on the first page of his "Monas Hieroglyphica." John Dee's Table of Nalvae indicates a mathematical model beyond three dimensions.

refers to any inner alchemy, any either ascending or descending movement into or out of ordinary life or what Jesus calls “the outer darkness” (Matthew 22:13). “Spirit” is the relation between “Father” and “Son” and is the energy-substance of the higher dimensions of You. You are a mission, or micro-orbit, within higher dimensions. That is, you are a micro-mission within Higher You, a macro-orbit in relation to lower You but a micro-orbit in relation to Still Higher You, which is still closer to Highest You—all-pervasive, unborn and eternal.

In this context, Jesus’ exhortations in the Gospels, using the metaphors of finance to talk about spiritual principles, are to “profit.” In one of Jesus’ parables, the “landowner” (macrocosmic, higher-dimensional You) calls in the “steward” of his estate (mesocosmic, mid-dimensional higher You) to give an accounting of the management of the estate. (Luke 16). This results in the steward of the estate calling in the debtors (i.e. ordinary You) to “make payment,” i.e. live in time in regular earthly existence, or “outer darkness.” “Fathers,” “landowners,” “stewards” and “sons” all have quite specific meanings in relation to the cosmic reality about which the Gospels teach in coded form. *Turning one “talent” into two, or more—inner alchemy.*

If you authentically do what the Gospels and other spiritual texts/paths instruct with your allotment of Spirit, then you will obtain “eternal life,” that is, the substance of the higher *aetas* will be engendered in you, inexplicably. As Jesus said, “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?” (Mark 8:34-38) The work of increasing one’s “soul” requires a struggle with the demonic, in *“la montée aux extrêmes.”* In this process, the point of life is to get more of the spirit-material forming the basis of true faith, which is self-organizing when one gets it. Indeed, as Jesus explains to Nicodemus in John 3, one cannot track or understand the ways of Spirit.

On a computer screen used for trading, it is useful first to observe price action in multiple time frames.³ Then, it is useful to divide visible price action into recognizable patterns/quadrants of 1/2/3/4; or into North, East, South, West; or 360 degrees (90°/90°/90°/90°). In this context, the market entry point of a profitable trade can be seen as an inter-dimensional crossing/convergence that happens somewhat unexpected-

³ Trading in multiple time frames evokes the cross-dimensional holographic and fractal universe (“Indra’s net of jewels,” in which every jewel reflects every other jewel and all the jewels).

ly. Since it is an opportunity to profit, one must be ready for this convergence point when it occurs. Considering this analogy in relation to the dynamism of tri-being, we can keep in mind the words of Psalm 40: "I waited patiently for the Lord." Additionally, Jesus said: "Watch—for you don't know what hour your lord will come" (Matthew 24:42).

At the "kairotic" convergence point, or "perfection" ("Be ye perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48)) expressed in spiritual code in the Gospels as "the day your Lord will come," there is the purest efficiency, total reflexivity in and of the center point. Isaac Newton translated the Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus, including its phrase "As above, so below." This phrase evokes higher You, in its gravitational orbit, so to speak, in inter-dimensional kairotic relation with yourself (as Jesus said, "I and the father are one." John 10:30). In the absolute center, all dimensional orbits align.⁴ At this justified center is the "terrible holiness," discussed by symposium participant Hugo Percy, that is beyond the distinction between good and evil.⁵ Indeed, the Dostoevskian "*übermensch*" is a law unto himself, because he is justified and aligned with himself and therefore real, i.e. no longer a hypocrite and actor.

The average unjustified person, by contrast, is still subject to the control of the mythical Grand Inquisitor, who stands in the way of ethical self-awareness. The "Church"—in all its forms (actual or metaphorical), denominations and creeds (Christian or otherwise)—antagonizes *living Christ*, as the Grand Inquisitor does, until an individual's "resurrection" that follows "*la montée aux extrêmes*" of his or her self-sacrificial struggle with the demonic. In connection with this struggle, the four quadrants of the model above can be understood as the standard four directions of a map which, in turn, can symbolize ordinary, involuted, unjustified reality. From this perspective, the number 4 also evokes the symbolism of the four rivers around Eden, as well as the four-letter name of the prohibitory, punitive, jealous, insecure and egotistical deity in the Biblical Eden story, i.e. the Tetragrammaton—*yod, he, vav, he*.⁶

⁴ To give another example, during a north Indian classical raga, listeners appreciate the convergence of macro- and micro- patterns—of the *rag* and the *tal*—that is an expression of completion/balance.

⁵ In eastern Orthodoxy, the divine light is the fire of hell to one with an evil will.

⁶ Consider the involution of Adam and Eve into physical form, or "garments of skin," following the lack of magnanimousness of the Edenic deity, the four

Recalling what Alexey Kozyrev discussed as Dostoevsky's "gnosticism," this four-letter evil demiurge, like the Grand Inquisitor, prohibits access (ultimately unsuccessfully) to the tree of knowledge in the center of the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9), i.e. ultimate point of origin of the All from Nothing (just as quantum events emerge from nothing, the Planck scale). Dostoevsky, like the Bible, points toward the development from the state of being a *demoniac* into the state of being a *pneumatic*. In the process of this conversion, one must confront oneself as one is: nothing other than the great tempting enemy spirit in the desert of *shunyata*.

The post-lapsarian suffering of Adam and Eve marks "*la montée aux extrêmes*" prior to the completion of the process of justification, which only begins with the essential step of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge at the center. In relation to this, consider the Indian parable about four blind men trying to figure out what an elephant is. "It is a rope," says the one feeling the tail. "It is a wall," says the one feeling its side. "It is a spear," says the one feeling the tusk. And so forth.⁷ Still divorced from the holiness of the higher *aetas* and subject to the demonic in *nirmita*, anything is an involution of a higher-dimensional reality but is still only a relative truth. The Sanskrit word "*shunya*" means relativity as well as emptiness.

Nina Dimitrova explains that, in Dostoevsky's exposition of a personality's struggle to find a way out of a spiritual conflict with the demonic, a concrete idea is associated with a certain character, who is not so much a person but a spiritual substance outside of time and space. For example, "Demons" is not a novel at all, according to Dimitrova, but a comparative experimental assessment of ideas-passions and ideas-powers in the choice-process necessary for action—in the paradoxical oppositizing process of "*la montée aux extrêmes*." Indeed, Dostoevsky

letters of the Tetragrammaton (poorly translated as "the Lord God") in Genesis 3: 21-22: "The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the LORD God said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.'" Also, in Chinese culture, 4 is an inauspicious and evil number.

⁷ Any one of these four men would certainly lose money in the markets. This is why they are "blind" in the parable.

is a pneumatologist, a researcher of spiritual phenomena, a seer of fallen spirits, Dimitrova explains. The fact that “Demons” is about demonism, not madness, is evidenced by its title, and Pushkin's poem of the same name as an epigraph to the novel, and also the epigraph from the Gospel of Luke in Dostoevsky's novel.

The first-century Gospel of Luke expresses the pneumatological dynamism of interdimensional circulation in the spiritual world. More specifically, the inter-dimensional exchange of energies is addressed in western esotericism in so-called “demon-binding,” including the practice related to the *Shem Hamephorash*, or the “72-fold name of God.” The coupling of 72 “angels” with 72 “demons” addresses the macro-energetic balance of the morphic field.

What happens in the dynamic exchange process is addressed in plain view, but expressed symbolically, in the Gospels. In Luke 9 and 10, “Jesus” sends out “72” people to “go into a house” and send out one's “peace.” Whether the householder “accepts” or “rejects” the “peace” (energy), the “72-person,” so to speak, or the “worker,” is instructed to remain and “eat” whatever is given to him, because “the workman is worthy of his meat” (Matthew 10:10, King James version).

When it comes to the power of meekness, the higher truths are expressed symbolically in the Gospels. So-called “demon-binding” is the transfer of energies: the concept of taking the talent from the person who has one talent and does not increase it and giving it to the person who has more talents and is increasing his or her talents (Matthew 25:14-30) is the same concept as reaping where you did not sow (Matthew 25:24). “Talents” are also the same thing as oil in your lamp (Matthew 25, Leviticus 24:2), water turned into wine (John 2:1-11), or a seed eventually blossoming into a tree (Matthew 13:31-32). Paul talked about this material, substance or *life* as the “*soma psuchicon*,” (1 Corinthians 15:44) or spiritual body, and this body is referred to as “wedding garment” in Matthew 22. This process of re-apportionment is actually happening all the time, but we are just not aware of it—just as gravity keeps us from knowing that we are actually racing through space in a planetary orbit at breakneck speed. Jesus' parables express *living life*, or dynamism in Body-Soul-Spirit.

In regard to the relationship of meekness to the “externalization” discussed by Ivan Esaulov, the material/vibration at the “demonic” level of reality has to do with attacking and defeating, revenge, primacy, the value of winning, supposedly proving people to be wrong if you can,

exploitation, dualistic black-and-white all-or-nothing thinking, etc. In short, the demonic. Nevertheless, some ideas that exist in human life are of a higher origin. The idea of self-sacrifice is of a higher origin. As Paul says, such ideas seem to be “foolishness” to people (1 Corinthians 1:25-30). *Only an “idiot” would embrace such notions.*

Some people, including many so-called Christian church-goers, are entirely cynical about the higher ideas, re-interpret the higher ideas in terms of lower ideas and cannot really believe that anyone would authentically seek out self-sacrifice as a goal. People at this level, unsentimentally referred to as “swine” in the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 7:6), lack what Paul calls discernment in 1 Corinthians 12, or the ability to make correct distinctions in the tripartite hierarchical organization in oneself, according to the same principle that a “problem” is only “solved” at a level higher than that of the “problem” (the power of dynamic spiritual hierarchy is also visible in the Gospel story of the Roman centurion who understood that Jesus could heal his servant according to the hierarchy principle before Jesus commended him for his great “faith” (Matthew 8:5-13)).

There is always a dynamic, interdimensional re-apportionment happening, whether or not one can awaken to it, and we all exist in an inter-connected network, even if we do not realize it. If you attack someone, or seek primacy and dominance in some way, as Jesus puts it, the “evil one” comes and takes away your “seed” (Matthew 13:19). But if you do not retaliate against an “evil person,” a transfer happens, and his higher-level body-material is transferred to you. This explains the transfer of talents, reaping where you did not sow, etc., in the New Testament. There is also a power of the “earth” that can be harnessed, or “inherited” for spiritual purposes, through not getting ensnared in the energy of the (demonic) world. So, as Jesus claims, “the meek shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5), which points to the fact that there is a certain geo-force with which the Taoists were also concerned.

Heart/Spirit/Mind integration can produce a non-futile, non-circular, non-demonic *third thing* in an alchemical process of Spirit-growth. This is the key to understanding Jesus’ phrase “take no thought for the morrow” (Matthew 6:25), which is about reducing the activity of the *left hand* and increasing the activity of the *right hand*. When it comes to exercising the will, we should ask ourselves: “What is the primary conviction to which I surrender my will?” This is obvious to the

fundamental ethos/story of the Gospels, but we prefer to live in our personal, futile hells of our own making because we have “withered right hands” (Jesus heals someone’s “withered” “right hand” in the synagogue in Luke 6:6-11). The great irony, as Jesus explains, is that only with self-sacrifice is the “yoke easy, the burden light.” (Matthew 11: 28-30). Consider the story of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22): only if you are genuinely willing to sacrifice “Isaac,” so to speak, does God then rush in and “angels minister” to you as they did after Jesus resisted temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:11). That is, after “*la montée aux extrêmes*” that produces humility, in emptiness.

Symposium participant Anastasia Gacheva discusses the Dostoevskian notion of future unity or “common synthesis” that overcomes egoism. Loving humility, for Dostoevsky, is the basis not only of spiritual strength but also of true freedom. Sacrificial self-giving is a necessary condition for the true revelation of the personality in its spiritual and moral maturity. The justification of man, for Dostoevsky, in turn justifies history and sets the vector of movement into the future toward *apocatastasis*, the salvation of all.

The “psychobiology,” so to speak, of the “Dostoevskian synthesis” is expressed in Zosima’s teachings in “The Brothers Karamazov” about the Tabor light: it transforms the material nature of the body into a different, supernatural quality. The psychological experience of the Dostoevskian synthesis is described in Sanskrit as “*Sat Chit Ananda*,” or *Being Consciousness Bliss*. A “law of physics” pertinent to the Dostoevskian synthesis is expressed in the Buddhist Heart Sutra: “Form is emptiness and emptiness is form.”

Finally, the “mathematical formula” of the Dostoevskian synthesis is $2 \times 2 = 5$.