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# The antipodes: on rebellion

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THE ANTIPODES: ON REBELLION

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Political Science

by  
Michael Scott Robinson  
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“ . . . we must, and ought to, act only upon convictions justified by reason and experience, which have been passed through the crucible of analysis; in a word, we must act rationally, not insanely, and not as though in dream and delirium, that we may not do harm, that we may not ill-treat and ruin a man.”

Fyodor Dostoevsky  
*The Brothers Karamazov*

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## Abstract

This essay argues that the term rebellion applies to two similar but distinguishable experiences representative of the limits to human action and capacity. The political rebel is a man who rebels against an oppressive political regime. Opposing him is the metaphysical rebel whose action is inspired by a grievance against the nature of existence generally, as a human being, which he has interpreted to be oppressive. These contradicting inspirations are matched by juxtaposing consequences, exemplified through a literary analysis of Fyodor Dostoevsky's novels, and a historical analysis of Václav Havel and the Velvet Revolution.

## Introduction: Terms, Concepts, and a Voegelinian Framework

Men in rebellion proclaim that their cause is driven by the truth, but men are imperfect creatures and capable of being incorrect; consequently there are those who rebel for the truth and there are those who rebel against it. If every proclamation of truth is not actually true, then there must be some measure to distinguish between rebels inspired by the truth and those who only profess it. Or is the solution to the quandary the annihilation of this term – the truth; the reorganization of understanding so as everything is true? ‘Certainly not,’ the reader might be moved to object; and the thought has flashed across the insightful mind: ‘or else the criminal has a right to his crime.’ The reader, insightful or not, has been moved to objection. The criminal, however, refuses to be moved in the same way. The rebellion of the reader and the rebellion of the criminal represent a forthright differentiation amongst the lot of man.

Rebellion is a broad term. It infers both the reader’s reluctance to accept a questionable proposition, and the criminal’s eagerness for it; but also it implies the reader’s acceptance of a sound idea, as well as the criminal’s recalcitrance against it. Both parties have a desired end, and in seeking that end they are both in opposition of the antagonizing idea, and active in their quest to reconcile life to their conceptions of how it should be. Hence Albert Camus opens his study *The Rebel* by giving us the very broad definition of a rebel as “a man who says no, but whose refusal does not imply a renunciation.”<sup>1</sup> This is an apposite definition; it recognizes the breadth of the term with which we are concerned and connotes an antagonism between juxtaposing ideas of what might be believed to be good.

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Camus, *The Rebel*. Vintage Books, New York: 1956. pg 13

The applicability of the term to opposing conceptions of life implies opposing consequences for those conceptions. The effect of rejection does not leave man in an empirical abyss. Camus is saying that a rebel remains a human being in affirmation of something. This thesis argues that the nature of the rebel's affirmation foreshadows the consequences of the idea he believes.

In other words, the nature of the rebellion depends upon what is denied by the rebel, and what is in turn accepted. In the example of the reader and the criminal the conflicting interests are qualitatively different in nature, lending to the ability to categorically distinguish between their pursuits, and consequently between their consequences. The reader would be inspired to say no to a malignantly contrived political institution because of an injustice it might impose, even if it is not he who suffers from its imposition. He affirms his belief in freedom, and renounces a political order for inhibiting his belief. On the other hand, the criminal rejects the very belief which inspires the reader. The unrelenting pursuit of mundane satiety abnegates the belief in the freedom of men.<sup>2</sup> The reader's unselfish but fair affirmation collides with the criminal's desire for immanent conquest; hence the conflict of rebellion is therefore always a situation in which the rebel is forced to decide between two qualitatively different claims to truth, one grounded in mundane satiety, and the other in that which inspires the belief in freedom.

Both scenarios lead into apparent paradoxes. The reader might find himself persecuted for objecting, if because of political conditions freedom is not a tolerable

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<sup>2</sup> "Mundane satiety" is a term used throughout the essay, inspired from Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*: "In order to understand the nature of happiness, we first have to analyze satiety." (Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr, trans. By Whitney, Thomas, *The First Circle*. Bantam Books, New York: 1968. pg. 38) It is also reliant on Eric Voegelin's persistent use of "mundane" as a juxtaposition of "transcendental."

notion in the society in which he lives. His family, his property, and his existence as a human being might become threatened for his rebellion. Worldly things, however precious, become the objects which the reader would be forced to abandon given his circumstance. While the political malefactors might face similar threats through the response of society to their encroachments, their rebellion against freedom is distinguishable because facilitated by the rejection of the motivation which inspires one to respect the freedom of others.

Jan Patočka has said simply: “there are some things worth suffering for.”<sup>3</sup> Patočka could not articulate himself any more clearly than to qualify suffering as worthwhile for *some things*. His ambiguous claim was not made out of inconclusiveness but out of truth. He sought to validate an experience of the soul that cannot be equated to any particular worldly qualification; his attunement was to the ineffable and eternal. If he had thought it worthwhile to suffer in order to drink fine wine, for example, he would have written to that effect. The tenets of his inspiration, however, like those of the reader, are of a freedom which cannot oblige men to suffer for any specific worldly good.

Similarly, Václav Havel has defined *something* in the also ambiguous but appropriate terminology of “authentic existence.”<sup>4</sup> The ambiguity of this terminology suggests that truth is indeed incompatible with a convenient definition – that if it could easily be defined man’s experience would cease to be “authentic.” It implies that truth can be reconciled with something of a shared experience amongst men, if what is shared is only the authenticity of our own unique experiences. This experience is revealed in

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<sup>3</sup> Ellis Sandoz, *The Politics of Truth and Other Untimely Essays: The Crisis of Civic Consciousness*. University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London: 1999. pg 10

<sup>4</sup> Václav Havel, ed. Vladislav, Jan. *Living in Truth*. Faber and Faber, London: 1986. pg 57

ambiguous language because the qualifications for it are derived from an attunement to eternal things which necessarily defy worldly concretion.

Such language does not imply that any experience fulfills the qualifications of an “authentic existence.” Rather, if a criminal usurps from society in order to satisfy his own cravings, his usurpations suggest that no one affected by those misgivings remains in a state of authenticity. The criminal’s conquest, as a collection of goods stolen from those around him, is not really “authentic.” It is manufactured by his turning of others’ experiences and goods into his own. Likewise, neither do those from whom he stole experience authenticity; their experiences in life are no longer theirs; their experiences, too, are a creation of the criminal.

The dichotomous motivations of the reader and the criminal are manifested in the ways in which our societies are organized. The criminal is intent on recreating fundamental components of our experiences, but within a world that has already been created for us and exists as a given. The impossibility of creating a world that has already been created is implacable. If such a rebel obtains power within a society the whole of society is affected, he attempts to change the nature of it in a way consistent with the usurpations he makes for his advantage. The consequence is that the experiences understood to be “authentic” become eradicated and replaced by the criminal’s manufactured experiences. But a manufactured experience is still an experience.

This experience is a vitiation of the authentic one; it may foster the rebellion against this manufactured experience, in a quest to rediscover authenticity. The political ramifications of this discovery lead men to form institutions respectful of the fundamental

need inherent to the maintenance of authenticity; namely: the freedom to discover and maintain it.

This thesis' examination of this phenomenon revolves around the juxtaposing demands of these two rebels, and of the interrelation between them. It accordingly seeks to divide rebellion into two more specific categories: the metaphysical rebel who seeks to create, and the political rebel who seeks authenticity. Let us define and clarify these terms, before moving into an account of the criteria used to establish them.

As Patočka and Havel exemplify, political rebellion occurs in concordance with the type of truth experienced as a movement of the soul, and when that movement pits man in opposition to a malevolent, unjust, unnecessary, and criminal political imposition. Political rebellion is coined for the specific purpose of referring to the rebellion against unjust and unnecessary impositions, and not used in reference to any rebellion that might involve action in the political realm. Political rebellion therefore occurs when the responsible party for a grievance is a politically sovereign entity. The term political rebellion conveys the idea of a rebellion for a grievance that can be legitimately directed against a regime. The idea that there is a legitimate or fair role for politics to play in the organization of man's affairs is unoriginal. I would like to base my considerations of legitimacy on the social contract theory of John Locke.

Locke proposed that men come together under the social contract for the purpose of "quitting the state of nature" and preserving "their lives, liberties . . . and property."<sup>5</sup> We subject ourselves to the prerogatives of our rulers for these purposes, any violation of these premises by the ruler constituting "encroachments which prejudice or hinder the

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<sup>5</sup> Locke, John, ed. Wootton, David. *Political Writings*. Hackett Publishing, Indianapolis/London: 1993. pg. 271, 325

public good.”<sup>6</sup> Violations of this sort are tyrannical acts and violations of the social contract which revert the tyrant to the state of nature and give the society the opportunity and right to reify the social contract. Revolutions of this sort can thus be seen as legitimate restorations of the social contract and are referred to in this essay as inspired by political rebellion. It is not the revolutionaries who rebel against the social contract, but rather the government which had perverted its contractual powers.<sup>7</sup>

In revolution we have a similar term to rebellion, but one that extends beyond it. Rebellion refers, in this essay, to the spirited defiance that occurs within individuals, or within small groups that cannot affect the larger political setting. Revolutions, however, occur within a group or groups of people and culminate in political change. Revolutions do, however, manifest from rebellions; they are movements of individuals rebelling collectively. The terms are specifically related in that the ideals of the rebellion will affect the institutions wrought by the revolution.

Change, however, can be brought about in either a restorative or renovative manner; a distinction noticed by Hannah Arendt which helps to develop the idea of rebellion as a broad phenomenon of juxtaposing interrelations. Consistent with the notion of restoring the social contract, revolution was originally understood as a word that implies restoration.<sup>8</sup> In modernity, however, the idea of revolution as a political movement in which a society or faction of a society attempts to impose a new-found right or duty onto society has taken hold, confusing the integrity of the term.<sup>9</sup> Such

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 346

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 377

<sup>8</sup> In Arendt’s words: “...its precise Latin meaning, designating the regular, lawfully revolving motion of the stars, which, since it was known to be beyond the influence of man and hence irresistible, was certainly characterized by neither newness nor by violence. On the contrary, the word clearly indicates a recurring cyclical movement.” (Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*. The Viking Press, New York: 1965. pg 35)

<sup>9</sup> Arendt, *On Revolution*, pgs. 34 -40

revolutions might be more appropriately understood as renovations, and cannot be considered as an effect of political rebellion, as rights heretofore unknown to the experiences of men cannot be the responsibility of politics. Revolutions of this sort do not attempt to reinstate the social contract but to transfigure the meaning of it, to impose a new definition of societal obligation onto the area it controls. In other words, revolutionaries who seek to replace tyrannical encroachments with impositions of their own are nothing more than rebels against social well-being themselves. The purpose of the social contract is not restored in such a situation. As Locke puts it: “For in all the states of created beings capable of laws, where there is no law there is no freedom. For liberty is to be free from restraint and violence from others, which cannot be where there is no law.”<sup>10</sup> The nature of the laws of a society reveals the intentions of its regime: if a regime seeks to preserve the freedom of those it rules its laws will reflect this desire. If the rebels that make revolutions and the revolutions that precede regimes do not consciously seek this end, it will not manifest in political reality.

Accordingly, this analysis will establish revolutions in terms of the consequence or historical manifestation of them, and categorize findings accordingly. Revolutions will be divided between those which composed governments of law respectful of the freedoms inherent to the social contract, and those which merely changed the way in which society was oppressed. The ultimate product will outline the necessary prerequisites or stipulations a revolution must adhere to if it is to successfully restore the Lockean notion of social contract and fulfill the demands of political rebellion as used in this essay. It will only be revolutions that result in the institution of open and fair political systems that qualify as the consequence of political rebellions.

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<sup>10</sup> Locke, *Political Writings*, pg. 289

In this way rebellion and revolution are inextricably linked. The motivating factors of a rebellion are reflected in the institutional changes sought through revolutionary action. If a rebel proclaims, “I am oppressed,” turns this rebellion into a political movement and assumes political power only to turn around and become the oppressor, then something about the nature of his oppression is revealed through this action. It was not really motivated by a sense of un-authenticity, but by a drive to redefine what authenticity may mean, which in turn corrupts that notion. This insinuates that not every revolution, simply because it proclaims to achieve fairness for the society in which it occurs, results in the institution of open and fair political systems. Laws must assume the humble role of maintaining “lives, liberties . . . and property.”<sup>11</sup> Their fundamental task, therefore, is the assignment of preventing acts which encroach upon man’s equal right to “lives, liberties . . . and property.” If a revolution is to be categorized as a political rebellion it must meet this criterion. An example from the pages of history is appropriate.

Legitimate revolution, inspired by political rebellion, occurs in Locke’s theory as a mechanism through which the rights provided by the social contract can be protected. For example, Sandoz frames England’s Glorious Revolution around the issue of “fundamental law” or “a law superior to even kings.”<sup>12</sup> Fundamental law is a way of expressing that certain rights transcend the bounds of legitimate political authority and are fundamentally irrelevant to the ability of a regime to provide for the well-being of a society, and should therefore remain inaccessible to worldly authority. Fundamental law entails those rights inherent to the social contract.

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<sup>11</sup> Locke, *Political Writings*, pg. 325

<sup>12</sup> Ellis Sandoz, *A Government of Laws*. University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London: 2001. pg. 159

The validity of this concept was initially challenged in England in 1649 and settled in 1688. In 1649 Oliver Cromwell was instrumental in the beheadings of the Earl of Strafford and King Charles I, the latter on grounds of “perverting his rule into a tyrannical power to rule according to his will.”<sup>13</sup> The uprising that led to his execution was the result of the imposition of a new prayer book on Presbyterian Scotland.<sup>14</sup> This act constituted a usurpation of fundamental law. The means by which they attempted to address the tyrannical encroachment, or to institute the provisions defined by the social contract, was to instill “greater authority for the Parliament and an end to arbitrary royal rule.”<sup>15</sup> This act was viewed as a restoration of fundamental law; Arendt notes: “the short-lived victory of this first modern revolution was officially understood as a restoration, namely as ‘freedom by God’s blessing restored. . . .’”<sup>16</sup>

Again, in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, after the short-lived victory in 1649 had resulted in the ultimate restoration of the monarchy, a bloodless coup was inspired by the tyrannical encroachments of James II. He had “revoked the charters of many English towns, rejected the advice of Parliament, and aroused popular opposition by openly practicing Roman Catholicism.”<sup>17</sup> The birth of his son and Catholic heir inspired the revolution which resulted in Mary II and William III ruling as constitutional monarchs, “accepting a Declaration of Rights that limited royal prerogatives and increased personal liberties and parliamentary powers.”<sup>18</sup> In the English experience the process of revolution can be detected as a response to a formulation of laws that were not

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Henretta, Brody, and Dumenil. *America: A Concise History, vol. 1: to 1877*. Bedford/ St. Martins, New York, Boston: 1999. pg. 49.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Arendt, *On Revolution*, pg. 36

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 60.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 61.

fundamental to the task of politics. The right to worship in a particular way is not one that a political ruler should have a right to decide. The preclusion of a particular form of worship is an example of “tyrannical encroachment” because such rights are tangential to the protection of lives and property. Moreover, such an encroachment directly inhibits the “liberties” referred to in Locke’s formulation. This is antithetical to Locke’s conception of the purpose of government and therefore is a catalyst for revolution. Thus revolutions which occur, like the Glorious Revolution, against politically unnecessary impositions and result in the institution of fair political systems are to be understood as manifestations of political rebellion.

Other legitimate applications of this theory can be detected. In East Europe, during the closing decades of the twentieth century, it became the responsibility of men to rebel against the order of things for something that had become vitiated under the soulless existence of totalitarian life. Hence Václav Havel developed his politics of responsibility, became a leading figure of the Velvet Revolution and the first president of a free and democratized Czechoslovak Republic. It is an interesting phenomenon that a playwright and essayist found the means by which to both rebel and inspire from his powerless station in life. How he did so is a focal point of this essay; illustrating that the rise to power of an open and effective political system, simply upon the opening of a society to freedom, indeed implies that the truth reconcilable with such an experience is in fact *true*.

Political rebellions occur as responsive movements to the political manifestation of metaphysical rebellion. Metaphysical rebellion is a revolt against the order of things as ordained by God. Camus has defined metaphysical rebellion as “the movement by

which man protests against his condition and against the whole of creation.”<sup>19</sup> In contradiction to political rebellion, metaphysical rebellion does not stake its grievance against the legitimacy of a political regime, but against the nature of man’s existence as man. It can be juxtaposed to political rebellion, which might be understood as the rebellion against the nature of man’s existence as citizen. Camus writes: “The slave protests against the condition in which he finds himself within his state of slavery; the metaphysical rebel protests against the condition in which he finds himself as a man.”<sup>20</sup>

The nature of metaphysical rebellion poses a problem which Camus has studiously detected. Like the political rebellion of a slave, metaphysical rebellions are characterized by the questioning of a power. The rebel understands himself to be in submission to this power, and is motivated to change his condition.<sup>21</sup> Camus, however, understands this grievance to be misplaced in the metaphysical rebel’s case. His worries concerning the consequences of this misplacement are well founded:

“[The metaphysical rebel] involves this superior being [called God] in the same humiliating adventure as mankind’s, its ineffectual power being the equivalent of our ineffectual condition. He subjects it to our power of refusal, bends it to the unbending part of human nature, forcibly integrates it into an existence that we render absurd, and finally drags it from its refuge outside time and involves it in history, very far from the eternal stability that it can find only in the unanimous submission of all men. . . . When the throne of God is overturned, the rebel realizes that it is his own responsibility to create the justice, order, and unity that he sought in vain within his own condition, and in this way to justify the fall of God. Then begins the desperate effort to create, at the price of crime and murder if necessary, the dominion of man. This will not come about without terrible consequences, of which we are so far only aware of a few. But these consequences are in no way due to rebellion itself, or at least they only occur to the extent that the rebel forgets his original purpose, tires of the tremendous tension created by refusing to give a positive or negative answer, and finally abandons himself to complete negation or total submission.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Camus, *The Rebel*, pg. 23

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, pg. 23

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*. pg. 24

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*. pg. 24-25

Through this effort to create, metaphysical rebellion can manifest as a political phenomenon in the form of revolution. As Camus' statement reveals, moreover, the consequences of this form of rebellion are "terrible." Political rebellion, however, is also a political phenomenon and it opposes metaphysical rebellion in that it is remedial. The similarity of metaphysical rebellion to political rebellion can therefore lead into complications. Hence the central task of this essay is to distinguish political and metaphysical rebellions from one another. The differences between the pragmatic implications of each form justify the attempt; often movements that appear to be political rebellions and are undertaken energetically, sometimes with the best of intentions, are actually metaphysical rebellions whose consequence is political discord and experiential horror. The French Revolution provides an example of an apparently political appeal that was in fact grounded in metaphysical rebellion and whose consequence was therefore disorder.

The French Revolution was driven by a sense of compassion for the poor and miserable. Hannah Arendt, in her book *On Revolution*, recalls Rousseau's observation that "an 'innate repugnance at seeing a fellow creature suffer' had become common in certain strata of European society and precisely among those who made the French Revolution."<sup>23</sup> Hence, the Declaration of the Rights of man represented much more than the preservation of the condition of each individual's stake in society, but sought an egalitarianism of condition itself. It not being the king but God who had allocated different stations and portions to the different social classes, the proposition did not represent a political appeal, but a metaphysical one. Arendt writes:

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<sup>23</sup> Arendt, *On Revolution*, pg. 65

“the men of the Revolution were no longer concerned with the emancipation of citizens, or with equality in the sense that everybody should be equally entitled to his legal personality. . . . They believed they had emancipated nature herself, as it were, liberated the natural man in all men, and given him the Rights of Man to which each was entitled, not by virtue of the body politic to which he belonged but by virtue of being born.”<sup>24</sup>

Attempting to fit such a supposition into the Lockean social contract is not a straightforward assignment. It is not within the prerogative of any king or executive to suppress what was appearing to emerge as a ‘new’ natural right. Some right that had heretofore been suppressed in mankind across history, such as the universal assuagement of suffering, is not a justifiable grievance against which a governing power may feasibly be held responsible because it is a plea which may be heard with compassion but not one that can reasonably be addressed. The existence of suffering in the world has always transcended political culpability.

Consequently irrationality became the design of the revolutionaries, the guillotine their method. The assertion of the new law which sought to transfigure reality rested on the annihilation of that portion of society which interrupted the designs of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Simply because they existed and claimed what was theirs, the French elites preempted the foundation of an equality of condition in France. The solution became the eradication of that class of men. Mass murder of compatriots, however, represents a tremendous moral compromise for an impracticable utopia. The act was a metaphysical rebellion, and the moral compromise resulted in experiential terror. When the persecution of the *ancien regime* proved no panacea, the guillotines were turned in upon the revolutionaries themselves; Robespierre did not escape his ideas. The impracticability and consequences of metaphysical rebellion will receive persistent

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 104

attention in this analysis. Such is an attempt to illustrate the duplicity of metaphysical rebellion; it is an enticing proposition – but it does not work.

The French experience is only one example of metaphysical rebellion. The socialist systems designed by European intellectuals in the nineteenth century, enlightened and eager to renounce God, swept Russian intellectuals like wild-fire; the Marxian roots of Leninist-Stalinist Russia also exemplify metaphysical rebellion. Such movements represent the work of nihilists who do not accept the world as it is in its most fundamental precepts and who would seek to rebuild in its stead a dream-world at *any* cost. In prophetic fashion Fyodor Dostoevsky broke from socialist ideas and began developing literary characters that foresaw with precision the fate of his country. The most brilliantly developed of his characters are rebels, God is their grievance. His art is the exposition of the mendacity of metaphysical rebellion.

From the two counter points of Dostoevsky's metaphysical rebels and the political rebellion of Havel, I will hope to elucidate my claim that there are, simply, two types of rebels, representing the antipodes of man's experience as man. I additionally seek to illustrate that the two phenomena can be linked into one single progression. The act of metaphysical rebellion implies a fixation with mundane affairs, when this fixation affects societies and the regimes which govern them, it becomes inherently necessary for political rebellion to find a manner of living more conducive to happiness. Yet rebellions do not happen magically or combust from thin air. In order for the metaphysical rebellion to catalyze a political rebellion, much is reliant upon the psychological disposition of the affected society. As stated, all rebels proclaim the truth and believe that they are taking the 'right' action. Hence, how is this happiness formulated and how

can man realize the erroneousness of wrong action; essentially, how does man understand when he is actually right, and when he has been wrong?

A frame-work for analyzing the process of rebellion, and for answering these questions, has been developed by Eric Voegelin and will be employed herein for the purpose of dividing the phenomenon of rebellion into the categories of metaphysical rebellion and political rebellion. In order to develop this framework from various aspects of Voegelin's thought, it is necessary to focus upon two primary areas: his theory of consciousness and his theory of modern gnosticism. These two theories reveal the psychological traits inherent to the political and metaphysical rebel respectively. Before developing these theories, I would like to discuss the classical foundations to them.

## I

Apperception of truth can be derived in Voegelin from the classical experience. Indeed that experience can lend, in the example of Socrates, credence to the truth of being a humble creature in an already crafted world. A central part of the Socratic story is his trial and death, in which the fundamentals of rebellion are evident. He simply had to acquiesce in submission to the Athenian order, but rather chose to rebel: "let me go free or do not let me go free; but I will never do anything else, even if I am to die many deaths."<sup>25</sup> He was convicted and his sentence was death. His friends offered to save him. Again all that was necessary was his submission but he refused to abandon the "difficult thing:" "Neither in court nor in war ought I or anyone else to do anything and everything to contrive an escape from death . . . the difficult thing is not to escape death, I think, but

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<sup>25</sup> Plato. Trans. By Rouse, W.H.D., ed. By Warmington, Eric H. and Rouse, Phillip G., *Great Dialogues of Plato*. Signet, New York: 1999. pg. 436

to escape wickedness.”<sup>26</sup> Socrates’ unwavering awareness of the nature of wickedness illustrates the fundamental characteristics of the quintessential political rebel.

Socrates’ wisdom justified the willingness to choose death over wickedness; the character of it points towards its inspiration as amongst the eternal things. As Plato tells it, the Oracle at Delphi inspired Socrates to discover the character of his wisdom. He compared himself to another man, supposedly wise, and found: “the fact is that neither of us knows anything beautiful and good, but he thinks he does know when he doesn’t, and I don’t know and don’t think I do: so I am wiser than he is by only this trifle, that what I do not know I don’t think I do.”<sup>27</sup> Socrates’ choice of death was validated by the fact that his rebellion was in accordance with the truth of the eternal things: “the truth really is, gentleman, that the god is in fact wise, and in this oracle he means that human wisdom is worth little or nothing. . . .”<sup>28</sup> Therefore the indictment against Socrates, which reads: “Socrates is a criminal, who corrupts the young and does not believe in the gods whom the state believes in, but other new spiritual things instead,” disavows the truth revealed to Socrates by the Oracle.<sup>29</sup> The truth of eternal matters is unknowable to political authorities and man generally. Men can not possibly have prescribed laws regarding the gods accurately, as their wisdom regarding eternal matters is essentially “worth little or nothing.” The rebellion of Socrates is therefore an example of political rebellion; it is the unwillingness to abandon one’s attunement to the eternal foundations of the truth – in spite of mundane circumstances – which characterizes this special form of rebel.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 444

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 426

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 429

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 430

Voegelin's conceptions of transcendence and reason underlay his theory of consciousness and rely on the concept of the good as eternal. Voegelin develops his understanding of the classical conception of the good in the third volume of *Order and History: Plato and Aristotle*. Particularly relevant to this analysis are his remarks on Plato's *Republic*.

Therein, Plato develops an illustration of truth residing beyond the realm of material existence. The sun, or the idea of the Agathon, is an analogy for the highest good: "the sun not only provides what is seen with the power of being seen, but also with generation, growth, and nourishment although it itself isn't generation."<sup>30</sup> The good is noticeably not an object of cognition but something more: "the condition which characterizes the good must receive still greater honor."<sup>31</sup> It is clearly spelled out as something which transcends being: "the good isn't being but is still *beyond being*, exceeding it in dignity and power."<sup>32</sup> However, the realization of the idea of the good is not given in man's experience; rather it must be detected through an often laborious process. As Socrates was insistent on the "difficult thing" in *the Apology*, he insists on a "longer and harder way" in *the Republic*.<sup>33</sup> The Allegory of the Cave relates the idea to Socrates' audience.<sup>34</sup>

The Allegory is effective on many levels, but most importantly is its effectiveness in exposing the bifurcated nature of existence. The representative antipodal truths of the sunlight and of the cave characterize the eternal truth of the political rebel and the

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<sup>30</sup> Plato, trans. By. Bloom, Allan. *The Republic*. Basic Books, New York: 1991. pg. 189 (509a)

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 189 (509a)

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 189 (509b) [my italics]

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 114 (435d); quoted in Voegelin, Eric. *Plato*. University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London: 2000. pg. 112

<sup>34</sup> Voegelin, *Plato*, pgs. 112-117

worldly truth of the metaphysical rebel. In Plato's Allegory, life in the cave is juxtaposed by life in the sunlight. Cave dwellers are understood to be prisoners, their understanding of truth commensurable with "the shadows of artificial things."<sup>35</sup> The cave is somehow understood by its dwellers, despite the strange and unnatural conception of life depicted therein, to be a congenial place. Lethargy seems to them tranquility. This condition is apparently a source of fixation for the cave dwellers, as affirmed by the response of one who attempts to climb from the depths. "In pain" and "dazzled" the man finds himself "at a loss," acquiescing under the conviction "that what was seen before is truer than what is now shown."<sup>36</sup> He abandons his revolt for the ease of the cave. Indeed, it is even dangerous to attempt such a revolt. If a man were to rise, and return:

"and if he once more had to compete with those perpetual prisoners in forming judgments about those shadows while his vision was dim, before his eyes had recovered, and if the time needed for getting accustomed were not at all short, wouldn't he be the source of laughter, and wouldn't it be said of him that he went up and came back with his eyes corrupted, and that it's not even worth trying to go up? And if they were somehow able to get their hands on and kill the man who attempts to release and lead up, wouldn't they kill him?"<sup>37</sup>

The cave is perpetuated not only because it appears to be the easiest way to live, but because there is a threat involved in escaping from the condition of life within it. This is a trait of regimes and societies affected by metaphysical rebellion. It is detectable in the Socratic example, and it raises a question: If this "difficult truth" were so impracticable, why was it not eradicated from being long ago?

In fact, man does know of a truth beyond the cave. Voegelin refers to the discovery of this truth as "epochal," and he lauds the significance of it: "When the soul opened toward transcendent reality, it found a source of order superior in rank to the

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<sup>35</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, pg. 194 (515c)

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 194 (515c-d)

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* pgs. 195-196 (516e-517a)

established order of society as well as a truth in critical opposition to the truth at which society had arrived through the symbolism of its self-interpretation.”<sup>38</sup> While the discovery may account for no constitutive change to reality itself, it does result in a “complication” which produces antagonisms between conceptions of reality: “Both types of truth will from now on exist together; and the tension between the two, in various degrees of consciousness, will be a permanent structure of reality.”<sup>39</sup> The division of political and metaphysical rebellion rests upon the conception of truth to which man has attuned himself; the truth of “transcendent reality” is the standard by which political rebellions are judged.

These reflections on Platonic thought inspire two considerations, both manageably handled with respective theories of Voegelin’s. The first concerns the danger inherent in the “complication,” we will return to it shortly. The other consideration relates to the nature of the truth discovered in the classical experience. How is such a thing as truth beyond immanent reality discerned by men? This answer is derived from Voegelin’s theory of consciousness.

## II

Voegelin’s theory of consciousness, drawing from the classical conception of not only Platonic philosophy but also from Aristotelian methodology, provides a measure by which the truth that inspires a political rebellion can be detected. The first point to be considered concerning such a proposition is that it is based in empirical observation and not in speculative abstraction. Consequently, as Voegelin writes in *Anamnesis*: “the form

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<sup>38</sup> Voegelin, Eric. *The New Science of Politics*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London: 1987. pg. 156

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 158

it will assume in the individual case will depend on the circumstances.”<sup>40</sup> This is one of the major reasons why a tidy definition of truth is so difficult to articulate. Truth can be identified less with a specific definition of what it is than with an experience revealed to man through his very participation in reality. Voegelin asserts that the recognition of truth is the result of the individual attempt to orient one’s understanding of existence towards that which is actually real, not simply that which has been proclaimed or postulated to be real. For example, Aristotle does not defend the *Nicomachean Ethics* with an arrogant claim to knowledge or with a pedantic display, but with the qualification that “we must examine the conclusions we have reached so far by applying them to the actual facts of life: if they are in harmony with the facts we must accept them, and if they clash we must assume that they are mere words.”<sup>41</sup> Consequently, Aristotle was open to the truth wherever it led him. Proclamations of truth were not to be confused with the real thing, founded in the observation of reality. Likewise, the Voegelinian conception on how man arrives at truth, or perceives the order of being as ordained by God *to be* the order of being as ordained by God, is not self-evident but dependent on consciousness of the fullness of reality, and on a “desire to know” the tenets of being within that reality.

He writes in *Anamnesis*:

“The quality of this instrument, then, and consequently the quality of the results, will depend on the analyst’s willingness to reach out into all the dimensions of the reality in which his conscious existence is an event, it will depend on his desire to know. A consciousness of this kind is not an a priori structure, nor does it just happen, nor is its horizon a given. It rather is a ceaseless action of expanding, ordering, articulating, and correcting itself; it is an event in the reality of which as a part it partakes. It is a permanent effort at responsive openness to the appeal of reality, at bewareing of premature satisfaction, and above all at avoiding the self-destructive phantasy [sic] of believing the

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<sup>40</sup> Voegelin, Eric. *Anamnesis*. University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London: 1978. pg. 8

<sup>41</sup> Aristotle, trans. By. Ostwald, Martin. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Prentice Hall, New Jersey: 1999. pg. 294 (1179a20-24)

reality of which it is a part to be an object external to itself that can be mastered by bringing it into the form of a system.”<sup>42</sup>

Consciousness is then consistent with the Aristotelian conception of objectivity. Because it is discovered through a process of awareness and discovery of the whole realm of man’s being, it signifies a concordance with “the actual facts of life.” That which is sought to be known, but cannot be understood in terms of physical materialism, is that which Plato has symbolized in the idea of the Agathon; it is truth beyond physical and material being, but a truth ineradicable once discovered. As it defies articulation but is the unmovable source of orientation, Voegelin calls this object the “transcendent ground.”<sup>43</sup>

The Platonic formulation of the Agathon and the Voegelinian interpretation of it are not unique conceptualizations of the ground of being. Various expressions of similar ideas suggest the validity of this ground, despite its ineffability. Leibniz, in 1714 posed it as the Question: “Why is there something, why not nothing? And why do things have to be as they are and not different?” In Leibniz’s words: “This ultimate reason of things is called *God*.”<sup>44</sup> In many ways, asking the Question posed by Leibniz leads one to an understanding of its answer. Thus by “desiring to know,” or asking the Question, man discovers that there *is* an answer for it. Although embodied in many expressions, there is but one consistent Answer. According to Sandoz:

“In its various modes, [the Question] structures the process of the search of the Ground of being; and its very asking implies an Answer just as answers given imply the Question, even if the responsive answer of men out of the several experiential horizons of myth, philosophy, revelation, and the meditative styles of India and China provide in their

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<sup>42</sup> Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, pg. 4

<sup>43</sup> Voegelin, Eric, ed. By Sandoz, Ellis. *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, vol. 11*, “In Search of the Ground.” University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London: 2000. pg. 232

<sup>44</sup> Sandoz Ellis, *The Voegelinian Revolution*. Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick: 2000. pg. 196; see also Voegelin, *The Collected Works, vol. 11*, pg. 225

equivalence no more than representative truth. It is through the differentiation of the Question that compact truth dissolves to differentiate as the advance of truth in history. History is thus understood to be the dimension of reality in the In-Between in which the luminosity of the meaning of the Whole increases and in which the process of the Whole is experienced as moving in the direction of ‘eminent reality.’”<sup>45</sup>

As Sandoz identifies, the Answer can lead into a conflicting situation in which man must attempt to subscribe to the divine ground as he lives within the confines of immanent reality. And as Voegelin argues, the discovery of the transcendent ground does not transfigure the nature of existence itself: “the leap upward in being is not a leap out of existence.”<sup>46</sup> It rather forces men to engage in this In-Between, and to allow themselves to be drawn towards a different ordering impetus than that which is seemingly immediately self-evident. The tenets of being have not been altered by the leap, merely man’s conception of those tenets, but:

“something has changed . . . in the order of being and existence itself. Existence is partnership in the community of being; and the discovery of imperfect participation, of a mismanagement of existence through lack of proper attunement to the order of being, of the danger of a fall from being, is a horror indeed, compelling a radical reorientation of existence.”<sup>47</sup>

The discovery of consciousness opens men’s understandings of existence up to more than the organic and biological necessities which reflection on the mundane world will provide. Heretofore man must not only provide for those needs, but for the soul as well. By opening up the transcendent ground to experience, men discover a completely new realm of their being. Happiness and well-being become reoriented in the process, as man’s interests now include an entirely different set of criteria which must be imposed upon his worldly needs. Thus something has indeed changed with the conscious discovery of the transcendent ground, at least epistemologically. This change will affect

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<sup>45</sup> Sandoz, *The Voegelinian Revolution*, pgs. 197-198

<sup>46</sup> Voegelin, Eric. *Israel and Revelation*. Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge: 1994. pg. 11

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

the way in which thought and action alike are oriented; it will affect, for example, the in which things such as 'reason' are conceived.

According to Voegelin, the divine ground as the object of consciousness is the proper understanding of reason. This conception falls in opposition to the conception of reason as a tool for calculating mundane fulfillment. The two forms of reason are respectively representative of the two types of truth available to human insight. Reason in the Voegelinian conception can be defined as "a word denoting the tension between man as a human being and the divine Ground of his existence of which he is in search." Indeed, "The consciousness of being caused by the divine Ground and being in search of the divine Ground – that is reason. Period. That is the meaning of the word *reason*."<sup>48</sup> For this sort of reason Voegelin adopted the term *Nous*, coined classically by Parmenides for "man's faculty of ascending to the vision of being," to avoid terminological confusion regarding a word that can also be used to describe the logic by which Plato's cave is maintained.<sup>49</sup>

So-called reason in discordance with the transcendent ground is fallacy, but this does not mean that fallacy cannot be postulated. Camus reminds: "the world after all can realize itself in crime and in pursuit of a false concept."<sup>50</sup> Voegelin, too, makes the assertion that our understanding of what the ground is, "might be unfounded," thus it is the persistent questing for the ground or of attuning oneself to it, for reason (*nous*), and not its actual attainment, which is of prime significance. Voegelin writes:

"An insight concerning being must always really be present – not only so that the first steps of the analysis can be taken, but so that the very idea of the analysis can be

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<sup>48</sup> Voegelin, *The Collected Works vol. 11*, pg. 232; Voegelin here also writes: "That is reason: openness toward the ground."

<sup>49</sup> Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, pg. 94

<sup>50</sup> Camus, *The Rebel*, pg. 239

conceived and developed at all. And indeed, Platonic-Aristotelian analysis did not in the least begin with speculations about its own possibility, but with the actual insight into being which motivated the analytical process. The decisive event in the establishment of a *politike episteme* was the specifically philosophical realization that the levels of being discernible within the world are surmounted by a transcendent source of being and its order.”<sup>51</sup>

This paradigm reveals two fundamental insights concerning the nature of consciousness. On the one hand, it serves to improve life by making men happy within the world as it may exist. The pursuer of this reason understands such an attunement to facilitate a more fulfilling manner of living. At the same time, it is not a speculative attempt at improvement. Consciousness attempts to improve life by changing the way men understand it, through the activity of questioning the nature of the world in which we live and accepting openly the results of that inquiry. It is notably an active process.

Voegelin has described it as both a “critical consciousness” and a “cognitive consciousness.”<sup>52</sup> The theme of “desiring to know” is forefront:

“The questioning unrest carries the assuaging answer within itself in as much as man is moved to his search of the ground by the divine ground of which he is in search. The ground is not a spatially distant thing but a divine presence that becomes manifest in the experience of unrest and the desire to know.”<sup>53</sup>

Thus changes fashioned to the world through this process are brought about by attempts to correlate the world with the experience of consciousness, and changes can be measured by this standard. It is not speculative because a consciousness of the transcendent ground must condone the modifications to reality. Changes are *a priori* grounded in reality, as revealed through consciousness, before such changes even occur. It is not concerned with whether or not a change is physically possible, but with whether or not such a change can be condoned in the souls of men. We see then that men who undertake

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<sup>51</sup> Voegelin, Eric. *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*. ISI Books, Wilmington, Delaware: 2004. pg. 13

<sup>52</sup> Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, pgs. 95-96

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 95

change based upon this inclination are concerned with the fulfillment of man as he exists, which is achieved through caring for the soul, and through disclosing the dictates of the soul to reality. This is the groundwork of the psychological disposition of the political rebel. He does not wish to create a better man who may in turn create a better world; he is not frustrated with himself as a man. He wishes to create a political order in which man may be what he is; he is frustrated with politics and with society – with usurpations of his human-ness. He seeks to fulfill his nature as a man, as that nature is dictated to him by his conscience and consciousness.

Conversely, metaphysical rebellion occurs in the man who fails to become involved in this process. It is characterized by first, a person who develops a formula for immanent salvation and, second, the masses which accept these formulas as doctrine and attempt to enact them. The former represents, in Voegelin's words: “. . . persons who know that, and why, their opinions cannot stand up under critical analysis and who therefore make the prohibition of the examination of their premises part of their dogma.”<sup>54</sup> This phenomenon directly opposes the spiritual act of seeking truth; it is “the prohibition of questioning.”<sup>55</sup> By prohibiting and refusing to ask questions it is possible to close the faculty of man's being which is receptive to the transcendent ground of being. Thus, it is possible to quell the “desire to know” and to prohibit the Question. The consequence is that dogmas become proliferated into mass movements through the acceptance of them without questioning, by the standard of consciousness, the premises on which they were constructed. In accordance with Voegelin's theory of consciousness, however, is the notion that the imposition of such realities upon societies through the

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<sup>54</sup> Voegelin, *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*, pg. 17

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 16

implementation of political systems is not a phenomenon against which humans have no defense. The problem is solved through an individual awareness of consciousness, and therefore is one that “everyone possesses the means of overcoming . . . in his own life.”<sup>56</sup> In this sense the mode of analysis evident in Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy, informed by *noetic* reason, becomes a form of “therapeutic analysis.”<sup>57</sup>

Essentially, attunement to the divine ground is facilitated through the asking of the Question. When the Question is prohibited, a political rebel is one who asks it. Hence, political rebellion can be understood as serving a sort of spiritual therapy. Therapy, however, implies regeneration. Therefore, we must first better understand the process of spiritual corruption. Voegelin’s theory of modern gnosticism provides a way of describing this process.

### III

The corruption is a conscious annihilation of the transcendent ground of truth, manifesting in the actions characteristic of metaphysical rebellion. The typical political manifestation of metaphysical rebellion is a society that does not uniformly understand their social state as a rebellion against God. The act of concealing reality as ordained by God from a society is the aspect of metaphysical rebellion which results in horrific political consequences; essentially, metaphysical rebellion often appears politically as totalitarianism. As Voegelin frames it: “the limit is reached when an activist sect which represents the Gnostic truth organizes civilization into an empire under its rule.

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 17

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

Totalitarianism, defined as the existential rule of Gnostic activists, is the end form of progressive civilization.”<sup>58</sup>

Voegelin’s theory of gnosticism provides a scheme for identifying the various examples of metaphysical rebellion and its political counterpart – totalitarianism. Modern gnosticism is a system through which the suppression of the Question can be facilitated, thereby attuning gnostic thinkers to an immanently oriented conception of truth that is uninformed by *noetic* insight. The political consequence is a totalitarian regime driven by ideological chauvinism, while the individual consequence is a loss of the authenticity attained through consciousness of the whole range of human nature, and specifically to the transcendent ground. Because this loss is precisely that which facilitates the political and personal conditions that characterize metaphysical rebellion, modern gnosticism will be useful as an analytical tool in this essay, employed as a means of identifying and explaining the process inherent to metaphysical rebellion.

The history of gnosticism is complex and its manifestation in reality is manifold. There are, however, six fundamental characteristics that apply to the process of metaphysical rebellion:

- 1) “The Gnostic is dissatisfied with his situation”
- 2) “The belief that the drawbacks of the situation can be attributed to the fact that the world is intrinsically poorly organized”
- 3) “The belief that salvation from the evil of the world is possible”
- 4) “The belief that the order of being will have to be changed in an historical process”
- 5) “In the narrower sense – the belief that a change in the order of being lies in the realm of human action, that this salvational act is possible through man’s own effort”
- 6) “The construction of a formula for self and world salvation, as well as the gnostic’s readiness to come forward about the salvation of mankind”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*, pg. 132

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* pgs. 64-65

Dissatisfaction with situation is the motivating factor from which the action of the gnostic/metaphysical rebel springs; we will return to the attributes and implications of this characteristic. It is a sweeping characteristic that will also be applicable to the motivations of the political rebel; for now let us dwell on those characteristics which help us to distinguish metaphysical rebellion from political rebellion.

The attempt to reconcile the metaphysical rebel's motivation is dependant upon the maintenance of a system to replace the configuration of the world as ordained by God and revealed to man via reason (*nous*); Voegelin writes: "Gnosis desires dominion over being; in order to seize control of being the gnostic constructs his system. The building of systems is a gnostic form of reasoning, not a philosophical one."<sup>60</sup> Philosophy and science become vitiated if employed for the purpose of reconfiguring reality into a system; the plight becomes to recreate rather than to observe human nature. Camus' observation, quoted earlier, affirms the notion: "When the throne of God is overturned, the rebel realizes that it is his own responsibility to create the justice, order, and unity that he sought. . . ." In the attempt to reconstruct reality in a new and speculative manner the gnostic has overstepped the bounds of philosophy. Philosophy is the love of wisdom; the philosopher, as was Aristotle, is led in the direction that the evidence leads him. In the attempt to reconfigure the fundamental nature of man's experience into a "system," however, the observational role of science is overstepped; in Camus' words: "Real objectivity would consist in judging by those results which can be scientifically observed and by facts and their general tendencies. . . . An interminable subjectivity which is imposed on others as objectivity: . . . that is the philosophical definition of terror."<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 32

<sup>61</sup> Camus, *The Rebel*, pg. 243

Crossing the threshold from observation into creation constitutes metaphysical rebellion; it is this action which ends in experiential horror brought about as means of attempting to address the grievance professed against God. The terror imposed is derivative of, and perhaps reveals, the impracticability of such systems. In Eric Voegelin's words:

“The constitution of being is what it is, and cannot be affected by human fancies. Hence, the metastatic denial of the order of mundane existence is neither a true proposition in philosophy, nor a program of action that could be executed. The will to transform reality into something which by essence it is not is the rebellion against the nature of things as ordained by God.”<sup>62</sup>

The impossibility of transfiguring the order of existence, in short, does not stop men from attempting to do so. The implacable nature of the situation, however, leads gnostic thinkers into one particular shared trait: the attempted obfuscation of the given order of existence through a gnostic system. Political systems that are constructed for the purpose of this obfuscation are therefore the indicative markings of metaphysical rebellion manifested into political action. Because the motivating factor of all rebellions is dissatisfaction with situation, the manifestation of political systems helps to distinguish the metaphysical rebel from the political rebel.

The example of Karl Marx illustrates how gnostic speculation is reliant upon a system for the obfuscation of the given order of things. From this example we can also understand how experiential terror becomes a consequence of the gnostic plight to conceal this obfuscation's disjunction with reality. Voegelin's analysis of Marx reveals both the fallacy inherent to his logic and the means by which Marx attempts to conceal this fallacy so that his system can appear to be valid. In Marx the fundamental characteristics of gnosticism can be detected, as can the means of prohibiting questions which allows the system to obtain. Hence, through an analysis of his system we can see

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<sup>62</sup> Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation*, pg. 453

how Marx attempts to place the role of Creator within the human sphere. Consequently, we can see how this misplacement infringes upon the “authentic” experiences of those affected by it through its suppression of such authenticity. The authentic experiences of human beings created by God is replaced by the experiences of Marx’s manufactured “new men.”

Voegelin notes that in Marx’s *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) the following proposition is made: “Nature as it develops in human history . . . as it develops through industry . . . is true *anthropological* nature.”<sup>63</sup> Voegelin contends that the actual nature of man, whatever it is, is not as Marx describes: “Man is not a self-created, autonomous being carrying the origin and meaning of his existence within himself.”<sup>64</sup> Or more explicitly: “man experiences himself as a being who does not exist from himself. He exists in an already given world. This world itself exists by reason of a mystery, and the name for the mystery, for the cause of this being of the world, of which man is a component, is referred to as ‘God.’”<sup>65</sup>

Opposing claims to truth made on the abstract level of ‘man exists of himself’ juxtaposed by ‘man exists of a superior but mysterious reality’ can be deciphered through a scientific analysis of, as Aristotle put it, “the actual facts of life.” Voegelin, consistent with Aristotelian methodology, grounds his critique on empirical evidence and is able to expose that Marx’s claim lacks the backing of facts accordant to real life: “to . . . questions prompted by the ‘tangible’ experience that man does not exist of himself, Marx chooses to reply that they are a ‘product of abstraction. . . .’ Nature and man are real only

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<sup>63</sup> quoted in Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pg.18

<sup>64</sup> Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, pg. 92

<sup>65</sup> Voegelin, Eric. *Hitler and the Germans*. University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London: 1999. pg. 86

as Marx construes them in his speculation.”<sup>66</sup> Because Marx’s speculation is itself abstraction, he can do nothing more than accuse those who consciously perceive a different truth of themselves abstracting. He has no positive proof of his claims, however, as they have yet to unfold in historical reality. For this reason, Marx’s formula for “the salvation of mankind” is “neither a true proposition in philosophy, nor a program of action that could be executed.” The consequence of his system is terror because it is only facilitated through the suppression of any individual’s authenticity that might run contrary to Marx’s speculation.

In this game, the lie accusing the truth of being the lie is an unexceptional characteristic of systematization.<sup>67</sup> Because Marx lacks the “tangible experience” which prompts questioners of his system, he must therefore declare: “Do not think, do not question me.”<sup>68</sup> This act is what Voegelin has called “the prohibition of questions,” and constitutes a blatant denial of the Question. The system has proven itself logically flawed; its designer understands the question against which his system can be disproved. Instead of abandoning the system, however, the thinker attempts to abandon the question (Question) which made him aware of his fallacy. Voegelin does not refrain from labeling Karl Marx an “intellectual swindler.”<sup>69</sup>

When such a swindle is enacted politically the constitution of being is negated in tangible experience, not in thought. What is real can therefore only be what the system, embodied as political authority, declares to be real. Yet “the constitution of being is what

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<sup>66</sup> Voegelin, *Science Politics and Gnosticism*, pg. 19

<sup>67</sup> In Voegelin’s words: “In practice, the consequence of the conflict between first and second reality is not the intellectual swindle but the lie. The lie becomes the indispensable method because the second reality claims to be true, and since it continually comes into conflict with the first reality, it is necessary to lie constantly: for example, one holds that the first reality is a quite different one from what it actually is, or that the second reality is most horribly misunderstood.” (Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans*, pg. 109)

<sup>68</sup> Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pg. 19

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 21

it is,” and therefore the system is the attempted construction of a reality which operates in active conflict against the order of being revealed to man through an attunement to the transcendent ground. The institution of systems, because of this conflict, results in regimes whose power is maintained through a series of prohibitions. Evidence of these prohibitions lie in certain now familiar devices, all implemented to attenuate this conflict between system and reality: namely guillotines, gas-showers, and the GULAG. The political consequence of metaphysical rebellion, therefore, is the institution of a totalitarian regime whose existence necessitates control over and manipulation of all aspects of existence. Such a regime takes hold of a civilization when the propositions of a gnostic thinker are adopted *en masse*. The existence of totalitarianism in the world is, however, dependent upon individual and societal acceptances of it. An understanding of the political ramifications of gnostic speculation relies upon the relationship between a gnostic thinker and his society, with a focus on the promises made by the gnostic thinker.

Speculative claims which facilitate the proliferation of a system are responsible for the “intellectual swindle.” They are promises made by the thinker to justify the system and revolve around the improvement of man’s experience as man. These promises are typically consistent with the gnostic goal of “salvation from the evil of the world.” However, such promises are not constructed on empirical observation. They are unverifiable because the systemist has no evidence to support the claims made of the system. These promises, by appealing to the desire for mundane satiety, can have the effect of stirring ideological radicalism grounded in the speculative promise of an immanent heaven on earth. Consequently, the acceptance of speculative promises lulls

societies into metaphysical rebellion through the guise of political change that is believed to be practicable.

Voegelin distinguishes between the gnostic thinker and the society affected by him, although characteristics of metaphysical rebellion can be detected in both groups. Those truly deceived by the propositions of a metaphysical rebel include ideologues who do not know that they are ideologues.<sup>70</sup> They follow along with the cause because its promises are appealing, and they utterly believe those promises to be forthcoming. Additionally, there is the party responsible for the deception of the rabble.<sup>71</sup> The deception induces the ideologues to adopt the cause of the metaphysical rebellion by proclaiming the goals of the rebellion to be in accord with reality as ordained by God.<sup>72</sup> Thus the party responsible for the deception cozens an ideological rabble for support. This rabble, with mixed motivations from fear to passion, will then condone crimes committed for the sake of the ideology. Although the promise offered is a deception, it is taken to be real from the standpoint of the ideologues as a consequence of something Voegelin refers to as “compact honesty,” the honest and well-meaning belief in the proposition that the deceiver promises.<sup>73</sup> In effect, the deceived group believes that they are undertaking a legitimate political rebellion that will result in the creation of a more perfect political order. This belief allows the deceiver to undertake the radical means necessary to perpetrate his deception. Specifically, belief in the political promises of the deceiver allows the ideologues to be carried to the point of condoning those promises by

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<sup>70</sup> Voegelin refers to this group as the “rabble;” see *Hitler and the Germans*, pg. 97

<sup>71</sup> Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans*, pg. 243

<sup>72</sup> In the Marx case, the claim that social man will emerge from “true anthropological nature” is an example of how Marx proclaims his system to be in accord with “nature” and therefore in accord with reality as ordained by God.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 109

any means, including criminal ones. The acceptance of criminal behavior implicitly connects the ideological rabble to the gnostic thinker, implicating all of society in metaphysical rebellion. This acceptance grounds the movement in the quest for dominion over the organization of the material world, and lays the foundation for a totalitarian regime to take hold of a society by convincing that society that such a dominion would be experienced as utopian.

The promise of a forthcoming utopia has been referred to as the creation of a “second reality.” The term, derived from two twentieth century Austrian novelists – Robert Musil and Heimito von Doderer – is meant to apply to one who indulges in a dream-world construction with the understanding that such a construction is an actual political possibility.<sup>74</sup> The creation of them implies the gnostic motivation – dissatisfaction with situation. The utopian nature of these constructions, however, aids in distinguishing the metaphysical rebel’s dissatisfaction from the political rebel’s dissatisfaction

Second realities are developed around the idea that the world, as given to us by God, is simply not good enough. The idea of heaven is equated to something practicable on earth; as Voegelin has put it: “the construction of a second reality comes from a desire to have a beyond in this life.”<sup>75</sup> Barry Cooper has noted the idea that “the impossibility or untenability” of one’s situation inspires one to honestly believe that the constitution of being as ordained by God can be transfigured.<sup>76</sup> This idea is often inspired by the condition of man’s existence in the world. Men are not all kings, and many lives are

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<sup>74</sup> Cooper, Barry. *New Political Religions; or An Analysis of Modern Terrorism*. University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London: 2004. pg. 43

<sup>75</sup> Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans*, pg. 255; Cooper, *New Political Religions*, pg. 44

<sup>76</sup> Cooper, *New Political Religions*, pg. 44

lived in depravity. Thus the depraved find themselves particularly attracted to the promises of a second reality in which that depravity is promised to transfigure into a utopian condition. It is a dishonest position, however, because the constitution of being as ordained by God cannot be changed. Such an attempt bears consequences not proclaimed by the gnostic thinker. Cooper argues: “Revolutionaries and others who indulge in the practice do so for a very specific purpose: to screen the ‘first reality’ of common experience from view or to put the common experience of reality into shadow . . . this second act does not abolish the frictions in response to which it was initially undertaken, but rather enhances them ‘into a general conflict between the world of his imagination and the real world.’”<sup>77</sup>

This conflict culminates in rebellious action; there is an existing order against which such hopes must react. Political rebellions conflict with the nature of the political regime which is the cause of the rebel’s grievance. In the case of metaphysical rebellion, however, revolutionaries overlook the stipulations of Locke’s formulation of the social contract and are not inspired by the nature of the regime that their political action displaces. Depravity is only an excuse for political violence if there is a political actor that can be charged as responsible for the depraved condition. In essence, the condition of the metaphysical rebel often becomes an alibi for the crimes his rebellion motivates him to commit. And indeed, revolutionary violence directed against a political ruler who has done nothing tyrannical to inspire it should be understood as a crime.

Therefore, the ideologues themselves and not merely the gnostic thinker can be identified as undertaking the psychological progression of metaphysical rebellion.

Although metaphysical rebellion begins as an often innocent derailment from the given

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<sup>77</sup> Cooper, *New Political Religions*, pgs. 44-45

order of existence, such as a question concerning the depravity of one's condition, the rebel persists in his derailment in spite of the fact that his convictions become acknowledged, as a result of the discovery of the criminality inspired by such convictions, to be false. The consequence of this progression is the revelation of the derailment as both fallacious and evil in nature. As Voegelin formulates it, the process is applicable to both the deceiver and the deceived, and progresses from innocent, but wrong, action through the realization of the evil nature of such wrong behavior:

“1) For the surface act it will be convenient to retain the term Nietzsche used, ‘deception.’ But in content this action does not necessarily differ from a wrong judgment arising from another motive than the gnostic. It could also be an ‘error.’ It becomes a deception only because of the psychological context.

2) In the second stage the thinker becomes aware of the untruth of his assertion or speculation, but persists in it in spite of this knowledge. Only because of his awareness of the untruth does the action become a deception. And because of the persistence in the communication of what are recognized to be false arguments, it also becomes an ‘intellectual swindle.’

3) In the third stage the revolt against God is revealed and recognized to be the motive of the swindle. With the continuation of the intellectual swindle in full knowledge of the motive of revolt the deception further becomes ‘demonic mendacity.’<sup>78</sup>

As the deceiver performs the “intellectual swindle” with the construction of his system, the rabble perpetuates the swindle by continuing to indulge in the second reality even after criminal measures are required to complete the construction. Thus, once criminal action is undertaken for the purpose of political achievement the ideological rabble can no longer claim innocence as a result of being deceived. Undertaking criminal action, such as political violence perpetrated against innocent people, reveals to any conscionable person the mendacity of such action. Therefore, the “demonic mendacity”

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<sup>78</sup> Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pgs. 25-26

underscoring metaphysical rebellion is revealed by the willingness of metaphysical rebels to condone evil atrocities. For them, the action and the goal of the action supersede the moral implications of such behavior.

Voegelin's appeal that "there is no right to be stupid" is simply the assertion of each man's responsibility for attuning himself to the moral ends which inform man of such concepts as criminality.<sup>79</sup> By stupidity Voegelin means "that a man, because of his loss of reality, is not in a position to rightly orient his action in the world."<sup>80</sup> To further identify stupidity with immoral behavior, Voegelin coins the term "spiritual illiteracy," which is "caused by the loss of contact with determinate sectors of reality . . . giving rise to stupidity in thinking and in action."<sup>81</sup> The sector of reality from which the spiritually illiterate man's faculty has departed is that sector informed by reason (*nous*) and "the desire to know." At the level of human conscience, therefore, the murder of innocents for political purposes is a stupid thing to do because it ignores the moral implications of that act. Indeed, most stupid acts result in unfortunate consequences for the fool(s) who committed them. A review of the physical and spiritual repercussions of indulging in gnostic speculation and metaphysical rebellion will consequently conclude this chapter, as the pragmatic implications of metaphysical rebellion aid in the division of it from political rebellion.

The spiritual consequence of the construction of second reality dream-worlds is moral disorientation. This is what Voegelin implies by the term "spiritual illiteracy." Metaphorical support for this position can be found in Plato's cave dwellers. The fixation with the shadows, the second reality this represents, prevents the cave dwellers

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<sup>79</sup> Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans*, pg. 107

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 89

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 97

from realizing the truth beyond the cave. Thus the corrupted movement of the spirit can be understood as one of descent into the acceptance of the truth commensurable with the shadows of the cave, as Voegelin's connotation infers: "the gnostic movement of the spirit does not lead to the erotic opening of the soul, but rather to the deepest reach of persistence in the deception, where revolt against God is revealed to be its motive and purpose."<sup>82</sup> The experience found at the "deepest reaches" is essentially of a soul closed to the Question. This soul is not conscious of that ground which informs moral behavior; he consequently cannot distinguish, even in the most seemingly blatant cases, right from wrong action. Jack F. Matlock Jr., former U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, has illustrated both the experiential reality and the spiritual consequences of such a revolt proliferating into political concretion:

"... imposition of the adopted ideology on all, and forcible suppression of questioning, not only of the ideology itself but of the political decisions made in its name by the rulers; development of a quasi-religious cult around the founders and often around the current leaders of the political movement. Dostoevsky would lead us to expect from this an eventual spiritual bankruptcy. And, in fact, evidence is rapidly accumulating that this process is far advanced in those societies where totalitarian political movements have been in power for an extended period of time."<sup>83</sup>

The totalitarian experience insinuates dreadful physical experiences for those affected by it; as Voegelin contends: "the dedivinizing is always followed by a dehumanizing."<sup>84</sup> Camus has called what manifests, experientially for human beings, "the universe of the concentration camp."<sup>85</sup> The concentration camp is the mechanism through which the "prohibition of questions" is maintained. The Question is a formidable obstacle for a gnostic system to overcome; eradicating the men that would pose the

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<sup>82</sup> Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pg. 25

<sup>83</sup> Sandoz, *The Politics of Truth and Other Untimely Essays*, pg. 4

<sup>84</sup> Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans*, pg. 87

<sup>85</sup> Camus, *The Rebel*, pg. 246

Question, therefore, becomes the quintessential tool of totalitarian regimes. Metaphysical rebellion, therefore, is “demonic mendacity” because it does not proliferate as it was purportedly designed. The gnostic thinker’s promise to rid the world of suffering manifests as a utopia speckled with concentration camps.

#### IV

The rebellion against God, as Voegelin notes, is a potentially universal problem: “the temptation to fall from a spiritual height that brings the element of uncertainty into final clarity down into the more solid certainty of world-immanent, sensible fulfillment . . . seems to be a general human problem.”<sup>86</sup> Fortunately for man, spiritual disease is also one for which everyman possess the remedy; as Plato has put it: “this power is in the soul of each.”<sup>87</sup> The workings of consciousness therefore prove a proactive antagonist against the workings of gnosticism; in Voegelin’s words: “No one is obliged to take part in the spiritual crises of society; on the contrary, everyone is obliged to avoid this folly and live his life in order. Our presentation of the phenomenon, therefore, will at the same time furnish the remedy for it through therapeutic analysis.”<sup>88</sup>

This analysis of rebellion will consequently materialize as a study of choice and deliberation – as an analysis of man’s being in relation to the Question. When man is attuned to the Question, he rebels against tyranny despite threats to his mundane being. When man is not, he rebels because of conjectured improvements to his mundane circumstance. Political and metaphysical rebellions can therefore be distinguished based upon motivating factors. Both forms of rebellion are driven by dissatisfaction with condition. The grounding of dissatisfaction, however, varies dependent upon the form of

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<sup>86</sup> Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pg. 87

<sup>87</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, pg. 197 (518c)

<sup>88</sup> Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pg. 17

rebellion. The ground is found either in eternal or in worldly affairs, in an open attunement to consciousness or in a closed-minded delving for satiety, and juxtaposes the form of rebellion undertaken. Political rebellions are grounded in an attunement to metaphysical affairs – in man’s being conscious of his conscience; metaphysical rebellions are grounded in an exclusive attunement to worldly affairs. The nature of rebellion is therefore exposed by the reasoning of the man who chooses ‘no.’

The study will be conducted in two sections. In chapter one an analysis of Dostoevsky will highlight the characteristics of metaphysical rebellion. We will be attuned to the dream-worlds created by metaphysical rebels, as well as to the deceptions undertaken to attempt to bring the dreams into reality. Additionally, an eye will be turned towards the spiritual and physical consequences of metaphysical rebellion. In chapter two an analysis of political rebellion will be undertaken to illustrate how both men and societies can recover from the experience of metaphysical rebellion. The Czech experience as told by Václav Havel will be the setting of this analysis. The focus of chapter two will be the ways in which men individually reject the tenets of a metaphysical rebellion, as well as on the ways that individual rejections can crescendo into a politically effective movement.

The analysis as whole will show the interrelation between the two phenomena. It will show the temptation of the truth proclaimed from the cave, but also the consequences of adhering to it. Because of these consequences, if metaphysical rebellion has proliferated in a society as a derivative of an infective political order, it can make men aware of their consciences and inspire political rebellion. These consequences and the response they can inspire argue for and suggest the unchangeable nature of the truth.

William Faulkner once wrote that “there is only one truth, and it covers all things that touch the heart.”<sup>89</sup> As something of an innate response to metaphysical rebellion, political rebellion affirms Faulkner’s observation that that the truth cannot be affected by the wills of men.

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<sup>89</sup> Faulkner, William. *Three Famous Short Novels*, “The Bear.” Vintage Books, New York: 1961. pg. 250

## Chapter One: Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky

Metaphysical rebellion and the consequences thereof are a theme of Dostoevsky's work from *Notes from Underground* on. The philosophical arguments to be found in his mature work are informed by the author's life, and in particular, by his own affiliation with metaphysical rebellion in his younger days. Through his experience, Dostoevsky came to understand both the spiritual and experiential consequences of indulging in the idea that "everything is lawful."<sup>90</sup> Consequently this chapter will focus on connecting the spiritual process of metaphysical rebellion with the personal and political experiences it engenders. Dostoevsky's arguments are largely considered prophetic; the question which provides the essential premise of his mature works, "which is better, a cheap happiness or a lofty suffering?," tormented the twentieth century.<sup>91</sup> A further consideration of this chapter, therefore, will be the connection of the personal experience of metaphysical rebellion with the political experience of totalitarianism, as our debt to Dostoevsky is recognizable in the footprints of Hitler and Stalin; it is due to the emphasis placed within his question. Dostoevsky incorporates into his query the qualities of debauchery and divinity; he leads his reader to question the value of a "cheap happiness" by persistently leading his audience to the end of that philosophy.

A common introduction to Dostoevsky comes with his classic, *The Brothers Karamazov*. One who is struck by the moral integrity of Alyosha is in some ways surprised, and in other ways not surprised, to learn that the young hero was born in the mind of a man who came up "under the dominance of romantic 'daydreaming,' the

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<sup>90</sup> Dostoevsky, Fyodor, trans. By Garnett, Constance. *The Brothers Karamazov*. W. W. Norton & Co., New York: 1976. pg. 244

<sup>91</sup> Dostoevsky, Fyodor. Trans. By Coulson, Jessie. *Notes from Underground*. Penguin Books, London: 2003. pg. 122

idealism of Schiller, and the French utopian socialism.”<sup>92</sup> Such an experience engenders the idea that “everything is lawful,” which is characteristic of Alyosha’s brother, Ivan. It is from the passion with which Ivan defends his metaphysical rebellion that the reader suspects the author himself had experienced the ideal of defending innocents. But it is from both Ivan’s Grand Inquisitor and his ultimate insanity that the reader understands Dostoevsky’s rejection of the position for its logical end: the defense of murder and the dismissal of justice.

Consequently one cannot imagine a mature Dostoevsky daydreaming of utopia. The experiences of Dostoevsky’s life inform this argument. His personal encounter with socialistic fantasies, his descent into nihilism in their defense and turn from them in Siberia are not only essential to an understanding of his famous works, but they also provide a quintessential example of the philosophical derailment into and recovery from gnosticism. His life is a testament to his philosophy, and must be understood before his work is discussed.

## I

The daydreams of the young Dostoevsky fit naturally into the revolutionary undercurrents of St. Petersburg in the 1840s. Mochulsky affirms:

“the transition from romantic idealism to socialism was perfectly natural. The young writer lived in an atmosphere of mystical expectations, of faith in the immanent approach of the golden age and in the complete transfiguration of life. . . . Socialistic utopianism appeared to the generation of the forties as a continuation of Christianity, as the attainment of evangelical truth. It was the translation of the Christian Apocalypse into contemporary social terms.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Mochulsky, Konstantin, trans. By Minihan, Michael. A., *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work*. Princeton University Press: 1967. pg. 114

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 115

The attempt to attain evangelical truth in the immanent world, however, foments gnostic ideals. It relies upon “the belief that salvation from the evil of the world is possible” and “that this salvational act is possible through man’s own effort.” The misplacement of “evangelical truth” as, in Marxian language, “anthropological truth” forced Dostoevsky and other socialists to unwittingly embark upon a course of metaphysical rebellion. In the life of the young Dostoevsky this progression is evident in his involvement with the Petrashevsky circle beginning in the spring of 1846, and in his affiliation with the more radical Belinsky the next year. His eventual split with Belinsky provided the foundation for the maturation of his philosophy.

The Petrashevsky circle was a group that Mochulsky categorizes as “philanthropic liberals,” bearing marks of socialists, seeking “to cover the whole of the impoverished earth with palaces, fruits, and to adorn it with flowers.”<sup>94</sup> But the movement had not slipped into the materialistic socialism one finds in Belinsky, rather it maintained the exalted aims of constructing the golden age on the foundation of universal moral integrity, of a mankind dedicated to loving one another. At a gathering of Petrashevists, Konstantin Mochulsky tells us that D. Akhsharumov said:

“And here were to be found men with an ardent love for all people, for the whole of mankind, and likewise, *for God*, who dedicated their entire lives in an attempt to discover an ordering of society wherein all would be rich, happy, and content; where our very life, its every day, hour, and minutes, would be a thanksgiving hymn to the *Creator*. . . .”<sup>95</sup>

In this discourse, while God is exalted and some degree of integrity is maintained, the first signs of bad faith or material predilection emerge; it is hoped that all be rich as well as happy. On another occasion K.I. Timkovsky hoped to “demonstrate in a purely scientific fashion the divinity of Jesus Christ, the necessity of his coming into the world

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 116

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

for the purpose of salvation, and His birth of a Virgin.”<sup>96</sup> Whereas it is one thing to hope for salvation and to have faith in Jesus, it is another, and perhaps more materialistic thing, to find it necessary to clarify the issue in “purely scientific” terms.

Belinsky’s influence on Dostoevsky was to radicalize this philosophy.

Dostoevsky first met Belinsky in the spring of 1845, though their friendship did not kindle until the spring of 1847, at which time Belinsky helped to drive the views of the young Dostoevsky to the ideological left.<sup>97</sup> Sandoz has noted that in Belinsky’s philosophy there is an attention to practical action which would appeal to a member of the Petrashevsky circle: “like Petrashevsky and other contemporary revolutionists, and most notably like Karl Marx, Belinsky was not so much interested in abstract speculation as he was in concrete praxis.”<sup>98</sup> In Belinsky the exalted aims of the Petrashevsky are compromised by the necessity to act upon them, motivated by the gnostic belief that salvation from the world can be brought about by men’s doing:

“. . . And that will be effected through *sociality*. And hence there is no object more noble and lofty than to contribute towards its progress and development. But it is absurd to imagine that this could happen by itself, with the aid of time, without violent changes, without bloodshed. Men are so insensate that they must forcibly be led to happiness. And of what significance is the blood of thousands compared to the degradation and suffering of millions. Indeed: *fiat justitia, pereat mundus!*”<sup>99</sup>

In the intention to take the forces of nature into the hands of man, the intellectual pursuits of the revolutionaries overstep the bounds of reality; this attempt compromises the existing structure of being. The attempt to rectify the situation is executed via a gnostic system, founded upon the idea that a change in human nature can be enacted through an

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* 115

<sup>97</sup> Sandoz, Ellis *Political Apocalypse: A Study of Dostoevsky’s Grand Inquisitor*. Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge: 1971. pg. 9

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 14

<sup>99</sup> quoted in Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse*, pg. 16

historical process and that the gnostic himself can provide a formula for achieving this goal. Sandoz calls this formula for action the “pivotal ideological conception of Belinsky.”<sup>100</sup> But Belinsky’s system is constructed on the qualification that “the blood of thousands” will be required for man to “forcibly be led to happiness.” In Belinsky murder must be condoned for the sake of the cause, and the once idyllic notions of the Petrashevsky are corrupted with the advice that happiness lies on the other side of murder. The appeal, perhaps once sincere and for the sake of humanity, is demeaned because it is built at the cost of that for which the system was constructed.

Dostoevsky admits in *The Diary of a Writer* (1873) that at the time of their acquaintanceship he had “passionately accepted” all Belinsky had to offer.<sup>101</sup> In the acceptance of Belinsky, Dostoevsky accepts the central critique that would later emerge in his mature work: the paradox of condoning evil for the salvation of mankind. An understanding of “cheap happiness” and the truth it reveals of the nature of “lofty suffering” are admittedly lacking in the early experiences of Dostoevsky, yet the foggy space between reality and imagination can lead man to found his suppositions on false premises. Indeed, the passionate acceptances of such premises do not lead into the salvation of mankind. Dostoevsky would learn this lesson through fervently attempting to bring about such salvation.

Dostoevsky involved himself in a radical clique of the Petrashevsky known as the Durov circle. The true purpose of the meetings of this group is unknown, but it is generally speculated that it was to establish a secret printing press and thereby to inspire the serfs to mobilize into revolution. The involvement of Dostoevsky in the circle

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 14

<sup>101</sup> Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, pg. 119

indicates that, in his youth, it was not merely in philosophical speculations that Belinsky would influence Dostoevsky, but in concrete action.

It was, however, concrete action which would lead to the circumstances under which he would abandon the convictions he had developed under Belinsky's influence. Dostoevsky drew attention to himself from the authorities by reading a copy of Belinsky's *Letter to Gogol* to the Petrashevsky circle. The passivity of the Petrashevsky's attention to praxis inspired Dostoevsky to affiliate himself with the more radical Durov circle. Sandoz writes that "the stimulus of these associations helped to educate Dostoevsky and also led him to isolate and reject the central metaphysical tenet of positivism, materialism, and radical socialism: namely, atheism."<sup>102</sup> While this is true, it is only a partial truth. It was not the experience or affiliation with the Petrashevsky or Durov circles, or even the influence of Belinsky himself that would inspire Dostoevsky to turn on his youthful daydreams, but the ten years spent behind bars in which he was able to see the logic of his youthful philosophy through to its end.

Dostoevsky was arrested, along with Petrashevsky and thirty-two other members of his circle, on April 22, 1849, and brought upon the following charges:

"Retired Lieutenant Dostoevsky for having taken part in criminal designs, having circulated a letter by the writer Belinsky which was filled with impertinent expressions against the Orthodox Church and the sovereign power and for having attempted, together with others, to circulate works against the government through means of a private printing press, is to be stripped of all the rights owing to his station, and to be exiled to penal servitude in a fortress for eight years."<sup>103</sup>

Although this was the sentence as handed down by Nikolai I, he had stipulated that the criminals be led to believe they were sentenced to death. Only moments before he thought his death was to come, Dostoevsky was informed that his sentence had been

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<sup>102</sup> Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse*, pg. 11

<sup>103</sup> Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, pg. 141

commuted to a prison term. He wrote to his brother, within hours of that experience, and the knowledge that Siberia awaited:

“Brother, I’m not depressed and haven’t lost spirit. Life everywhere is life, life is in ourselves and not in the external. There will be people near me, and to be a human among human beings, and remain one forever, no matter what misfortunes befall, not to become depressed and not to falter – this is what life is, herein lies its task. I have come to recognize this.”<sup>104</sup>

Mochulsky writes that “the scaffold proved a crucial event in the writer’s life. His life was ‘split in two,’ the past was ended, there began another existence, a ‘rebirth in a new form.’”<sup>105</sup> This new form is assumed in the writings of the mature Dostoevsky.

Although his life may have been split in 1849 he would sit in a prison cell for years thereafter, and the toll of that sentence would allow the philosophical depth of the intensely creative genius to unfold into a variegated but persistent affirmation of the value of life in the face of suffering. To live is to suffer as well as it is many other things, and therein a “lofty suffering” emerges as the better choice against a “cheap happiness” founded on the attempted negation of certain ineradicable aspects of life itself. The happiness is cheap because it is incomplete; it does not fulfill the whole range of human experience. The happiness of the whole may not be utopian like the one a gnostic system might attempt to create, but all humans suffer sometimes. The happiness of the whole range of human nature expresses itself as deference to the Question and the open acceptance of the Answer given. The attempt to change the fundamental experience of humanity is the attempt to change the Answer to the Question, to arrange the existence of things differently and therefore to deny God as the Creator. In this denial, however, man

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 142

only finds that the responsibility inherent in adopting the role of Creator for himself leads into greater suffering.

Dostoevsky realized this truth in his dark cell, and it is nowhere more evident than in the example of Ivan Karamazov. No one loves life, and “the sticky leaves,” more than Ivan.<sup>106</sup> Ivan is willing to negate God in order to make the whole of mankind happy. But he cannot escape the logical disjunction of his philosophy, that “everything is lawful.” If everything is permitted then murder is permitted all the same, and the suffering of innocents against which he is avowed must be condoned in its turn. This realization, brought about by the actions of Smerdyakov, drives Ivan insane.

The intoxication of Ivan’s arguments is juxtaposed by the mystical naturalism of Zosima and the moral integrity it inspires in Alyosha. The polarity between the embodied ideals of Ivan and Alyosha is central to Dostoevsky’s thought, and to our dilemma as whole. At the perigee is the appeal of paradise in the immanent world. At the apogee lies the less immanently appealing recognition of suffering, the acknowledgement of moral obligations, individual responsibility and the understanding that paradise is not of this world. The intoxication of the perigee lies in that it promises to manifest the apogee onto itself – the apogee’s logical polar juxtaposition – although the very essence of the apogee is that it opposes the perigee. The appeal does not make sense and consequently is bound to fail to become manifest in a conscionable and practicable institution. Dostoevsky’s purpose within these counterpoints, therefore, is to encourage the reader towards the apogee.

Thus in Dostoevsky appears the prophetic and desperate rebellion against the materialistic socialist creeds of the day, as an affirmation of God’s creation. D.H.

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<sup>106</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 243

Lawrence has written that each time he reads *The Brothers Karamazov* he finds it “more depressing because, alas, more drearily true to life . . . it is a deadly, devastating summing up, unanswerable because borne out by the long experience of humanity.”<sup>107</sup> If it is depressing it is at least laudable science. Recalling Aristotle’s dedication to truth despite predilection, Dostoevsky’s “unanswerable” depiction is so because it is an honest account of the human experience. The appeal to “lofty suffering” is in the end a qualitatively different appeal than that made by materialistic socialism, and the distinction lies in a dedication to man’s conscious experience as man. The recognition that the utopian dreams of his youth were flawed by a theoretical fallacy provides the honest, self-critical and humble condition upon which Dostoevsky’s “therapeutic analysis” is founded.

Dostoevsky’s literature is the medium of his criticism of metaphysical rebellion. It will be examined relative to Eric Voegelin’s insights on modern gnosticism and consciousness. The analysis of Dostoevsky, drawing from the selected works, *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Crime and Punishment*, will depict the descent into metaphysical rebellion from the perspectives of gnostic thinker and ideological rabble, sketching the end form of metaphysical rebellion to be totalitarianism. An argument will be made depicting the essence of such institutions as evil, relying upon the mental experiences Dostoevsky conveys. With the recognition of evil comes either the turn from the beliefs a metaphysical rebel might hold, or the acceptance of evil by that man. The characters of individuals who make both choices will be analyzed, revealing the motivating force which drives such a choice to be the ground of attunement, either immanent or transcendent, to which an individual is directed. The choice to turn from evil relies upon insights from the selected works, as well as an aside about the antihero of

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<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 829

*Notes from Underground*, which identifies an attunement to the transcendent ground as founded in the ineradicable dictates of man's conscience. This turn thrusts the conscionable individual into political rebellion against a domineering totalitarian regime that had inculcated in him the beliefs that he now understands to be false. Hence the analysis to follow will sketch the cumulative process of metaphysical rebellion: from the initial acceptance of it, into depravity, and finally into the point at which a rebellion is identifiably evil and man must choose either to adhere to its tenets or to vacillate from his positions. Dostoevsky reveals through the consequences of this choice that man can always change the way he looks at the world, even if the world itself cannot be affected. The need to rent the world, and the interminable misery such an urge delivers, can be eradicated by breaking the way man thinks of himself.

The argument has been broken down in a manner consistent with Voegelin's theories of gnosticism and of consciousness. It begins with the dissatisfaction and speculative construction of the gnostic thinker, proceeds through the disaffection and gnostic tendencies of the ideological rabble. The consequences of the metaphysical rebellion are then discussed, followed by an analysis of the discovery of consciousness as the impetus of the turn away from gnostic beliefs. The argument concludes with an analysis of the way in which such a turn might occur, through the example of the antihero. The antihero reveals the immanent problems inherent to political rebellion, leading into the thought of Václav Havel.

## II

The first indicative attribute of metaphysical rebellion is that of dissatisfaction with one's situation. In the case of the gnostic thinker a second reality arises from a

theoretical quibble with the nature of existence. For the ideological rabble it arises with the indulgence in a second reality prompted by one's condition. The indulgence in a second reality prompts the rabble to accept the quibble raised by the gnostic thinker.

Ivan Karamazov is a metaphysical rebel who displays characteristics of a gnostic thinker. His rebellion is driven by a theoretical quibble with the nature of man's existence as man. He does not rebel against the experience of any regime but against the world at large; Ivan proclaims: "in the final result I don't accept this world of God's, and, although I know it exists, I don't accept it at all."<sup>108</sup> Ivan knows of the tenets of existence, "it's not God I don't respect," but he denies the conditions of those tenets nonetheless, "only I most respectfully return to him the ticket."<sup>109</sup> Ivan, however, remains a human being in affirmation of something. He does not liken himself to a rebel; when Alyosha accuses him of being in rebellion Ivan retorts: "Rebellion? I am sorry you call it that. One can hardly live in rebellion and I want to live."<sup>110</sup> His rebellion is driven like all rebellions, against dissatisfaction with condition and the hope for a better way of living. But the distinction between metaphysical and political rebellion lies in the grounds upon which dissatisfaction is founded, and the foundations of Ivan's condition qualify as metaphysical rebellion.

The suffering of innocent children motivates Ivan's revolt. Although suffering has forever been inherent to God's world, it is suffering against which Ivan rebels: "If all must suffer to pay for the eternal harmony, what have children to do with it, tell me, please? It's beyond all comprehension why they should suffer, and why they should pay

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 216

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 226

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

for the harmony.”<sup>111</sup> As Ivan remains in affirmation of something, his plight is to develop a means by which suffering can be eradicated from the human experience. His rejection of the “entrance ticket” is the rejection of an “eternal harmony.”<sup>112</sup> He seeks, therefore, a worldly harmony. He tells Alyosha:

“Surely I haven’t suffered, simply that I, my crimes and my sufferings, may manure the soil of the future harmony for somebody else. I want to see with my own eyes the hind lie down with the lion and the victim rise up and embrace his murderer. I want to be there when everyone suddenly understands what it has all been for.”<sup>113</sup>

The immanent attunement of his disposition is clear and confessed: “what pulls me up here is that I can’t accept that harmony. And while I am on earth, I make haste to take my own measures . . . I hasten to protect myself and so I renounce the higher harmony altogether.”<sup>114</sup> In order to protect himself and realize a worldly harmony, Ivan must develop a system for bringing about such a reality.

Ivan’s system is designed to restructure the nature of man’s existence so that the suffering of innocent children cannot occur. This system is reliant upon the development of a “new man.”<sup>115</sup> The design is recounted to Ivan by a hallucination of the devil:

“Men will unite to take from life all it can give, but only for joy and happiness in the present world. Man will be lifted up with a spirit of divine Titanic pride and the man-god will appear. For hour to hour extending his conquest of nature infinitely by his will and his science, man will feel such lofty joy from hour to hour in doing it that it will make up for all his old dreams of the joys of heaven. Everyone will know that he is mortal and will accept death proudly and serenely like a God. His pride will teach him that it’s useless for him to repine at life’s being a moment, and he will love his brother without need of reward.”<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 225

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 226

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 225

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 616

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

The realization of this experience is, however, reliant upon a qualitative change in the nature of mankind; the devil pits “the new man” or “the man-god” against “the old-slave man.”<sup>117</sup> The new man’s realization is founded upon the dictum “all things are lawful.”<sup>118</sup> The new man must be aware of this dictum and disregard any recognition of obligations to the transcendent ground of truth. New man “may lightly overstep all the barriers of the old morality of the old slave-man, if necessary.”<sup>119</sup> In order to do this however, man must assume the responsibilities of God: “There is no law for God. Where God stands, the place is holy. Where I stand will be at once the foremost place . . . ‘all things are lawful’ and that’s the end of it!”<sup>120</sup> Although Ivan remains a human being in affirmation of something, his affirmation is one that negates the transcendent ground. The affirmation of Ivan’s man-god rests upon the abnegation of moral obligation. Innocent children do not suffer because the new man has no conception of guilt or innocence.

Ivan develops a means for creating the new man, and conveys the idea to his brother in the chapter entitled “The Grand Inquisitor.” It is a story envisioning the conditions upon which the new man can be realized in historical reality. As the moral obligations of the old slave-man inhibit this realization, the Grand Inquisitor develops a political prognostication in which such obligations can be overstepped by erasing them from the realm of man’s conscience. Thus the Inquisitor’s purpose is gnostic systemization; it disregards empirical evidence and speculates upon the possible nature of

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

a transfigured man. The system can be revealed as speculative *visa vie* attempts within it to conceal the obligatory constraints of morality on action.

The Inquisitor distinguishes between worldly and eternal goods. His system is designed to make man happy by conditioning him only to care for the worldly goods. He argues that man cannot be fulfilled by transcendent duties because man is naturally endowed with mundane desires that conflict with those duties. In his view, eternal goods are mere obstacles to worldly well-being. He argues to Christ:

“Instead of taking men’s freedom from them, Thou didst make it greater than ever! Didst Thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil? Nothing is more seductive for man than his freedom of conscience, but nothing is a greater cause of suffering. And behold, instead of giving a firm foundation for setting the conscience of man at rest forever, Thou didst choose what was utterly beyond the strength of all men, acting as though Thou didst not love them at all – Thou who didst come to give Thy life for them! Instead of taking possession of men’s freedom, Thou didst increase it, and burdened the spiritual kingdom of mankind with its sufferings forever.”<sup>121</sup>

Because of man’s fallen nature, because “man was created a rebel,” freedom of conscience confounds the conditions of men’s happiness.<sup>122</sup> In a spiritual sense, man can never be happy because he can never cease to wrong his brethren. As Father Zosima puts it: “in truth we are each responsible to all for all, it’s only that men don’t know this. If they knew it, the world would be a paradise at once.”<sup>123</sup> Freedom of conscience is confounding because man is forced to live a life in which he necessarily commits atrocities from which springs spiritual suffering. The Inquisitor argues that given the nature of man, happiness will only be attained by a few in making choices consistent with

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 235

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 232

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 277

the freedom represented by Christ. He asks of Christ: “And how are the other weak ones to blame, because they could not endure what the strong have endured?”<sup>124</sup>

The book of John tells us that the freedom of Christ is discovered through the revelation of truth: “you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”<sup>125</sup> Although the truth makes man free, it does so in a qualified manner and only in relation to the bondage analogized in Plato’s cave. It attunes man to the “difficult truth” rendered upon the foundation of “a desire to know.” Christ’s freedom provides liberation from the unalienable suffering of mundane existence, but not because it eliminates the suffering inherent to that existence; it provides freedom from the intoxicating hold of mundane satiety by making worldly goods categorically inferior to the truth realized through an attunement to the transcendent ground. As the Inquisitor frames it, such an attunement places a grave burden on man. His mundane predilection is both natural and necessary. Man is an organic being which must eat and drink; an attunement to eternal truth is too much to ask of a species so easily driven to distraction.

The Inquisitor therefore “corrects” the Lord’s work.<sup>126</sup> God’s solution provides comfort to mundane suffering by attuning man’s interest elsewhere. It does not, however, do away with such suffering. It creates additional suffering because it adds the element of spiritual suffering to the inevitable mundane suffering. In order to correct the Lord’s work the Inquisitor’s system attempts to eradicate spiritual suffering by ignoring those interests, therefore allowing man to fulfill his mundane desires. Ivan’s dictum that “everything is lawful” provides the foundation for this correction. By providing freedom in an unqualified sense, man is released from the bounds of moral obligation and eternal

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 237

<sup>125</sup> Ed. Scofield, C.I, *The Scofield Study Bible*. Oxford University Press, New York: 1996. John 8:32 (KJV)

<sup>126</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 237

truth. He is, however, returned to a state of bondage in which the demands of his worldly urgings become his prison. Metaphysical rebellion delivers man into a state of mundane absolutism which, lacking attunement to eternal obligations, places man's sole interest in the fulfillment of worldly drives. "Give bread, and man will worship . . .," the Inquisitor declares.<sup>127</sup>

The end result of the Inquisitor's design is professed to be "the universal happiness of mankind . . . one unanimous and harmonious anthill . . . a universal state."<sup>128</sup>

His system provides a way in which the universal salvation of mankind can be theoretically achieved. This design, however, is constructed around the obfuscation of the transcendent ground of truth. Consistent with the "prohibition of questions" and "intellectual swindle" that Eric Voegelin has identified to be inherent to gnostic constructions, are the deceptions undertaken in support of Ivan's design. The Inquisitor understands that if he is to found a universal state of mankind driven by mundane attunement there can be no questions regarding the existence of eternal truth. The mystery of the eternal realm must be somehow replaced or duplicated in immanent terms.

The Inquisitor states:

"They will marvel at us and look on us as gods, because we are ready to endure the freedom which they have found so dreadful and to rule over them – so awful it will seem to them to be free. But we shall tell them that we are Thy servants and rule them in Thy name. We shall deceive them again, for we will not let Thee come to us again. That deception will be our suffering, for we shall be forced to lie."<sup>129</sup>

A similarity between the Inquisitor's design and Marx's gnostic system arises in the proclamation of god as inherent to man, and in deceptions perpetrated in order to conceal

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 235

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 238

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 234

this fallacy.<sup>130</sup> Marxian atheism is not atheism per se, rather it simply claims that God cannot be questioned: “[Existence begins] from the practically and theoretically sensuous consciousness of man and of nature as the essence.”<sup>131</sup> Yet because he understands nature as developed through “history” and “industry”, whatever man may will to create of nature may be actualized, as existence begins within man himself.<sup>132</sup> In making such a proclamation, Marx has effectively prohibited questions regarding a misplacement of the ground without, likewise, denying the existence of that ground. He claims to be clairvoyant concerning the essence of nature, which he has placed in man, but will add that his clairvoyance cannot be questioned.

The Inquisitor, like Marx, misplaces the ground of being in anthropological devices and proclaims such devices to be in accord with eternal truth. The Inquisitor speaks of this misplacement as an active concealment of the transcendent ground: “Didst thou not often say then, ‘I will make you free’? . . . But let me tell Thee that now, today, people are more persuaded than ever that they have perfect freedom, yet they have brought that freedom to us and laid it humbly at our feet. But that has been our doing.”<sup>133</sup> This deception is perpetrated visa vie the prohibition of questions. The Inquisitor states to Christ: “We will not let thee come to us again.”<sup>134</sup> The Inquisitor’s unanimous harmony is consequent only of the denial of eternal truth. His worldly harmony dissipates if the eternal truth is considered, breaking down by his very own distinction between strong souls and “weak ones . . . [that] could not endure what the strong have

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<sup>130</sup> see Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse*, pgs. 116-117.

<sup>131</sup> quoted in Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse*, pg. 117

<sup>132</sup> Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pg. 16

<sup>133</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 232

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 240

endured.”<sup>135</sup> Because the Inquisitor knows such a truth to exist, his system is a lie dependent upon a deception which negates the transcendent ground of that truth. His fraud is an “intellectual swindle” because it knowingly vitiates the true human experience. The consequences of his deception are ideological followers willing to murder for the sake of the anthill. With a bold face, he tells Jesus Christ: “tomorrow Thou shalt see that obedient flock who at a sign from me will hasten to heap up the hot cinders about the pile on which I shall burn Thee for coming to hinder us. . . . Tomorrow I shall burn thee.”<sup>136</sup>

### III

The gnostic thinker’s deception results in the institution of a totalitarian regime as revealed by the product of the Grand Inquisitor’s design: a rabble willing to kill anyone that disagrees with or does not conform to the dictates of the ideology spewed by the gnostic thinker. Totalitarianism, however, is wholly dependent upon this “obedient flock” or ideological rabble. Smerdyakov represents this rabble; he acts upon Ivan’s ravings. He kills Ivan’s father, Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov, and justifies his crime to Ivan in the following manner:

“I did dream of it, chiefly because ‘all things are lawful.’ That was quite right what you taught me, for you talked a lot to me about that. For if there’s no everlasting God, there’s no such thing as virtue, and there’s no need of it. You were right there. So that’s how I looked at it.”<sup>137</sup>

Smerdyakov’s disillusionment was derived from the “dream of it” he made for himself. This dream constitutes the condition upon which the gnostic thinker’s deception creates an ideological rabble inclined to the gnostic’s system. The idea that “all things are lawful” is one that is easier to instill in those whose worldly necessities are wanting. In

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 235

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 241

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 599

the ideological rabble the ‘children suffer’ of the gnostic thinker is replaced by an ‘I suffer.’ Smerdyakov killed and stole from Ivan’s father because, “I did have an idea of beginning a new life. . . .”<sup>138</sup> Dostoevsky develops this tendency of the desperate with greater lucidity in *Crime and Punishment*, through the character Raskolnikov.

Raskolnikov’s rebellion arises from the “impossibility or untenability” presented by his condition, leading him to misplace the ground of his actions in the mundane realm. Unlike the gnostic thinker’s theoretical rebellion, the ideological rabble is moved by a proposition to which they themselves can relate. The structure of *Crime and Punishment* identifies Raskolnikov with the rebellion of the ideological rabble; he is persuaded by a series of events in his own life to adopt a role akin to Ivan’s new men. Unlike Ivan his rebellion is not grounded in gnostic speculation but in the adoption of gnostic ideas offered from various sources. Raskolnikov’s choice to adopt the idea, as Ivan thought of it, that man should “lightly overstep all the barriers of the old morality of the old slave-man, if necessary,” is reinforced by the dire situation of his own life. His personal situation leads him to overlook the impossibility of moral bounds; the oversight is made because he is grounded in the fantasy world of a man without barriers.

The novel opens with images of an embittered young man, alienated from happiness by the depravity of his condition: “there was such accumulated bitterness and contempt in the young man’s heart that, in spite of all the fastidiousness of youth, he minded his rags least of all in the street.”<sup>139</sup> He drinks in sordid taverns and the squalor is both unbearable and inescapable. Disdain for the world and his implacable condition therein engender the desire for another world in which to live: “He was so weary after a

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<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Dostoevsky, Fyodor, trans. By. Garnett, Constance, *Crime and Punishment*. Bantam Books, New York: 2003. pg. 3

month of concentrated wretchedness and gloomy excitement that he longed to rest, if only for a moment, in some other world, whatever that might be.”<sup>140</sup> Although unaware of any possibility for salvation from his condition, his understanding of his life as somehow unjust is amplified by his conversation with Marmeladov in the tavern and by the letter received from his mother.

Marmeladov affirms the conviction that “. . . every man must have somewhere to go. Since there are times when one absolutely must go somewhere!”<sup>141</sup> This position is facilitated by the nature of worldly experience, in particular with the unbearable nature of dependence: “In poverty you may still retain your innate nobility of soul, but in beggary – never – no one.”<sup>142</sup> Marmeladov’s predilection for the bottle, however, precludes his ability to provide for his family. But the inability to provide drives his tendency to drink; the paradox his situation presents is the possibility that if man’s mundane necessities were fulfilled then perhaps all would be well, that if man could provide for himself he would not drink himself into buffoonery. Raskolnikov, not unaffected by the conversation, leaves the money in his pocket on Marmeladov’s windowsill as he retires.<sup>143</sup> He has begun the quest to improve man’s material condition. The urgency of the enterprise is heightened by the circumstances surrounding Raskolnikov’s own familial situation.

His mother’s letter conveys the story of his sister’s marriage to Pyotr Petrovitch Luzhin, a distinguished counselor to whom both mother and sister are unwarrantedly and incautiously obsequious. Raskolnikov detects that the promised future generosity of

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 10

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 13

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 12

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 26

Luzhin will not manifest as foreseen by mother and sister, that mother's and sister's happiness depends upon an evil man, thus leaving them no where to go:

“So she is building all her hopes all the time on Mr. Luzhin's generosity . . . till the last moment, they hope for the best and will see nothing wrong, and although they have an inkling of the other side of the picture, yet they won't face the truth till they are forced to; the very thought of it makes them shiver; they thrust the truth away with both hands, until the man they deck out in false colours puts a fool's cap on them with his own hands.”<sup>144</sup>

To make matters worse, his mother additionally places in Luzhin the role of employer for Raskolnikov. The perception of reality as utterly dependent – essentially beggarly and lacking any foreseeable future other than the one in the hands of Luzhin – leads Raskolnikov's fantasy to become necessity:

“His mother's letter had burst on him like a thunderclap. It was clear that he must not now suffer passively, worrying himself over unresolved questions, but that he must do something, do it at once and do it quickly. Anyway he must decide on something, or else. . . . Or throw up life altogether!”<sup>145</sup>

Raskolnikov is thus affected by his dissatisfaction towards his circumstance; his whole effort is from this point focused around the alleviation of his condition.

Although Raskolnikov's rebellion can accurately be described as being against his experience as man, not as citizen, he develops a means through which his attempt can, in his eyes, be validated. The construction of a dream-world provides the inspiration from which Raskolnikov is convinced that the mundane experience of life can be dramatically improved. While it is true that life can be improved, the means of improving it are always qualified. Raskolnikov's attunement is revealed to be unqualified because it is turned towards the ends for which his actions are directed, rather than towards the means by which such ends can be achieved. The construction leads Raskolnikov towards a state

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 44

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 47

of, as Voegelin described it, “spiritual illiteracy.” Moral disorientation becomes evident as the idea of the dream begins to become tenable:

“the difference was that a month ago, yesterday even the thought was a mere dream: but now . . . now it appeared no dream at all, it had taken a new meaning and quite unfamiliar shape, and he suddenly became aware of this himself . . . He felt a hammering in his head, and there was a darkness before his eyes.”<sup>146</sup>

This “hammering” is a consequence of the fact that he must confront the bleak nature of the act he must commit if he is to transfigure his reality as it is imagined. The confrontation is overcome by focusing more upon his end than his means of establishing that end. When planning the crime his mind is not moved by the act itself. Instead, he is driven by the dream-like conception of a transfigured reality that would emerge upon the deed’s execution. As the crime is being devised, the forthcoming reality is envisioned, on one exemplary occasion, to be bucolic and tranquil. This belief is expressed in Raskolnikov’s experience in the countryside:

“The greenness and freshness were at first restful to his weary eyes after the dust of the town and the huge houses that hemmed him in and weighed upon him. Here there were no taverns, no stifling closeness, no stench. But soon these new pleasant sensations passed into morbid irritability. Sometimes he stood still before a brightly painted summer villa standing among green foliage, he gazed through the fence, he saw in the distance smartly dressed women on the verandas and balconies, and children running in the gardens. The flowers especially caught his attention; he gazed at them long than at anything. He was met, too, by luxurious carriages and by men and women on horseback; he watched them with curious eyes. . . .”<sup>147</sup>

The dream reality disjoined from his current condition by this “morbid irritability” allows him to conjure a transfigured world for himself – one characterized by the beautiful scenery and the big houses that depraved men dream of; he yearns for these things but understands that the dreamed transfiguration is not reality. That night he dreams of a mare being thrashed to death, and of being unable to understand the necessity of such

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<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 48

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 56

suffering. He awakes still unconvinced that suffering condones crime, but tempted and contemplating the “darkness and confusion . . . in his soul.”<sup>148</sup> His nightmare of unjustified suffering is leading him to believe that the abatement of physical suffering is perhaps justifiable, regardless of means, because of the horror of suffering. He is now contemplating with all seriousness: “Good God, can it be?”<sup>149</sup>

Raskolnikov’s train of thought is affected by his impressionability. The possibility of mundane fulfillment as a panacea for man’s woes has been reinforced by external influences, such as Marmeladov and his mother, as well as internal influences, namely his own circumstance and his own imagination. The end result is a dream-world in which Raskolnikov can envision the forthcoming bliss of mundane fulfillment.

Although moral obstacles have thus far preempted action, Raskolnikov is finally compelled to act after eavesdropping in a tavern. He hears a group of officers talking, and is moved to the following rationale:

“ . . . fresh young lives are thrown away for want of help by the thousands, on every side! A hundred thousand good deeds could be done and helped, on that old woman’s money which will be buried in a monastery! Hundreds, thousands perhaps, might be set on the right path; dozens of families saved from destitution, from ruin, from vice, from the Lock hospitals – and all with her money. Kill her, take her money and with the help of it devote oneself to the service of humanity and the good of all. What do you think, would not one tiny crime be wiped out by thousands of good deeds? For one life thousands would be saved from corruption and decay. One death, and a hundred lives in exchange – it’s simple arithmetic! Besides, what value has the life of that sickly, stupid, ill-natured old woman in the balance of existence? No more than the life of a louse, of a black-beetle, less in fact because the old woman is doing harm.”<sup>150</sup>

This mendacious logic exposes the cumulative effects of his experience and the influence of his dream-world: it moves Raskolnikov to kill the louse Alyona in the name of humanity. The inherent immorality of the act was concealed from Raskolnikov by the

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 62

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 68

lofty aims that he thought would be realized upon its being done. But when he cannot commit the murder and escape before Lizavetta enters to discover both her sister and her sister's murderer, he kills her too.

The crime, therefore, becomes detectably removed from the proclaimed motive. If his first murder had been consistent with his aim, the second cannot be justified by the same standards. Lizavetta was a character of greater depravity than Raskolnikov, but who happened to possess a humble and respecting soul; if salvation for the suffering could be ascertained by murdering the despicable Alyona, nothing evident was gained for humanity by murdering one who is not only innocent by Raskolnikov's standards, but moreover the intended beneficiary of his crime. Lizavetta was a woman who not only suffered, but by all standards of morality suffered innocently. The loot stolen from Alyona, moreover, was tossed into a river; that with which he was to aid humanity, and for which he had committed his crime, was abandoned. With these developments, the motivating factor could not conceal itself even from the perpetrator. Dostoevsky writes of Raskolnikov: "It seemed to him, he had cut himself off from everyone and from everything at that moment."<sup>151</sup>

The end of metaphysical rebellion reveals itself, therefore, to be fundamentally flawed. Although man can improve his worldly condition, there are bounds to the ways in which change can occur; the effects of murder on man's conscience are not affected by the justificatory rationale of the deed. The attempt to reconstruct reality around the false premise that murder is a pragmatic route to happiness cannot culminate in anything but man's cutting himself off from the world. Instead we arrive at the realization that man's actions can be wrong. Raskolnikov realized that he had indeed "cut himself off from

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 117

everyone and from everything,” and that the rationale for his crime could not change the affects of it upon his conscience. Raskolnikov felt guilty.

#### IV

This feeling delivers man into a situation in which, as Voegelin framed it, “the revolt against God is revealed and recognized to be the motive of the swindle. With the continuation of the intellectual swindle in full knowledge of the motive of revolt the deception further becomes ‘demonic mendacity.’”<sup>152</sup> But the feeling of guilt is not always immediate or realized in men, even if the capability for it is embedded within each of us. The realization of the enterprise as both fallacious and evil therefore presents men indulging in it with a choice to either accept or reject the validity of evil as good.

The Grand Inquisitor acknowledges the demonic motivations of his system: “We have taken the sword of Caesar, and in taking it, of course, we have rejected Thee and followed *him*.”<sup>153</sup> With his acknowledged understanding of his motivations as evil, and the acceptance of those motivations as good, the Inquisitor realizes the necessity to obfuscate the understanding of good and evil:

“We shall tell them that every sin shall be expiated, if it is done with our permission, that we allow them to sin because we love them, and the punishment for these sins we take upon ourselves. And we shall take it upon ourselves, and they will adore us as their saviors who have taken on themselves their sins before God. . . . The most painful secrets of their conscience, all, all they will bring to us, and we shall have an answer for all. And they will be glad to believe our answer, for it will save them from the great anxiety and terrible agony they endure at present in making a free decision for themselves.”<sup>154</sup>

The Inquisitor’s design is for a soul without understanding of the moral obligations instilled by an attunement to the transcendent ground of truth. His means of achieving it is simply to allow all moral transgressions while focusing on the provision of mundane

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<sup>152</sup> Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pgs. 25-26

<sup>153</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 238

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 240

satiety; he places the good of mundane satiety above the good which fosters moral obligation. Dostoevsky's work guides the reader to an understanding of the consequences of this obfuscation. Alyosha, for example, immediately refutes the proclaimed loftiness of Ivan's poem, defiling the Jesuits as:

“. . . simply the Romish army for the earthly sovereignty of the world in the future, with the Pontiff of Rome for Emperor. . . . It's simple lust for power, for filthy earthly gain, for domination – something like a universal serfdom with them as masters – that's all they stand for. They don't even believe in God perhaps. Your suffering inquisitor is a mere fantasy.”<sup>155</sup>

Alyosha points out not only the idea's earthly predisposition, but the consequences of the denial of the eternal truth upon which such a predisposition rests:

“‘But the sticky leaves, and the precious tombs, and the blue sky, and the woman you love! How will you live, how will you love them?’ Alyosha cried sorrowfully. ‘With such a hell in your heart and your head, how can you? No, that's just what you are going away for, to join them . . . if not, you will kill yourself, you can't endure it.’”<sup>156</sup>

Here Alyosha illustrates the consequences of the revelation of metaphysical rebellion as evil: the acceptance of evil as good, resulting in the failure to consciously eradicate the transcendent ground of truth from existence culminating in insanity – even suicide – as a result of the interminable conflict between reality as experienced by man and the proposed fantasy of the gnostic thinker.

Ivan's character is a portrayal of this conflict as it might play out; he identifies Alyosha's concerns over suicide to be prophetic. Ivan set out with his Inquisitor to assuage the innocent suffering of the world, but in the end he failed to achieve this goal. In the theoretical world of the Inquisitor he has succeeded in eliminating morality from existence. There is no longer guilt or innocence and therefore no longer *innocent* suffering; but suffering persists. Because morality does not exist innocent children might

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<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 241

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 243

not suffer, but children will suffer. The annihilation of morality will not change the fact that children in the world suffer. As Camus writes:

“Man can master in himself everything that should be mastered. He should rectify in creation everything that should be rectified. And after he has done so, children will still die unjustly even in a perfect society. Even by his greatest effort man can only propose to diminish arithmetically the sufferings of the world. But the injustice and the suffering of the world will remain and, no matter how limited they are, they will not cease to be an outrage.”<sup>157</sup>

His recalcitrance, in spite of these problems, reveals his motive to be “demonic mendacity.” The consequences of this acceptance are confounding for Ivan. Camus notes that “the same man who so violently took the part of innocence, from the moment he rejects divine coherence and tries to discover his own rule of life, recognizes the legitimacy of murder.”<sup>158</sup> Faced with a devastating contradiction, Ivan must either condone murder or admit to his place within God’s world. Unable to find justice in either alternative, his rebellion culminates in, as Sandoz puts it: “the incomprehending yet guilty horror . . . that his egregious verbal and metaphysical diarrhea induced the actual murder of his father. . . .”<sup>159</sup> The Inquisitor himself affirmed that those responsible for the deception of the rabble would be unhappy, and this insight is consistent with the development of Ivan’s character. He becomes involved in assuming God-like responsibilities, the consequences of which are appropriately summed up by Voegelin in *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*: “to rule means to be God; in order to be God gnostic man takes upon himself the torments of deception and self-laceration.”<sup>160</sup> The nonsense of these deceptions affected those around him; consequently the murderer, Smerdyakov, whose actions were only produced by the stupidity of the ideological rabble, hangs

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<sup>157</sup> Camus, *The Rebel*, pg. 303

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 58

<sup>159</sup> Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse*, pg. 208

<sup>160</sup> Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pg. 23

himself; it cannot be said that he finds happiness in this end. Hence, Dostoevsky depicts through the representatives of Smerdyakov and Ivan that given the Inquisitor's design, no one, neither clever nor innocent, becomes happy.

Dostoevsky develops the characteristics of such societies as exclusively disposed to worldly inclinations. On the Inquisitor, for example, the silent argument of Christ falls deaf: "The kiss glows in his heart, but the old man adheres to his idea."<sup>161</sup> The Inquisitor represents a man with no inclination towards anything beyond materialism, his willingness to kill Christ in the name of that materialism exposes his nature to be utterly evil. In *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky depicts the domineering as essentially evil, sometimes describing such characters as tyrannical. Such an exposition further identifies the desperation and depravity that is a consequence of being exclusively disposed to worldly inclination.

In addition to Raskolnikov's action, this picture is developed particularly through Svidrigailov and Luzhin. Both characters possess the desire to maintain a sort of dominance over their surroundings. Both seek to maintain a master/slave dynamic – and to be the master – amongst their relations. This trait is characteristic of an attunement to mundane satiety; it leaves behind evidence of the infringement of Locke's conception of respecting the "lives, liberties . . . and properties" of one another. Therefore, the development of these characters depicts the nature of tyrannical behavior to be consistent with behavior derived from an infatuation with mundane fulfillment.

Luzhin's illustration of the characteristics of tyranny affirms a persistent preoccupation with worldly dominion. Indeed, Raskolnikov is not amiss to suspect Luzhin's dastardly intentions towards his kin. The nature of Luzhin's relationship to

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<sup>161</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 243

Dounia and Pulcheria Alexandrovna is in fact not one of love but of one of conquest.

Upon the exposure of his nature to them, and their consequent rejection of him, he thinks to himself:

“It was my mistake, too, not to have given them money . . . if I’d spent some fifteen hundred roubles on them for the trousseau and presents . . . my position would have been better and . . . stronger! They are the sort of people that would feel bound to return money and presents if they broke it off; and they would find hard to do it! And their conscience would prick them: how can we dismiss a man who has hitherto been so generous and delicate? . . . H’m! I’ve made a blunder.”<sup>162</sup>

The fact that these women had placed all of their being in his hands was a source of malevolent fulfillment and, in turn, of dejection for him. The permeation of mundane conquest with an all-or-nothing stake in mundane affairs exposes the ground of Luzhin’s motivation to be unabashedly immanent. Dostoevsky exposes the consequences of Luzhin’s worldly conquests through the similarly disposed character Svidrigailov.

Svidrigailov is spoken of as a “villain and tyrant.”<sup>163</sup> He thrives on womanizing, and the manipulation of others which facilitates his dominance over social circumstances. With such dominance comes the role of provider in an extreme sense. Like the Inquisitor, dominance over one’s peers manifests in Svidrigailov as an attempt to both provide substantive support and to recreate moral and conscious predilections in a manner consistent with his design, as Alyosha put it, “for power, for filthy earthly gain, for domination . . . .”<sup>164</sup> This craving is revealed particularly through his willingness to accept for himself the role of God which is revealed through his desire to manipulate the wills of those surrounding him; yet Locke established “liberties” as an inherent necessity to the social contract because the power over one’s own will is a dispensation whose

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<sup>162</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, pg. 358

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 493

<sup>164</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 241

manipulation is reserved for divine ordinance. The contradiction between his design and what has been conceived of in this essay as a legitimate and fair design implies that a fallacy underlies his system and that it therefore leads into unforeseen consequences.

Svidrigailov stakes everything upon his ability to shape existences. His ultimate design is for Dounia; a desire seeded in his tendency to womanize. The end of Svidrigailov's particular system was the love of a woman that did not love, and could not consciously conceive of loving him. He, unaware of any truth beyond materialism, stakes everything upon the achievement of his plan. But Dounia spurns him, making his designs untenable. Having staked everything upon this plan, he feels at a complete and irreconcilable loss: "There followed a moment of terrible, dumb struggle in the heart of Svidrigailov. He looked at her with an indescribable gaze."<sup>165</sup> Svidrigailov did not abandon the loyalties to the all-or-nothingness of his system; instead he shot himself.

The psychological dimension of staking everything upon a worldly enterprise is central to the greater issue of political philosophy because it renders social consequences that stem from the spiritual disorientation apparent at the individual level. Camus has put it succinctly: "One step more and from *All or Nothing* we arrive at *Everyone or No one*."<sup>166</sup> The Inquisitor's design is for a global community of likeminded individuals, of which none except the Jesuits are aware of the true nature of that community. He argues: "only we, we who guard the mystery, will be unhappy."<sup>167</sup> The system is therefore dependent on the unanimous acceptance of it, and totalitarian governance is a tool for deriving unanimity from a mass of uniquely individual human beings. Hence, the tyrannical tendencies of Luzhin and Svidrigailov are the roots from which springs

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<sup>165</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, pg. 492

<sup>166</sup> Camus, *The Rebel*, pg. 57

<sup>167</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 240

political and existential horror on a societal scale, culminating in a body of individuals that cannot think independently of the system offered, for, as the Inquisitor argues, their very happiness is dependent upon the validity of the system.

This validity is, however, derived from the lack of anyone possessing a “desire to know.” The existence of totalitarian systems resides on this fact. Attunement to moral obligations instilled by the transcendent ground of truth, however, places man in active conflict against the proclamations dispelling moral obligations purported by gnostic systemization. The conflict between the purported truth of a system and the transcendent ground of truth that man himself experiences to be valid results in the psychological digression into insanity and, as Svidrigailov and Smerdyakov illustrate, sometimes suicide. But thankfully, built into the pneumopathology of metaphysical rebellion is its remedy, the “difficult” act of attuning oneself to the ineradicable pangs of being a creature amongst created beings.

## V

Attunement is thus facilitated through the experience of the conscience. For Raskolnikov, this experience unveiled the fallacy and criminality underlying his actions. After the murder his ability to logically connect his actions to any normative scheme had dissipated:

“If it all has really been done deliberately and not idiotically, if I really had a certain and definite object, how is it I did not even glance into the purse and don’t know what I had there, for which I have undergone these agonies, and have deliberately undertaken this base, filthy, degrading business? And here I wanted at once to throw into the water the purse together with all the things which I had not seen either . . . how’s that?”<sup>168</sup>

Raskolnikov is realizing for himself the evil nature of his actions. His response to this realization will differentiate him from those who continue to indulge in fantasies

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<sup>168</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, pg. 112

grounded in an all-or-nothing qualification. As his impressionability led him to accept the fallacy of the gnostic system, his relationship with Sonia impresses on him the realization that his quest was engendered from a desire to overstep the bounds of being, “to become a Napoleon,” as he puts it.<sup>169</sup> Raskolnikov understands this quest to be demonically motivated: “I know myself that it was the devil leading me.”<sup>170</sup> He understands the source of this motivation to be haughtiness:

“And you don’t suppose that I went into it headlong like a fool? I went into it like a wise man and that was just my destruction. And you mustn’t suppose that I didn’t know, for instance, that if I began to question myself whether I had the right to gain power – I certainly hadn’t the right – or that if I asked myself whether a human being is a louse it proved that it wasn’t so for me, though it might be for a man who would go straight to his goal without asking questions. . . . If I worried myself all those days, wondering whether Napoleon would have done it or not, I felt clearly of course that I wasn’t Napoleon. I had to endure all the agony of that battle of ideas . . . and I longed to throw it off: I wanted to murder without causitry, to murder for my own sake, for myself alone! . . . I wanted to find out quickly whether I was a louse like everybody else or a man. Whether I can step over barriers or not, whether I dare stoop to pick up or not, whether I am a trembling creature or whether I have the *right*. . . .”<sup>171</sup>

The acknowledgment of the truth that “I wasn’t Napoleon” leads Raskolnikov into the following realization, which expresses that the haughtiness of his actions equates to a demonic intoxication bearing consequences for him personally:

“. . . I want to prove one thing only, that the devil led me on and then he has shown me since that I had not the right to take that path, because I am just such a louse as all the rest. . . . Did I murder the old woman? I murdered myself, not her! I crushed myself once for all, for ever. . . . But it was the devil that killed that old woman, not I.”<sup>172</sup>

Sonia provides Raskolnikov with the strength to atone for his crime and to consequently regenerate his psyche. Sonia’s philosophy is one of persistent humility: “but I can’t know the Divine Providence,” and the acceptance of suffering and deference to God:

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<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 410

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 414

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.* pgs. 414-415

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 415

“how could it happen that it should depend on my decision – who has made me a judge to decide who is to live and who is not to live?”<sup>173</sup> It serves as the counterpoint in this novel from which Raskolnikov is ultimately able to accept the consequences of his actions. Raskolnikov asks Sonia, “what am I to do now?” to whom Sonia replies with the Christian argument: “Suffer and expiate your sin by it, that’s what you must do.”<sup>174</sup>

From Sonia the Christian idea of repentance, and its applicability to political circumstances, can be illuminated. The idea of repentance as a conscious admittance of one’s crime is related to the notion of spiritual therapy; the locus of spiritual regeneration is as well a conscious devise. Sonia is immediately aware of the nature of the falsehood into which Raskolnikov has delved: “You have turned away from God and God has smitten you, has given you over to the devil!”<sup>175</sup> But she also knows that atonement is achieved through the conscious rejection of the ideas which had festered within a metaphysical rebel. Just as he “turned away from God,” the act of repentance is achieved by simply turning towards God; it is the Platonic *periagoge*.

This turn is facilitated through Sonia’s unqualified love for Raskolnikov: “He had gone to her, Sonia, first with his confession; he had gone to her for human fellowship when he needed it; she would go with him wherever fate might send him.”<sup>176</sup> She could forgive any crime, and Raskolnikov’s realization of this fact ties him to the more difficult truth consistent with Dostoevsky’s “lofty suffering:” “He looked at Sonia and felt how great was her love for him, and strange to say he felt it suddenly burdensome and painful

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 403

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* pgs. 415-416

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 413

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 516

to be so loved.”<sup>177</sup> The significance of Sonia to Raskolnikov is the vouchsafing of the notion that Christian truth, representative in the character of Sonia, is not begrudging but open to humanity despite the radical nature of humanity’s errors. Because of the depth of Sonia’s love for Raskolnikov – or of Christ’s love for man – Raskolnikov’s crime affected Sonia as man’s sin affected Christ. Sonia declares to Raskolnikov: “We will go to suffer together, and together we will bear our cross!”<sup>178</sup>

The acceptance of such a truth is facilitated by, as much as it facilitates, the dismissal of haughty and domineering worldly desires. It is, however, a conscious and deliberative acceptance: Raskolnikov had to bring it upon himself to confess to Sonia, to the town-square, and to the police. Although atonement in Siberia will certainly bring with it suffering, such suffering is validated by a particular sort of responsibility motivated by the ineradicable discovery of love. Zametov expresses that responsibility and its impetus appositely near the novel’s close: “Official duty is one thing but . . . you are thinking I meant to say *friendship* is quite another? No, you are wrong! It’s not friendship, but the feeling of a man and a citizen, the feeling of humanity and of love for the Almighty.”<sup>179</sup> Zametov is saying, in other words, that this responsibility cannot be brought about by society or politics, but only through a personal attunement to the transcendent ground.

Ivan’s experience also affirms the remedial response to metaphysical rebellion, and exposes similar regenerative capabilities to be inherent to gnostic thinker as well as to ideological rabble. Voegelin argues that the fall into metaphysical rebellion is a “general human problem,” and insinuates that the recovery from the fall has general

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<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 417

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 418

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 523

applicability as well.<sup>180</sup> Dostoevsky affirms this argument; although Ivan's lesson is harsh, the reader is not left with the impression that it is an inevitable fate. Dimitri prophesizes in the epilogue: "Listen, our brother Ivan will surpass everyone. He ought to live and not us. He will recover."<sup>181</sup>

Ivan's brother Dimitri illustrates that even the most vile and tyrannical can find hope in the salvation from their disposition. Mitya is a slovenly character, predisposed to immanent fulfillment; transcendent happiness is initially too difficult an attainment for him. In his words:

"... man is broad, too broad, indeed. I'd have him narrower. The devil only knows what to make of it! What to the mind is shameful is beauty and nothing else to the heart. Is there beauty in Sodom? Believe me, that for the immense mass of mankind beauty is found in Sodom. Did you know that secret? The awful thing is that beauty is mysterious as well as terrible. God and the devil are fighting there and the battlefield is the heart of man."<sup>182</sup>

The characters of Mitya and Alyosha are juxtaposing representations. Alyosha's angelic qualities are offset by Mitya's inebriated escapades. Sandoz has called them "the twin abysses of the Karamazov character."<sup>183</sup> Ivan represents a more typically representative human being in flux between the antipodal embodiments of his brothers. Hence, when Mitya later realizes God's purpose in the battle, it is an all the more poignant reminder of the hope inherent in God's world for all men, with indifference to their former disposition concerning the world:

"Even there, in the mines, underground, I may find a human heart in another convict and murderer by my side, and I may make friends with him, for even there one may live and love and suffer. One may resurrect and revive a frozen heart in that convict, one may wait upon him for years, and at last bring up from the dark depths a lofty soul, a feeling, suffering creature; one may bring forth an angel, resurrect a hero! There are so many of

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<sup>180</sup> Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, pg. 87

<sup>181</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 783

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 97

<sup>183</sup> Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse*, pg. 208

them, and we are all responsible for them. It's for the babe I'm going. Because we are all responsible for all. I go for all because someone must go for all. I didn't kill father, but I've got to go, I accept it. Oh yes, we shall be in chains and there will be no freedom, but then, in our great sorrow, we shall rise again to joy, without which men cannot live nor God exist, for God gives joy: it's His privilege – a grand one.”<sup>184</sup>

The atonement process, evident in Mitya as a conscious acceptance of the egregiousness of his past, can serve a remedial or regenerative function, as acknowledged by Konstantin Mochulsky: “[Mitya] has to pass through the purification of suffering, through the torment of conscience and the spiritual death of penal servitude in order that the flame of Eros, which has caught fire in him might become a spiritual force that transfigures the world.”<sup>185</sup>

## VI

The purification process brought Mitya through both spiritual anguish and physical suffering. Raskolnikov's experience in the town square also illustrated that the turn towards eternal truth can be immanently problematic. Raskolnikov was forced not only to atone for his crime in Siberia, but to confess awkwardly to the gawking townspeople: “I am a murderer.”<sup>186</sup> Turning from untruth can require strength in the face of worldly despair and for men to alienate themselves from society. Dostoevsky gives us literary evidence of the awkward recovery from metaphysical rebellion, and the impetus for such action, in the example of the antihero in *Notes from Underground*.

The antihero is angry, vindictive and rebellious. He introduces himself by indicating that he is indeed angry, “sick,” and refuses “treatment out of spite.”<sup>187</sup> The treatment he refuses, materialistic socialism, is the social status quo of his day. It is not

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<sup>184</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 723

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 782

<sup>186</sup> Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, pg. 521

<sup>187</sup> Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, pg. 15

that the antihero had not wished to become a good socialist, an ardent soldier in the wave of change and empowerment; he had earnestly sought to construct these “intellectual” designs but found himself incapable: “I couldn’t make myself anything: neither good nor bad, neither a scoundrel nor an honest man, neither a hero nor an insect.”<sup>188</sup> But the realization of the logical end of the nihilistic construction, that what is evil must be accepted as zealously as what is good, inspires a disaffection towards such designs: “Now I go on living in my corner and irritating myself with the spiteful and worthless consolation that a wise man can’t seriously make himself anything, only a fool makes himself anything.”<sup>189</sup> The philosophy based on the understanding that “I couldn’t even make an insect out of myself”<sup>190</sup> reveals the bitter psychological process of rebelling against socially dominant but impracticable ideology, culminating in the rewarding process of realizing the more “difficult truth.”

The rebellion of the antihero is an active process against those who are themselves metaphysical rebels. This is a fundamental and necessary aspect of political rebellion; it manifests as a counteractive response to a socially proliferate metaphysical rebellion. Stated simply, a political rebel requires a tyrannical encroachment to rebel against. Because the metaphysical rebellion is socially proliferate, and although the antihero becomes attuned to the transcendent ground of truth, he makes arguments against accepted or perceived truths such as the laws of nature and of mathematics as coined by socialist man. Inherent to the socialist system against which the antihero rebels is the insistence upon conjectured “laws of nature” and “of mathematics” that he cannot

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<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 16

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 17

accept as true.<sup>191</sup> This insistence upon conjecturing has been exemplified as “intellectual swindle” in Voegelin’s critique of Marx. It is the act of proclaiming, for the sake of a particular goal, the laws of nature that are designed to appear as in accord with the desired goal of a gnostic system.

The antihero understands the design of materialistic socialism to be the creation of a new type of man that juxtaposes “the real man.”<sup>192</sup> This “test-tube man” is designed to “make something” of the world:

“A man like that goes straight for his goal like a mad bull charging his horns down, and is to be stopped, if at all, by a stone wall. . . . men like that, men of action, doers, quite genuinely give up when faced with a wall; to them a wall is not a challenge, as it is to us, for example, men who think and therefore don’t do anything; nor is it an excuse for tuning aside, an excuse that people like us are always glad of, even if we don’t usually believe in it ourselves.”<sup>193</sup>

If we understand “action” to be the attempt to create facts, and “thinkers” as devoted to empirical evidence, then the antihero’s division between action and thought distinguishes the “test-tube man” as gnostic. The gnosticism of test-tube man is made apparent by his devotion to the stone wall of “the laws of nature and of mathematics,” endowed “by way of the strictest logical syllogisms.”<sup>194</sup> The antihero is being sarcastic when implying that such logic can deliver man into truths that are not evident without the insight provided by the logic of the gnostic:

“What do I mean by a stone wall? Well, of course, the laws of nature or the conclusions of the natural sciences or of mathematics. When it is proved, for example, that you are descended from an ape, it’s no use scowling about it – accept it as a fact. Or if it is demonstrated that half an ounce of your own fat ought to be essentially dearer to you than a hundred thousand of your fellow-creatures, and that this demonstration finally disposes of all so-called good deeds, duties, and other lunacies and prejudices, simply accept it;

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<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 23

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 20

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.* pgs. 20-21

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 23

there's nothing to be done about it, because twice two is mathematics. Just try to argue!"<sup>195</sup>

The laws of nature and of mathematics in this case symbolize the result of gnostic speculation. They are not representative of God's laws of nature and of mathematics. In other words, they represent an attempt to manufacture facts. Yet because facts are grounded in preexistent empirical evidence, the laws against which he rebels are not God's but an imposter's. The bounds of the possible are established by the divine and any attempt by man to establish his own bounds will result in a situation in which a "stone wall" is constructed by that man for the defense of his construction. The stone wall is representative of the "the prohibition of questions," as it shelters the construction from the preexisting reality. Through the obfuscation of first reality, and the attempt to replace it with a second reality of manufactured facts, the system for deriving these facts reveals itself to be gnostic speculation.

Duplicity reveals the gnosticism of a system. Although other aspects of gnosticism are detectable, such as dissatisfaction and the dream of a better life, not all gnostic traits are exclusive to metaphysical rebellion. In metaphysical rebellion, dissatisfaction must result in an attempt to transfigure the essence of being – to change what man fundamentally is – which includes the mysterious dictates of man's conscience. For example, in *The Notes* the social system relies upon the underlying motivation of disaffection, "this well established and yet somehow unconvincing powerlessness to escape from the situation."<sup>196</sup> Yet distinguished from the dissatisfaction of the political rebel, metaphysical rebellion drives man to attempt an escape from the world while overlooking the moral bounds to action. It seeks a transfiguration whose impracticability

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<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 22

is mysterious but catalyzed by an uneasy feeling with the abnegation of morals. The antihero, in his attempt at metaphysical rebellion, feels this uneasiness. Thus in this attempt the antihero realizes that such bounds are indeed ineradicable:

“. . . I would be deeply moved, filled with remorse, and shedding tears, and, of course, I was deceiving myself, although I wasn't consciously pretending. My heart seemed to purge itself of its own accord. . . . For this I couldn't even blame the laws of nature . . . the whole thing was a lie, a disgusting lie, an unnatural lie. . . . Do you ask why I tortured and tormented myself? The answer is that it was too boring to sit and do nothing, so I indulged my fantasy.”<sup>197</sup>

The antihero's realization that the system was a lie and that his motive was fantasy is spawned from a conscionable conflict between the proposition made and the mysterious realm of being which moved him into conflict with it. The conflict did not arise from another purported claim, but from emotions and thoughts developed by the antihero in the process of living his daily life. The conflict is between a claim and an experience, between conjecture and evidence.

This duplicity, and its experiential consequence, is symbolized by the Palace of Crystal. It is a symbol which expresses frustration at and augments the conflict between fantasy and life. The Palace of Crystal is a mechanism for lying; it is a structure “at which one couldn't furtively put out one's tongue or make concealed gestures of derision . . . it will not be possible even to put out one's tongue at [it] in secret.”<sup>198</sup> The inability to question the Palace reveals the disingenuousness of it to the antihero: “I still refuse to take a henhouse for a palace. Let us grant that a building of crystal is a castle in the air, that by the laws of nature it is a sheer impossibility, and that I have invented it out

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<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 26

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 42

of nothing but my own stupidity and certain antiquated irrational habits of my generation.”<sup>199</sup>

The antihero’s clear frustration, even bitterness towards the system is facilitated by its negation of the antihero’s conscience; the force which moves him to abjure the “sheer impossibility” of it. The antihero admits: “I am certain that underground people like me must be kept in check . . . if we do come into the world and burst out, we will talk and talk and talk. . . .”<sup>200</sup> The system is gnostic speculation not because it is inspired by dissatisfaction or because it inspires people to dream and to fantasize, but because it resides on the submission of those in the underground. If they were to talk and talk, it would become evident that half of an ounce of a man’s own fat is, in contradiction to all that the system proclaims, worth little to nothing next to the whole of humanity.

The antihero is angry, vindictive and rebellious because such a reality forces him into a situation in which his conscience finds no solace. Konstantin Mochulsky argues: “Consciousness opposes itself to the world. It is alone, against it is everything.”<sup>201</sup> The insurmountable hopelessness of rebelling against the Palace of Crystal delivers the antihero into a paradox. The suffering inherent to his rebellion must be experienced if he is to attune himself to that which his soul experiences to be real. Mochulsky writes of the antihero:

“The underground man’s paradoxes are not the whims of some half-mad eccentric, but a new revelation of *man about man*. The consciousness of the angry mouse, crushed in the underground, proves to be *human consciousness in general*. We are hitting upon the enigma of consciousness. A man becomes a man if he possesses consciousness. Without consciousness, man is an animal. But consciousness arises only out of conflict with reality, from a breach with the world. Consciousness must pass through isolation and solitude; it is *pain*. On the other hand – solitary consciousness does not exist; it is always

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<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 43

<sup>201</sup> Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky*, pg. 248

joined with all mankind, it is *organically collective*. In this tormenting contradiction is the tragedy of personality.”<sup>202</sup>

The discovery of consciousness is, for the antihero, the discovery of an individual responsibility for his actions that conflicts against his experience in the world. But because such a responsibility defines man, elevating him above the beasts, the pain inherent to the conflict becomes justified.

The antihero’s experiences, told in *The Story of the Falling Sleet*, lead the reader into an understanding of a conception of happiness which validates immanent suffering. Consciousness does not find its impetus in materialistic or worldly experiences but in the way in which such experiences are experienced. An experience lacking consciousness is informed solely by materialistic desires. In an attempt to reconcile his station with his worldly desires, the antihero subjects himself to various awkward situations that attempt such a reconciliation. He always finds himself stepping aside for a particular officer on the street. Wishing to be more socially significant, his rebellion manifests as a rejection of society’s status quo, one day thinking to himself: “What . . . if I were to meet him and . . . not step aside?”<sup>203</sup> Unable to stand his ground, however, the antihero’s inadequacy festers into an impetus for action. He constructs a dream-world for himself in which he can envision his situation becoming transfigured:

“But I had one resource that reconciled all these contradictions – escaping into ‘all that is best and highest,’ in my dreams, of course. I dreamed endlessly. I dreamed for three months, crouching in my corner, and you may rest assured that during those moments I . . . had turned into a hero.”<sup>204</sup>

The dream-world construction prompts the antihero to proliferate the conflict between fantasy and reality by trying to befriend a group of officers. At this point, the antihero is

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.* pgs. 245 - 246

<sup>203</sup> Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, pg. 56

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 58

acting as a hero, as a man capable of transfiguring reality; his design for acknowledgment is one bent on social acceptance and materialistic success. But armed with a new decorous wardrobe, the antihero remains unable to win the friendship of the officers. Finding himself to be an impotent hero, the antihero's actions decline into an attempt to merely destruct the society as it were:

“They are not going to kneel before me begging for my friendship. That’s a mirage, a vulgar illusion, disgusting, romantic, and fanciful. . . . And that’s why I *must* give Zverkov a slap in the face! I’m obliged to it. So it’s settled. I’m in a tearing hurry to slap his face. – Faster!”<sup>205</sup>

But the slap is not delivered. The antihero fails to find Zverkov, instead becoming distracted by a girl named Liza. This distraction will lead him to abandon his quest for worldly conquest by attuning him to a different conception of value and truth grounded in personal, not social, fulfillment:

“I suspect, gentleman, that you are sorry for me; you keep telling me that an enlightened and fully developed human being of the future, cannot knowingly will something that is bad for him, and that this is mathematics. I quite agree, it really is a mathematical certainty. But I repeat for the hundredth time that there is one case, and only one, when a man can consciously and purposely desire for himself what is positively harmful and stupid, even the very height of stupidity, and that is when he claims the *right* to desire even the height of stupidity and not be bound by the obligation of wanting only what is sensible.”<sup>206</sup>

The right to attune oneself to a truth beyond sensory perceptions grounds the antihero's disposition as a rejection of worldly goods for a higher, eternal truth experienced through a consciousness that disregards one's worldly situation.

The antihero's consciousness can be symbolized as an attunement to God. The consequences of this discovery are explained in St. John's first epistle: “God is love; and

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<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 81

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 36

he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”<sup>207</sup> The antihero’s conversation with Liza reveals that his apparently bitter and antagonistic rebellion is not actually grounded in the deconstruction of reality, but in the reorientation of the way in which reality is perceived. One attuned to God experiences life in a particular manner – as informed by love. This position directly contradicts the deconstruction attempted in the antihero’s former position as hero. As hero the antihero was attuned to the improvement of his station in the world, or to a calculation for social acceptance and material well being. He was involved in a quest for mundane satiety, which is irrelevant to a man filled with love. The antihero’s rebellion against society – his descent into the underground – is therefore not an attempt to transfigure materialistic conditions but to ignore or to transcend them. He tells Liza: “And when there is love, you can live even without happiness. Life is good even in sorrow; it is good to live in the world, however you live.”<sup>208</sup> The following exchange between the two buttresses the idea:

“‘Some people are glad to sell their daughters instead of giving them in marriage honestly,’ she said suddenly.

Ah! So that’s it!

‘That’s in those accursed families where there is neither God nor love, Liza,’ I said hotly, ‘and where there is no love, there is no reason either. There are such families, certainly, but I am not talking about them. It is clear you never knew the kindness in your family, if you say things like that. You are truly unfortunate. H’m . . . It is mostly poverty that does that.’

‘Is it any better among gentlefolk then? And decent people lead good lives even if they are poor.’

‘H’m . . . yes. Perhaps. There’s another thing, Liza: people only like to count their sorrows, they don’t count their happinesses. But if they reckoned as they ought to, they would see that everybody gets his share of everything. Well, but suppose everything goes well for your family, God is good to you, your husband proves to be a good man who loves you and cherishes you and doesn’t leave you! It would be happy in a family like that.’<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> I John 4:16 (KJV)

<sup>208</sup> Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, pg. 90

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 93

Through the experience of love, the troubles of worldly circumstances fade away and happiness is found through responsibility directed towards oneself and those one loves:

“Why, if a husband is a good and honest man, and gets on in life, how can love pass away? The first wedded love passes, true, but then comes an even better love. The two come together in soul and have all things in common; they have no secrets from one another. And when children come, even the most difficult of times will seem happiness; one need only love and have courage.”<sup>210</sup>

The antihero’s focus in these thoughts is not towards immanent matters. Poverty, he implies, can be tolerated if one has love. Tyrannical action defined as the attempt to enforce one’s will upon others, which was the essential position of the hero, cannot be identified with the antihero’s newfound position. He admits of himself as hero that “without power and tyranny over somebody I can’t live,”<sup>211</sup> and that “with me to love meant to tyrannize.”<sup>212</sup> But these admissions come in the process of realizing that such a disposition construes the essence of man because it is epistemologically restrictive. Therefore, the ludicrous activities of the hero must be understood as the activities of the antihero while in the process of discovering that he could “make” nothing of himself, that his erroneous judgment was indeed the consequence of having been incorrect about the nature of reality.

## VII

The turn from hero to antihero expresses fundamental attributes shared between the metaphysical and the political rebel. Both the hero and the antihero express dissatisfaction towards their situation. Dissatisfaction is the inherent motivator of all rebellions. The reasons that hero and antihero were dissatisfied, however, reveal a fundamental distinction between the attributes of the two positions. The hero was

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<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 94

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 118

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 119

dissatisfied with the capabilities of natural human beings and sought to generate from them a superior being in the form of test-tube man. Contrarily, the antihero was dissatisfied because the attempt to create a new and superior test-tube man was discovered to be fallacious: “. . . I couldn’t even make an insect of myself.”<sup>213</sup> The hero sought to transfigure reality, whereas the antihero sought happiness within the confines of the traditional natural man, transfiguring man’s conception of happiness instead of the material world in which he lives.

Implicit to this observation is the ostensible appearance of dream-world constructions within both forms of rebellion. Because both hero and antihero dream of a transfigured situation, it might seem that both therefore create a second-reality which prompts their aspirations. The construction of a dream-world, however, which operates in active conflict against the world experienced is inherent to metaphysical rebellion only. Again, the distinction between an ontological ground (an attempt to transfigure reality) and an epistemological ground (or an attempt to transfigure conceptualizations) is the element which differentiates the two forms of rebellion. The political rebel – though he dreams of a better way of life – does not dream of a new world or reality that would be a necessary prerequisite for the achievement of his dream. Hence the goals of the hero and antihero are perversions of one another. The hero dreams of a new man which can facilitate happiness as he conceives of it. He requires a new man and a new form of being – a new world or a new reality. The antihero transfigures his idea of happiness, accepting the man to be concrete. He merely requires a new way of thinking, or of looking at the world. Both hero and antihero therefore operate within conflict, in antagonism against a world which precludes his ideas. The distinction between antihero

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<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 17

and hero, however, lies in the willingness of the antihero to abandon the fallacy of attempting to transfigure reality.

The antihero is so labeled because he is lethargic in his rebellion: “. . . it is best to do nothing! The best thing is conscious inertia! So long live the underground!”<sup>214</sup> The underground is not, however, the manifestation of his rebellion but the mere impetus of it. The underground only opens the door for the discovery of love: “. . . it isn't the underground that is better, but something different, entirely different, which I am eager for, but which I shall never find. Devil take the underground!”<sup>215</sup> The antihero is aware that to transform the underground into a Palace of Crystal would be to vitiate the discovery made in the therein. It is not the underground itself, but the ability to love which it facilitates that drives his rebellion. He is aware that no political system can ever eradicate man's conscience.

The foundation of man's being as in his soul is the persistent and desperate plea of the mature Dostoevsky, and a common theme threading the works examined above. The hero abandons his dream-world for the antihero's dream of love. Raskolnikov turns from his crime and finds his atonement through Sonia in Siberia. Mitya finds God through suffering, and Ivan's insanity reveals him to be “that hero of honor and conscience” because, unlike the Inquisitor he dreamt of, his madness was the culmination of a philosophical stupor his psyche could not ultimately endure.<sup>216</sup> His brothers and Katerina Ivanovna hope for his recovery. They expect it, indeed, for as much as Dostoevsky prophesies the spiritual and political horrors to come in Russia he also foresees the ability to escape from such horrors. The ability to recover from spiritual

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<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 43

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 717

degradation through the discovery of one's soul, and being fulfilled by the pangs suffered through it, is the bittersweet yet triumphant and final assertion of Fyodor Dostoevsky, grounded in Ellis Sandoz's observation that "man is what he *is*. . . ."<sup>217</sup>

This reconciliation with reality remains melancholy because it catalyzes immanent suffering. In Plato's cave, one who rises will be killed if he returns for his brethren. Dostoevsky gives us solid literary evidence that the impetus of such brave yet apparently futile action begins in the hearts of individual men. Christ, for example, forgives the Inquisitor with a kiss before being dismissed "into the dark squares of the town."<sup>218</sup> But what does happen in those dark squares? How does the individual rejection of an oppressive untruth disseminate through a society cloaked in darkness? Answers to these questions turn us from the literary evidence provided by Dostoevsky, towards the historical example of the Velvet Revolution.

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<sup>217</sup> Sandoz, *Political Apocalypse*, pg. 240

<sup>218</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 243

## Chapter Two: Václav Havel

Dostoevsky's work explored a decisive rift between two potential motivating factors; pitting the good of mundane satiety against that of man's consciousness. The paradox is that man and world are wrapped into the same game: man lives in the world, yet the good of his consciousness juxtaposes what the world may imply to be good. The inherent danger is of falling for the appeal of mundane satiety, and of organizing political affairs accordingly. Yet Dostoevsky's dark novels are augmented by the faint hope that the bleak society he foresees through the Inquisitor is not the end of history and progressive men. Rather, such societies possess the capability of recognizing the untruth which had procreated their systems, and *can* discover the truth of consciousness if it is only made evident to them. Gnostic systems reside on ideological rabbles or "obedient flocks" for their furtherance, cozening them into believing false propositions to be true. Nonetheless the ineffable but undeniable truth of consciousness has the power to override the deception and turn a rabble from a gnostic untruth towards the truth informed by man's consciousness.

### I

Support for this argument can be found in the historical example of the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, the culmination of which resulted in the election of Václav Havel as the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic on December 29, 1989. Although at first glance the election appears serendipitous – Havel had been a playwright whose works were banned under the former regime – it is more the result of, as he puts it, "living in the truth." The idea is a correlate of Voegelin's theory of consciousness – of attuning oneself to "the desire to know." In *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* Voegelin

identifies this act as “therapeutic analysis.” The Velvet Revolution is a prime example of the regenerative effects of this process upon society, and the political philosophy derived from the essays and speeches of Havel identify the movement as rooted in an individual awareness of personal identity and responsibility. Moreover, his writings reveal his motives to be against the communist Czech regime for its encroachment against this responsibility and personality; they therefore reveal that the case is an example of political rebellion. Thus thru an analysis of Havel and the Velvet Revolution empirical evidence is given to support the thesis that political rebellions, or rebellions waged against oppressive regimes, are driven by individuals’ consciousnesses as informed by *noetic* reason.

As for Dostoevsky, the personal experiences of Havel are imperative to his thought. Yet the decisive philosophical rift that occurred in Dostoevsky – the turn from fallacy towards truth – is wanting in Havel. An examination of Havel therefore does not replicate but compliments the Dostoevsky analysis. Where Dostoevsky reveals the untruth of gnostic systemization and that turning from it can be remedial, Havel focuses upon the impetus and effects of the turn. Havel illustrates the consequence of adhering to the newfound truth; how by simply living within the truth it may permeate throughout a society, and how this permeation may reshape the human experience for the better.

Having lived under the auspices of eight forms of totalitarian governance, from Nazi occupation to Stalinism to Czechoslovakia’s ‘post-totalitarian regime,’ Havel possessed a predilection for their infringements upon his sense of self.<sup>219</sup> His philosophical and literary tastes illustrate this point. Edá Kriseová argues that Franz Kafka is his foremost influence. She writes:

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<sup>219</sup> Keane, John, *Václav Havel: A Political Tragedy in Six Acts*. Basic Books, New York: 2000. pg. 10

“Kafka and Havel have in common their recognition of the absurd dimension of the world, their experience of exile, of shyness, of persistent doubt in themselves and their abilities, and a sense of guilt and of their own particular obscurity. . . . Both are interested in the loss of an individual’s identity, in a person’s position as the victim and target of manipulation by an impersonal power.”<sup>220</sup>

This persistent sense of alienation against the world fortified Havel’s philosophical quest for identity. At an address at Hebrew University, Jerusalem in 1990, Havel affirmed his affinity for Kafka, saying: “if Kafka had not lived, and if I could write a little better than I can, I would have written his complete works myself.”<sup>221</sup> He goes on to explain exactly what this implies:

“I shall try to give a very brief, telegraphic description of the more easily described aspects of this experience. These are: a deep, basic and thus thoroughly undefined sense of personal guilt. As if it were my very existence that were a sin. Then there is the strong sense of both my not belonging and of the inappropriateness of everything that contributes to these feelings. An oppressive sense of unbearable claustrophobia, a constant need to explain and defend myself before someone. A longing for an unattainable order of things, a longing that grows stronger as the ground on which I stand becomes more unpredictable and indecipherable. Sometimes I feel the need to reaffirm my problematic identity by shouting at someone, by standing up for my rights. This shout is of course completely futile, the reply never finds the right audience, but vanishes into the black hole that surrounds me. Everything that I experience reveals to me first and foremost its absurdity. As if I were running after a group of strong, confident men whom I can never overtake or match. I am basically an aggravating person, and I feel that I am only worthy of mockery.”<sup>222</sup>

Havel’s description of himself, for its sense of worthlessness and absurdity, reminds of Dostoevsky’s antihero and of his underground. Havel, however, leaves a more hopeful political suggestion than had the antihero. Where Dostoevsky leaves off at the reconciliation of man with his consciousness, Havel begins at this point to arrive at the political ramifications of this resolution.

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<sup>220</sup> Kriseova, Edá, *Václav Havel: The Authorized Biography*. St. Martin’s Press, New York: 1993. pgs. 11-12

<sup>221</sup> Ed. By Whipple, Tim, *After the Velvet Revolution: Václav Havel and the New Leaders of Czechoslovakia*. Freedom House, New York: 1991. pg. 102

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.* 102

As consciousness and personal experience are dependent upon one another, Havel's philosophy of dissent is grounded in the experiences of his life that led him from being an outlawed playwright to a political superstar. As signatory and spokesman for Charter 77, his philosophical journey was transfigured into a political plight. Reminiscent of America's Declaration of Independence, the Charter's declaration, dated January 1, 1977, reads that "Charter 77 is a free, informal, and open community of people of different convictions, different faiths, and different professions, united by the will to strive, individually and collectively, for the respect of civic and human rights."<sup>223</sup> The charter represents the institutional manifestation of political rebellion; it is a provision for the ascertainment of individual authenticity; it symbolizes the institutional embodiment of an attunement to consciousness. This chapter's purpose is to illustrate the ways in which it was brought about, and why it was designed as it were.

The experiences surrounding this achievement are infused throughout this chapter, as they shaped the metamorphosis from individual responsibility to political action. They argue that the provision of a community of free-thinking individuals therefore supplies the theoretical underpinning for "therapeutic analysis," but also that "therapeutic analysis underlies the establishment of such a community. This chapter seeks to illustrate Havel's resolution to this paradox, by showing how the dissemination of the belief in freedom proved a catalyst for the liberation of Czechoslovakia itself; the Charter culminated in a peaceful revolution in November, 1989, thrusting Havel into the presidency of a fledgling democratic regime.

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<sup>223</sup> Bugajski, Januz, *Czechoslovakia: Charter 77's Decade of Dissent*. Preager, New York: 1987. pg. 12

## II

Havel's theory of consciousness is remarkably similar to Voegelin's. But where Havel departs from, and perhaps may strengthen the arguments inherent to Voegelin's theory, is in his application of consciousness to political action and organization. Voegelin certainly implies this applicability, yet Havel's work deepens Voegelin's by formulating a coherent theory on the progression from conscious realization to political action. Hence, from Havel's assessment we can see both political rebellion and the ramifications of it; a process involving both individual rebellious spirits and a collective revolutionary movement culminating in the institution of an open and free form of government consistent with the Lockean social contract.

Voegelin's anthropological principle, founded on the Platonic insight that – as Voegelin frames it – “the polis is man written in larger letters,” insinuates that the remedy for totalitarian governance is not to be found through a socialized prescription for happiness.<sup>224</sup> Voegelin argues that Plato “restrains himself deliberately . . . in order not to give the false impression that good order in a polis can be created through institutional devices.”<sup>225</sup> If man's essence can be correlated to his consciousness, then Plato's dictum implies that the ground of social stability is as well grounded therein. Thus political institutions which allow for an attunement to consciousness are the most fulfilling; not because of any particular institutional design, but because good men make government function fairly and without usurpations. Voegelin does not go much further than this observation, although its implications for the character of institutions appear from time to time in his writings. He concludes *The New Science of Politics*, for example, with the

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<sup>224</sup> Voegelin, *Plato*, pgs. 69, 85-88; see Plato, *The Republic*, pg. 45 (368d-e)

<sup>225</sup> Voegelin, *Plato*, pg. 87

reflection that the American and English institutions are the most appropriate for man, as those forms most accurately reflect the truth of the soul.<sup>226</sup> But this constitutes one short paragraph, and does not speak to the process of instituting such forms. In so far as we are concerned not only with the rebellion against tyranny or totalitarianism but also with the reorganization of society after that rebellion, we cannot rely independently on Voegelin's theory of consciousness.

Havel too begins with the anthropological principle, writing that “. . . all attempts by society to resist the pressure of the system have their essential beginnings in the pre-political area.”<sup>227</sup> Yet he applies its implications to the process of rebellion and political change in a way that compliments Voegelin's insights. He would agree with the argument that institutions themselves do not provide a nostrum from which humanity may flourish; he writes: “. . . a better system will not automatically ensure a better life.”<sup>228</sup> The construction of institutional systems does not address the nature of the psyches of the men who must function within them. Instead of focusing upon the institutions, Havel argues that an appropriate method of counter-systemization resides in the human beings underlying the institutions. He writes that “such a change will have to derive from human existence, from the fundamental reconstitution of the position of people in the world, their relationships to themselves and to each other, and to the universe.”<sup>229</sup> Such an idea therefore rests on the attunement of individuals to the pragmatic implications of their behaviors. Each man has a responsibility to the society in which he lives, as it is nothing more than a reflection of the efforts of him and his

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<sup>226</sup> Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*, pg. 189

<sup>227</sup> Havel, *Living in Truth*, pg. 102

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 71

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 70

brethren. It can only be as good, as productive, as hard-working and as pleasant as the men within it. This principle implies that whatever form of institution might exist: it can only be fulfilling and productive if the men within it are good. Hence a revolution that seeks to institute a suitable regime – whatever its form might be – will always seek the production of good men first.

Inculcating a consciousness of what is good for the polis and of a personal responsibility for that good is the means by which good men are produced; this is the standard around which political action and organization should be oriented. The process of political rebellion begins from the discovery of personal integrity in the face of political oppression; its relationship with metaphysical rebellion identifies the ground of its impetus as an awareness of the full actuality of one's condition – in light of worldly and transcendent obligations.

Although it is a reactionary device against the usurpations of metaphysical rebels, it appears in some ways similar to the response of the metaphysical rebel to the general conditions of the world. Both processes are prompted by being dissatisfied. For the metaphysical rebel, a grievance is raised against God concerning the order of being; for example, in Ivan Karamazov's case, the grievance was the suffering of innocents. The political rebel, however, is also dissatisfied with his situation. He only differs from the metaphysical rebel on the premise that he does not attribute his grievance to the intrinsic organization of the world, but to a sense of injustice against that order. Thus an assessment of a rebel's condition should be informed by not only the ostensible characteristics of it, but the motivating factors behind them. The, 'the world is unfair because it precludes my utopian fantasies' must be aggregated from the 'the world is

unfair, but an injustice is being done against that world, as unfair as it may at times be.’ In the former case, the promise of paradise convinces individuals, in good faith, that the order of things had simply been mistaken in the first place. The metaphysical rebel claims that the utopian cause is consistent with the laws of reality and that this promise can indeed be procreated from, and as an improvement to, the nature of existence. Contrarily, the political rebel understands that this world is not a paradise, yet strives to achieve what he feasibly may within it. It is easy for imperfect men to become disoriented and frustrated against the hopes of such competing claims to truth. It is moreover easy for them to therein mistake the foundations of happiness.

However, it is precisely the disoriented and lost soul that can catalyze the quest for orientation. As exemplified by Dimitri, Ivan, Raskolnikov and the antihero, this notion was a central tenet to Dostoevsky’s work. Havel, too, affirms that the impetus of the turn from untruth is often facilitated by the recognition of being in a state of depravity. Often times, in order to recognize the nature of that condition, men must experience it for themselves firsthand; in his words: “there are times when we must sink to the bottom of our misery to understand truth. . . .”<sup>230</sup> From the nauseating *realization* that one does not know where one is, can come the *understanding* that one has become lost, and in becoming lost, also become miserable. In Ivan’s case, the realization of his philosophy’s untruth proved a confounding insight; it was only his father’s murder that revealed to him the fallacy of his thought. Because he was driven insane by Smerdaykov’s action, he realized the impracticability of his ideas; if only for their effects on his conscience. He will recover, but he will do so because his insanity symbolizes a realization of being in disorder and the necessity for a change in his perception of reality. Thus from the sense

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<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 89

that something does not seem right, man first comes to understand that things are indeed out of order. But when the source of disorder is a political regime, the uneasy feeling it causes can inspire action which can change the world for the better. Socrates understood this: it is what inspired his rebellion against the Athenian order. Plato tells us it was his *daimonion* which cautioned him; gave him orientation towards reality and consequently informed him of the disorder in his experiential world.<sup>231</sup> This “inner voice,” as Harry Järv puts it, “is simply a question of what we now call conscience.”<sup>232</sup>

Havel identifies an attunement to conscience as the first step towards “living within the truth.” Living within the truth is the progression from conscious realization towards political action, aimed at the correlation of man’s consciousness with the larger social order within which it must interact. Havel defines “living within the truth” as follows: “Living within the truth, as humanity’s revolt against an enforced position is . . . an attempt to regain control over one’s own sense of responsibility.”<sup>233</sup> It is a revolt against an enforced position, not an arbitrary reaction to the given circumstances of existence. By this definition an attempt to live within the truth is necessarily a political rebellion. It is an attempt to “regain something” from an “enforced position,” and rebellion can only be considered political if there is a tyrannical encroachment against which one may stake one’s grievance. If there are no imposed constraints on reality, if, for example, there is no law prescribing suffering, then the rebellion against suffering cannot reasonably be executed against a political malefactor. In avenging a grievance for which no one is guilty, men become criminals. The effects of becoming so, as Raskolnikov’s guilty conscience illustrated, means that being conscious of guilt and

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<sup>231</sup> see Voegelin, *Plato*, pg. 8

<sup>232</sup> Havel, *Living in Truth*, pg. 232

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 62

innocence – being aware of truth – is the initial movement towards actually living within the truth.

Thus living within the truth addresses an enforced position by attuning men to the dictates of consciousness. It is a direct attempt to address the personal and pre-political roots of political order. Havel writes: “Initially, this confrontation does not take place on the level of real, institutionalized, quantifiable power which relies on the various instruments of power, but on a different level altogether: the level of human consciousness and conscience, the existential level.”<sup>234</sup> Consciousness and conscience rely on an understanding that every man can derive from his own personal circumstance. The experience of the everyday, in turn, is more powerful than speculative political designs, however eloquently stated or mathematically perfect, when that experience is one of oppression. In order to develop the workings of consciousness within the attunement to conscience, and the role of this attunement within political rebellion, Havel provides the example of the greengrocer.

Take a grocer who places in his display the banner: ‘Workers of the world, unite!’ Posting the peculiar sign is explained: “it has been done that way for years, because everyone does it, and because that is the way it has to be. If he were to refuse, there could be trouble.”<sup>235</sup> The sign is stating the greengrocer’s obedience and submissiveness to the system. The truth of the sign is hidden by the grocer’s obsequiousness to the enforcement made upon him, it might have read: “I am afraid and therefore unquestioningly obedient.”<sup>236</sup> What the sign actually says is hiding the truth of what the sign means. To become aware of his submissiveness means to imply consequences for

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<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 58

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 41

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 42

the greengrocer. If he is to remain true to his awareness, his actions must become redirected in a manner consistent with his interpretation of the world. Havel writes:

“Let us now imagine that one day something in our greengrocer snaps and he stops putting up the slogans merely to ingratiate himself. He stops voting in elections that he knows are a farce. He begins to say what he really thinks at political meetings. And he even finds the strength in himself to express solidarity with those whom his conscience commands him to support. In this revolt the greengrocer steps out of living within the lie. He rejects the ritual and breaks the rules of the game. He discovers once more his suppressed identity and dignity. He gives his freedom a concrete significance. His revolt is an attempt to *live within the truth*.”<sup>237</sup>

The greengrocer example shows that through becoming conscious of a conflict between his conscience and reality; the greengrocer reshapes his actions in an attempt to affect reality in a way conducive to achieving happiness by establishing a harmony between the two entities. The greengrocer’s revolt is against an enforced position; he *can* claim political grievances. He is *forced* to do various things from posting his sign to voting in farcical elections. Although he is not being forced to steal or to murder, the fact that he is forced to do these frivolous things compromises his integrity and personal identity. His very personality is stripped from him, and the consequence of this encroachment is an autonomy in which that defining part of each of us is obliterated.

Returning the Lockean conception of social contract, the purpose of which is maintain “lives, liberties . . . and property,” we find the compromise the greengrocer had been forced to make a concession of the “liberties” Locke’s conception of government is designed to maintain. “The end of law,” he wrote, “is not to abolish or to restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom.”<sup>238</sup> But let us not mistake Locke for an Ivan Karamazov; he is not implying an “everything is lawful” philosophy. In *A Letter Concerning Toleration* he notes that “the sum of all we drive at is that every man may enjoy the same

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<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 55

<sup>238</sup> Locke, *Political Writings*, pg. 289

rights that are granted to others.”<sup>239</sup> He does not argue that all rights should be allowed, merely that rights should not be privileged to a few. Moreover he argues that there is a standard of truth for referencing the scale of liberty. When arguments arise as to which rights are to be permissible, and which not, the measure is “God alone.”<sup>240</sup> Locke argues that with God as the measure, consistent with the theories of consciousness discussed in this essay, man must tend to his soul “first.” He writes:

“For there is no judge upon earth between the supreme magistrate and the people. God, I say, is the only judge in this case, who will retribute unto everyone at the last day according to his deserts; that is, according to his sincerity and uprightness in endeavouring to promote piety, and the public weal and peace of mankind. But what shall be done in the meanwhile? I answer: The principle and chief care of everyone ought to be of his own soul first, and in the next place of the public peace: though yet there are few will think ‘tis peace there, where they see all laid waste.”<sup>241</sup>

Thus the greengrocer’s rebellion is validated by the purpose of it. Aware of an imposition upon his integrity by the regime, *visa vie* the silly sign, his rebellion is motivated by an attempt to maintain personal integrity and to care for his “soul first.” Only with this qualification in hand, may men begin to consider the methods of achieving and maintaining “public peace.”

### III

The transmission of the greengrocer’s realization into the society around him lays the foundation for political change. Change is facilitated through what Havel calls “the independent spiritual, social and political life of society.” He writes:

“... its most important focus is marked by a relatively high degree of inner emancipation. It sails upon the vast ocean of the manipulated life like little boats, tossed by the waves but always bobbing back as visible messengers of living within the truth, articulating the

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<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 430

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 424

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 424

suppressed aims of life . . . it is an area in which living within the truth becomes articulate and materializes in a visible way.”<sup>242</sup>

Concretely, it is a relatively nebulous collection of individuals consciously oppressed by an enforced way of life. Such individuals are engaged in “elementary revolts against manipulation” including “everything from self-education and thinking about the world, to free creative activity and its communication to others, to the most varied free, civic attitudes, including instances of independent self-organization.”<sup>243</sup> The independent life of society manifests as sporadic episodes of consciousness no longer to be surmounted by an enforced existence, sometimes manifesting as simply not doing something – as in the greengrocer’s desire not to post his sign.<sup>244</sup> These eruptions are the work of dissidents, procreated from the independent life of society.<sup>245</sup> Havel explains the work of dissidents as “simply an attempt to create and support the ‘independent life of society’ as an articulated expression of living ‘within the truth.’”<sup>246</sup>

The consequences of political action cannot be overlooked. Dissidents are thrown into a situation, again similar to yet distinct from metaphysical rebellion, in which the stakes of the quest become all-or-nothing. The identification of the rebellion with an all-or-nothing philosophy is an attribute shared between political and metaphysical rebellions. The all-or-nothingness of the metaphysical rebellion is focused around the fulfillment of all immanent desires and in the universal – “everyone or no one” – realization of such fulfillment. In the political form, the all-or-nothing mentality likewise becomes evident, yet as a risk to the rebel’s existence. The political rebel will make his world better, or he

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<sup>242</sup> Havel, *Living in Truth*, pg. 85

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 84

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 86

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 87

will cease to live in it. Because of these stakes, the political rebel is always one who is overwhelmed by his consciousness and simply cannot fail to act on its dictates; as

Voegelin writes: “It is not a game to be played or not.”<sup>247</sup> Havel writes similarly:

“Whether, when, and how this investment will eventually produce dividends in the form of specific political changes is even less possible to predict. But that, of course, is all part of living within the truth. As an existential solution, it takes individuals back to the solid ground of their own identity; as politics it throws them into a game of chance where the stakes are all or nothing. For this reason it is undertaken only by those for whom the former is worth risking the latter, or have come to the conclusion that there is no other way to conduct real politics. . . .”<sup>248</sup>

Because the all-or-nothingness is inherent to both forms of rebellion it does not, at least ostensibly, assist in the aggregation of forms. This is one of the complicating factors that leads to the sense of disorientation. Thus attempts to categorize rebellions as either political or metaphysical must rely upon assessments of motivating factors, as the specifics of the all-or-nothingness vary dependent upon form.

The inspiration for the metaphysical rebel’s all-or-nothingness is an ethical compromise. That is, the system is constructed on the basis that there is no God or afterlife to aspire to. All must be accomplished on earth, or it may as well be for nothing. “Everyone or no one” is facilitated through concentration camps, which are in turn facilitated by breaking ethical boundaries for the sake of the political aim. For without the afterlife, all that exists is political aims.

The exact opposite is true of the nature of the political rebel’s all-or-nothingness; his compromise is entirely materialistic. He risks the life, limb, property, family and future for which he fights, but he risks nothing of his morality. Unlike his antithesis, therefore, he will not arrive at “everyone or no one” in terms of a dogmatized system by

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<sup>247</sup> Voegelin, *Anamnesis*, pg. 93

<sup>248</sup> Havel, *Living in Truth*, pg. 61

which all men must subscribe. He may arrive at an attempt to liberate all men, but the simple act of liberation in and of itself does not impose anything on men save responsibility. This attunement does not close reality from the experience of one's conscience.

The institutional structures which foster the political rebel's conception of "everyone or no one" appear in what Havel calls "parallel structures."<sup>249</sup> Political rebellion is here reaching its crescendo, and the application of consciousness to institutionalization becomes clear: institutions must simply allow for an attunement to consciousness. "Everyone or no one" is a factor here, but only as a qualified reference to liberation. It is only relative insofar as regimes govern and necessarily affect the whole of the societies they control. Consequently the parallel structures of a society will have as their goal the liberation of everyone in an oppressed society. The tenets of such liberation, however, never carry with it the enforcing demands of systemization. Parallel structures are open in nature, reiterating their dichotomous relation to the intolerance of the metaphysical rebel's constructions. The institutional stipulations of the political rebel lack the imposing constraints of the metaphysical rebel. Havel argues:

"... parallel structures do not grow a priori out of a theoretical vision of systemic changes (there are no political sects involved), but from the aims of life and the authentic needs of real people. In fact, all eventual changes in the system . . . have come about as it were *de facto*, from 'below,' because life compelled them to, not because they came before life, somehow directing it or forcing some change on it."<sup>250</sup>

In a similar tone, Havel explains the fusion of communist and noncommunist dissidents in Czechoslovakia in the early 1970s leading to Charter 77. The passage

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<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 100

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 102

reveals the ability of people lacking political similarities to operate within a shared institutional structure. In his words:

“These two groups gradually ‘fused’; they would come together or mingle in various ways, which was a rather symptomatic phenomenon: these people all had very different pasts, but the differences of opinion that had once separated them had long since ceased to be important . . . this was a time when we were beginning to walk upright again, a time of ‘exhaustion with exhaustion,’ a time when many different groups of people had had enough of their isolation and felt that, if something was going to change, they had to start looking beyond their own horizons. Thus the ground was prepared for some kind of wider, common activity. . . . It was not easy for everyone – many had to suppress or overcome their ancient inner aversions – but everyone was able to do it, because we all felt that it was in common cause, and because something had taken shape here that was historically quite new: the embryo of a genuine social tolerance . . . [which] would be impossible to wipe out of the national memory. . . . It was not easy for many noncommunists to make that step, but for many communists it was difficult in the extreme. It was a stepping out toward life, toward a genuine state of thinking about common matters, a transcendence of their own shadow, and the cost of doing so was saying goodbye forever to the principle of the ‘leading role of the party.’”<sup>251</sup>

By transfiguring the role of political action from a formulation for life into a guard against such formulations, the parallel structure reveals a truth beyond the enclave of any particular political faction, and extends its applicability to any faction whose well being and identity had been suppressed by the enforcements of a systemic government. Such a program removes political and philosophical differences from political order, instead allowing for a plurality of factions to exist within any particular society or regime.

Parallel structures therefore argue for the ideas of openness and toleration.

Whereas the Inquisitor closed the range of experience by assuming the responsibility of freedom for all of society upon himself, the process of openness allows men to discover responsibility for themselves. The acceptance of individual responsibility, spread throughout a society, transfigures the conscious impetus of personal well-being into a prescription for social stability as well. In Havel’s words:

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<sup>251</sup> Havel, Václav, trans. By. Paul Wilson, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvížďala*. Vintage Books, New York: 1991. pgs. 121, 130, 138

“Historical experience teaches us that any genuinely meaningful point of departure in an individual’s life usually has an element of universality about it. In other words, it is not something partial, accessible only to a restricted community, and not transferable to any other. On the contrary, it must be potentially accessible to everyone; it must foreshadow a general solution and, thus, it is not just the expression of an introverted, self-contained responsibility that individuals have to and for themselves alone, but responsibility to and for the *world*. Thus it would be quite wrong to understand the parallel structures and the parallel *polis* as a retreat into a ghetto and as an act of isolation, addressing itself only to the welfare of those who had decided on such a course, and who are indifferent to the rest. It would be wrong, in short, to consider it an essentially group solution that has nothing to do with the general solution. Such a concept would, from the start, alienate the notion of living within the truth from its proper point of departure which is of concern for others, transforming it ultimately into just another more sophisticated version of ‘living within the lie. . . .’ Patočka used to say that the most interesting thing about responsibility is that we carry it with us everywhere. That means that responsibility is ours, that we must accept it and grasp it here, now, in this place in time and space where the Lord has set us down, and that we cannot lie our way out of it by moving somewhere else. . . . Christianity is an example of an opposite way out: it is a point of departure for me here and now – but only because anyone, anywhere, at any time, may avail themselves of it. In other words, the parallel *polis* points beyond itself and only makes sense as an act of deepening one’s responsibility to and for the whole world, as a way of discovering the most appropriate *locus* for this responsibility, not as an escape from it.”<sup>252</sup>

This responsibility implies the acceptance of truth as “beyond” material influence. It is inspired by the *noetic* form of reason described by Voegelin’s theory of consciousness; a reason informed by the transcendent ground of truth. The consequence of the attunement to the divine ground counteracts against tendencies toward immanent fulfillment. By invalidating the idea of gnostic systemization, the placement of the ground as “beyond” simultaneously validates the responsibility that, lacking such an attunement, would appear absurd. Havel writes:

“. . . the kind of hope I often think about . . . I understand above all as a state of mind, not a state of the world. Either we have hope within us or we don’t; it is a dimension of the soul, and it’s not essentially dependent on some particular observation of the world or estimate of the situation. Hope is not a prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons. I don’t think you can explain it as a mere derivative of something here, of some movement, or of some favorable signs in the world. I feel that its deepest roots are in the transcendental, just as the roots of human

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<sup>252</sup> Havel, *Living in Truth*, pg. 103-104

responsibility are, though of course I can't . . . say anything concrete about the transcendental.”<sup>253</sup>

The apolitical structure of Havel's parallel structures finds its organizational impetus in openness. The closure of any articulation of this experience facilitates the formulation of a system which enforces a particular interpretation of that experience upon man. Hence, the parallel structures developing in response to a gnostic system are, as necessitated by this opposition, tolerant and open in an attempt to correlate experiential reality with the dictates of consciousness. As this experience is grounded in a transcendental realm which defies precise description, the manifestation of this experience into political reality takes the form of tolerance and openness.

Havel therefore describes dissent movements as “explicitly defensive movements: they exist to defend human beings and the genuine aims of life against the aims of the system.”<sup>254</sup> It is not the task of such men to construct systems in opposition to an extant system but merely to rebel against such an idea. The task of the dissident, therefore, is simply to point out the encroachment of the system upon the demands of life. Dissidents do not construct systems to replace the ones against which they are rebelling. At the moment they undertake such a task, they have overstepped the bounds of political rebellion and embarked upon a course of metaphysical rebellion; it is this quest for system construction which distinguishes the two.

The work of dissidents in the construction of parallel structures is therefore merely to provide a conduit through which a system's obfuscations can become evident, and through which shared experiences of oppression can be illuminated for what they are. Havel has perceptively written that “what is true about the will of the regime . . . is not

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<sup>253</sup> Havel, *Disturbing the Peace*, pg. 181

<sup>254</sup> Havel, *Living in Truth*, pg. 88

necessarily true of the real spiritual potential of our community.”<sup>255</sup> The work of dissidents and parallel structures, therefore, emerges as a cultural underground running against the propagations of a system. Through such an underground, prolific but suppressed sensations of political oppression and injustice can gain momentum. Through the dissemination of this experience, men’s own reservations find reinforcement and perhaps the courage to act.

#### IV

Havel defines this underground movement as “nothing more and nothing less than a culture which, for various reasons will not, cannot or may not reach out to the public through the media which fall under state control.”<sup>256</sup> Therefore the underground emerges in cultural movements through mediums evasive of state censorship. Literature, music and philosophical discourse provide ways in which dissidents can bring their grievances to a forum for the sharing of ideas. Through the dissemination of ideas, society can realize the prolific nature of discontent and inspire the quest for political change. For example, in discussing Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim’s *Occult Philosophy*, Havel relates his understanding of it to Michael Jackson’s famous song, *Thriller*, saying “I only feel that chance – that great poet – is stammering an indistinct message about the desperate state of the world.”<sup>257</sup> Through the dissemination of such a lamentation, the repressed sensation of desperation gains momentum as men begin to understand that the sensation of reality being obfuscated is not exclusive to their particular experience.

Havel’s own plays influenced the parallel culture in Czechoslovakia. A performance of *The Beggar’s Opera* spread sentiments of disaffection throughout

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<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.* pgs. 124-125

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 127

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 161

Czechoslovakia's underground culture. Jiří Voskovec wrote passionately of its evocative appeal: “. . . the whirlwind of the Great Communal Nonsense; on this tiny planet, it attacks us all, regardless of political or other affiliation.”<sup>258</sup> Indeed, Voskovec's impressions were shared with colleagues. Edá Kriseová writes:

“In an atmosphere without drama and without narrative, something was starting to happen. People once again showed signs of life. The communal experience in the theater gave strength to many people who were soon to become signatories and spokespeople for Charter 77. That free act brought liberation to everyone who participated and whose participation created and fulfilled it.”<sup>259</sup>

The power of this shared experience gained momentum in the parallel culture. Recalling his first meeting with Ivan Jirous, when he first heard songs by Czech underground artists such as the Plastic People and DG 307, Havel said: “there was disturbing magic in the music, and a kind of inner warning. Here was something serious and genuine, an internally free articulation of an existential experience that everyone who had not become completely obtuse must understand.”<sup>260</sup> A short time later, Jirous and nineteen of his comrades were arrested. The occurrence illuminated the duplicity of the Czech regime, as Havel writes:

“What was happening here was not a settling of accounts with political enemies, who to a certain extent were prepared for the risks they were taking. This case had nothing whatsoever to do with a struggle between two competing political cliques. It was something far worse: an attack by the totalitarian system on life itself, on the very essence of human freedom and integrity. The objects of this attack were not veterans of old political battles; they had no political past, or even any well-defined political positions. They were simply young people who wanted to live in their own way, to make music they liked, to sing what they wanted to sing, to live in harmony with themselves, and to express themselves in a truthful way. A judicial attack against them, especially one that went unnoticed, could become the precedent for something truly evil: the regime could well start locking up everyone who thought independently and who expressed himself independently, even if he did so only in private. So these arrests were genuinely alarming: they were an attack on the spiritual and intellectual freedom of man,

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<sup>258</sup> Kriseova, *Václav Havel*, pg. 91

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.* pgs. 94-95

<sup>260</sup> Havel, *Disturbing the Peace*, pgs. 126-127

camouflaged as an attack on criminality, and therefore designed to gain support from a disinformed public. Here power had unintentionally revealed its own most proper intention: to make life entirely the same, to surgically remove from it everything that was even slightly different, everything that was highly individual, everything that stood out, that was independent and unclassifiable.”<sup>261</sup>

Because Czech society had been inculcated with a prolific but underground dissident movement and parallel culture, the arrests inspired questions – instead of becoming a mechanism for the silencing of them. Havel took it upon himself to incite support for the musicians. He was joined by other intellectuals of various ideological affiliations, such as Jiří Nemeč and Jan Patočka, making the arrests a formative event in the movement towards the development of Charter 77: “The people who gathered outside the courtroom were a prefiguration of Charter 77. The same atmosphere that dominated then, of equality, solidarity, conviviality, togetherness, and willingness to help each other, an atmosphere evoked by a common cause and a common threat, was also the atmosphere around Charter 77. . . .”<sup>262</sup>

This movement was not without its risks. As stated, all-or-nothingness is inherent to political rebellion. The movement forced the government to respond accordingly, which meant either to suppress or assimilate resistance, and the modus operandi of totalitarian systems is suppression. Havel was himself arrested three times, and detained on numerous other occasions. Patočka died in prison of a heart attack in 1977, after eleven hours of police interrogation.<sup>263</sup> For such costs, the movement was not spontaneously pandemic. As late as 1987, Janus Bugajski had noted that Charter 77 had not gained widespread support. He writes:

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<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.* pgs. 128-129

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 132

<sup>263</sup> Bugajski, *Czechoslovakia*, pg. 24

“Powerful socioeconomic pressures and sociopsychological factors that make people fearful of political involvement continue to operate in Czechoslovak society. Autonomous activities are widely perceived as counterproductive, because they could result in more severe across-the-board repressions and ultimately threaten living standards. A section of the population even seems to resist Charter 77 for posing a menace to the relative tranquility, however much they may ultimately support its aims. In addition, many ordinary citizens view with suspicion any movement that involves former Communist officials, making little distinction between variants of socialism. As a result, the majority of the population remains passive and avoids involvement in unofficial activities even if they sympathize with the principles and objectives.”<sup>264</sup>

But because the movement was carried out in secretive circles and *samizdat* publications, the explosion into revolution came as a shock to many people. The ineptitude of the government to stop the movement only became apparent with the widespread realization that the state was, in fact, incapable of overcoming the societal will. Bernard Wheaton and Zdeněk Kavan illustrate how the Velvet Revolution was the climax of a perhaps unforeseeable crescendo of dissent. The impetus of it derived not from the identifiable catalysts to social scientists – the effects socioeconomic factors on psychological dispositions – but from the surmounting urge to don political responsibility as individuals. They write:

“The collapse of the regime came as a surprise to many people who, for reasons connected with the general psychological and social conditions, had never challenged it. The impact of the evaporation of fear was of critical importance, and the longer the government failed to react, the more self-strengthening the movement became. The students and CF [Civic Forum] opened a door to mass action during the revolution, enabling people to throw off their fear and inspiring them to demonstrate on a massive scale that finally helped make them aware of the power of the collective will. This awareness had been absent in the two decades of the normalized regime, where the survival paradigm produced a general, sullen, involuntary cooperation with the party and state.”<sup>265</sup>

Consequently, the Velvet Revolution was achieved without the use of violence. The insurmountability of the parallel movement disclosed even to the government its own

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<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 34

<sup>265</sup> Wheaton, Bernard and Kavan, Zdeněk. *The Velvet Revolution: Czechoslovakia, 1988-1991*. Westview Press, Boulder: 1992. pg. 115

incompetency. Although achieved through the price of personal sacrifices and hardships to particular rebels such as Havel and Patočka, the Revolution itself of 1989 was carried out peacefully. Wheaton and Kavan note that this:

“. . . had much to do with the character and role of the dissident movement. It had a relatively long history, and, though participants were few and relatively isolated from the population, had laid down extensive networks. . . . the Czech dissidents had contacts and sympathizers as high as the upper echelons of the party, [and] linkages between dissidents and nondissidents were established without difficulty, as most activists and sympathizers were from what the Slovak clerical right described as the “Prague intellectual ghetto.” This was not large, everybody knowing or knowing of everybody else, and these connections led into most artistic and cultural institutions.”<sup>266</sup>

Hence the Velvet Revolution occurred in a manner consistent with the theoretical sketch developed in Havel’s essays. The dissident movement founded itself on a defiance of ideology and promulgated its ideas through cultural networks – mediums through which disaffection could be evidently yet discretely detected. The movement whittled away at the dominance of the regime by continually forcing it to suppress apparently innocent people – students, musicians and thinkers – who were obviously inspired by a sense of self and whose actions carried benign, even remedial, social consequences. The conscious collective realization of the regime’s oppressive nature loosened fears and, as a surprise to many, swiftly erupted into peaceful revolution forcing the government’s capitulation. The regime came under attack from all sides and all from factions; all grieved by a general suppression of consciousness and of identity. It could not, at once, respond to the seven hundred and fifty thousand souls on Prague’s Letná Plain.

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<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.* pg. 118

This example suggests that the tenets of truth cannot be annihilated but merely obfuscated, that the suppression of conscious reality for the achievement of political ends finds its greatest enemies in the souls of men brave enough to adhere to their consciences. Governments can burn books, but they can never keep them from being written. As Havel writes:

“ . . . in spite of all the tasks that were constantly assigned to it, literature would keep on doing only what it wanted. And if by chance it did not make an effort to carry out its assigned tasks, it was invariably the worse for it. Its only hope, no less so under the conditions of ‘parallelism’ (and especially then – that is why I chose them!) is to ignore the tasks anyone would assign to it, no matter how good his intentions, and go on doing only what it wants to do.”<sup>267</sup>

If it is the innate ability of literature to do what it wants, then it is probable that it will indeed become corrupted along with the corruption of a society. I am not arguing that literature, art, and a cultural insight magically correct the woes of an afflicted society. Infact, Voegelin refers to the German literary disposition in the twentieth century as “highly concentrated imbecility” in part responsible for the condition of that society.<sup>268</sup> Yet the concentration of stupidity is the facile account of a corrupting society. Literature, much like the men who write it, is innately disposed to be either ingenuous or duplicitous. Its magic relies in its ability to influence, yet the ways in which it transfigures the world is always dependent upon the character of its authors – for which there exists no magical panacea.

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<sup>267</sup> Havel, *Living in Truth*, pg. 128

<sup>268</sup> Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans*, pg. 252

### Conclusion: Climbing Golgotha

The foregoing analysis has argued that the term rebellion applies to two ostensibly similar actions that stem from juxtaposing inspirations. Rebellion implies the abnegation of one form of power, and the acceptance of another. Through it can be detected the bounds of the authority to which men are willing or able to submit; political action and reorganization expresses both the grievances men raise concerning the nature of existence, and the extent to which men can will changes to that existence.

But that existence is complicated; in it are involved laws of two distinct authorities, worldly and divine. We are obliged to the divine, but to the worldly only insofar as they are themselves in accord with divine sanctions. Political action is only a viable mechanism for addressing grievances raised by a political malefactor that has disturbed the balance between worldly and transcendent laws. This form of political action, political rebellion, implies the abnegation of a political power because of its oppressive nature. This action leads into the restoration of an equitable balance of power between a society and its government.

Political action inspired by a grievance that transcends politics is not political rebellion. Although such action involves action in the political sphere, it is inspired by a grievance against the general nature of existence as a human being regardless of political circumstance. The metaphysical rebel's action is differentiated from the action of the political rebel because it is executed against an innocent political actor; it is a tyrannical and criminal encroachment against the rights of someone who is simply performing his just role within society as ruler. But because it is motivated by a grievance, and executed

as an attempt to better the nature of existence, its act of refusal relates it to political rebellion.

Not only the motivations, but the consequences of the metaphysical rebel's action distinguish it from political action inspired by political rebellion. The action of the political rebel leads to a political situation that improves the given political conditions by restoring the authenticity that had been vitiated by oppression. As the rebellion against an oppressive political authority, it restores to the individual some right, liberty or property formerly restricted to them by the actions of their government. It implies a restoration of dignity, integrity and sense of personal value usurped by a governing authority.

The action of the metaphysical rebel, contrarily, does not lead into an equitable power balance between the members and rulers of a society. It proclaims this end, but is aimed at the furtherance of a particular interest. The consequent situation is of an unbalanced power structure in which one faction usurps from the others for private gain; metaphysical rebellion creates the very situation which validates the action inherent to political rebellion: oppression.

But both the consequences of the political rebel and the metaphysical rebel are derived from the disruption of political order. The two acts have therefore come to share a familial structure within our discourse; the act of renouncing one form of authority for the installation of another binds the two forms of rebellions. And perhaps they should be so understood; rebellion represents the normative extremes of political action between which the inspirations for political order must necessarily be bound. The act of political rebellion, in creating an equitable balance of power within a society creates the situation

which can only be changed by a decline into metaphysical rebellion. In respecting the freedoms of one another we in turn abstain from the indulgence of injustice for the sake of personal gain. The condition of selflessness, however, is the condition from which the temptations of selfishness arise; the only essential change from being selfless is to be more selfish. So as political rebellion restores the worth of a people, the only essential change from it is toward the corruption fostered by metaphysical rebellion. In this way the existence of one condition encourages the arrival of the other, if only because they are the experiential limits of their motivating ideals.

Rebellion is therefore something different than simply the attempt to replace one power with another; in it is represented the very bounds of human action and potential, beyond which men cannot reach. It symbolizes the culmination of dissent; following it is the return to the humdrum of mundane life – to the acceptance of the given order of things. Political rebellion institutes an order that is as open to the transcendent ground as a political order can be; metaphysical rebellion creates an order that is as closed to that ground as a political order can be. Thus in political rebellion is represented the human embodiment of that which is good and decent about existence, and just that.

Metaphysical rebellion discloses the nature of that which is essentially and only evil.

Between these bounds man can be observed to ebb and flow; but action beyond them is impossible. Rebellion occurs at that point where man begins to be pulled mysteriously away from one antipode and towards the other; it is the forthright attempt to grapple with and embody the essence represented at that extreme, and to forsake forever the balance of what is.

This point brings us back to Dostoevsky's offerings on rebellion, which culminates with the dialogue between Christ and the Inquisitor; he embodies these human limits to action in these characters. Christ is the political rebel acting on inherent goodness, and the Inquisitor is the metaphysical rebel acting on inherent evilness; in the two are the ideals between which humanity is torn: "God and the devil are fighting there and the battlefield is the heart man."

The structure of the dialogue between Christ and the Inquisitor implies the nature of the relationship of the good and evil entities involved, that in the unceasing go-around of human existence there is a correct action towards which we ought to be directed, even if even the best of us never will always be so. It implies a desired end, made unattainable by a fickle human nature that can at best only come close to it. It illustrates that humanity is endowed with the predilection for both ends, that it is perpetually strung between them, but that each end has opposing consequences for both the political orders and the personal experiences of men. It leads us to conclude that the best political order is therefore the one that leaves the door to transcendence open, that it is simply the one that does not dogmatize an ideal and replace what is good about humanity with a paradigm for action, that the best political order is the one that does not vitiate the human experience.

Dostoevsky discloses this end through the one-sided structure of the dialogue between the two characters. Try as he might have, the Inquisitor's attempt to enforce a change in human nature itself could not have succeeded, as the bounds of human nature represent the limits of moral obligations and therefore of conscionable action. Ivan's "new man that might overstep the moral boundaries of the old slave-man" proposes the

changing of a static boundary defined by transcendent obligations that are unaffected by worldly inclinations. Because this boundary is an indelible limit to action, the truth represented therein speaks for itself; the inability to negotiate from its grasp is implacable. It speaks to men through their conscience and through their being conscious of it. It is not, therefore, subject to being transfigured through eloquent or convincing argument; but this does not mean that imperfect haughty men cannot rebel against it.

The Inquisitor's design, which we have already developed, represents this rebellion. It represents all that man might defiantly do to institute himself as a god, but it is dependent upon the creation of this "new man that might overstep the boundaries of the old slave-man." This particular yearning represents the single great obstacle to the Inquisitor's design: He may constitute any political institution that he can willy-nilly contrive, but he cannot create the man that his paradigm demands. The man exists as a given; that given-ness and concrete existence as man is the natural renunciation of the Inquisitor's temptation.

Christ's role in the dialogue represents this renunciation. Through Him Dostoevsky reinforces the argument that human nature is defined by the human conscience, and that this qualification limits human capacity. Dostoevsky's Christ argues that man as he exists represents the correction to the error of the Inquisitor.

Because the nature of man is static, Christ's rebellion manifests contrary to the manifestation of the Inquisitor. Whereas the Inquisitor contrives a system by which his grievance can be theoretically rectified, Christ's rebellion is not defined by any system developed in response to the arguments made by the Inquisitor. Instead he passes through the dialogue in silent patient defiance:

“When the Inquisitor ceased speaking he waited some time for his Prisoner to answer him. His silence weighed upon him. He saw that the Prisoner had listened intently and quietly all the time, looking gently in his face and evidently not wishing to reply. The old man longed for Him to say something, however bitter and terrible. But he suddenly approached the old man in silence and softly kissed him on his bloodless aged lips. That was all his answer.”<sup>269</sup>

An interpretation of Christ’s silence leads into the political consequences it. An understanding of it is reliant upon the biblical account of Christ’s trial and death, which reinforces Christ’s rebuttal to the Inquisitor – but offers a bit more:

“And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered to him never a word; insomuch that the government marveled greatly.”<sup>270</sup>

In both accounts Christ refuses to quibble with a worldly authority that has called his auspices into question. Only through the biblical account, however, can we garner a sense of that silence as representative of a truth that does not stoop to defending itself: it is the truth, it needs no defense: it is what is. The Bible teaches that three days after men had forced Him to climb up to Golgotha, scourged, mocked, tortured and crucified Him, Christ illustrated for them the nature of His inimitable truth, saying on Easter Sunday: “I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world.”<sup>271</sup> He could be silent while bearing his cross because the arguments He might make could not affect the unchangeable nature of the truth He knew.

If Christ’s silent truth is that which is actually true, how can we reconcile our political demands with that truth? The question might appear at first somewhat paradoxical, as all political orders are dependent upon some type of system or paradigm by which those order’s imperatives and priorities are determined. How, therefore, can

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<sup>269</sup> Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pg. 243

<sup>270</sup> Matt. 27:12-14 (KJV)

<sup>271</sup> Matt. 28:20 (KJV)

man arrive a political order or system which is, effectively, non-systemic – a political order that is actually ordered, but not reliant upon any particular system for determining that order? Christ’s silence suggests a qualified answer to these questions, which Havel has captured succinctly: “By itself, the law can never create anything better.”<sup>272</sup>

Liberal and democratic institutions are the concrete manifestations of this answer, as the institutions wrought through Havel’s Velvet Revolution suggest; the tolerance contrived therein provides man with the opportunity to personally discover the transcendent ground of truth – it does not formulate this truth for him, rather it simply protects his ability to attune himself to it. But this institutional design is a qualified answer to our questions; dogmatized liberalism is the system of the Grand Inquisitor. By paying careful attention to the qualifications of political revolution in liberal thought, as drawn out by John Locke in his *Second Treatise on Government*, we find the balance drawn between liberalism and the use of law.

Locke’s theory makes it necessary that revolutionary political change be catalyzed by the precondition of an oppressive political regime, one that has infringed on men’s “lives, liberties . . . and property.” Concordantly, this scheme defines the sole prerogative of laws to maintain men’s individual responsibilities for these things; laws can not be employed as a tool, used by a political actor for the aim of worldly affluence. In Locke freedom and the law go hand-in-hand; laws find their place in encouraging men to respect the freedoms of one another, even if this means forsaking some aspirations of their own. Voegelin illustrates how a non-systemic political order is balanced between integrity and accommodation, but suggests that Locke’s paradigm is reliant upon men willing to abide by freedom’s qualifications:

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<sup>272</sup> Havel, *Living in Truth*, pg. 99

“ . . . democracy cannot work if its members have principles and want to realize them . . . every society that works is based on courtesy, on compromises, on concession to other people. Whoever has a fixed idea and wants this to be carried into effect, that is to say, whoever interprets freedom of speech and freedom of conscience to the effect that the society should behave in the way he considers right, is not qualified to be a citizen of a democracy. The political interplay of every society . . . is based on the fact that one thinks a lot about what the others do, but does not say it; that one is always aware that in the society there is more than one good to achieve, not only the good of freedom, but also the good of security, the good of welfare, and that if I specialize in one or other of these goods, I could thereby bring the whole society into disorder, because I could destroy the balance between the realization of goods on which the society is based. I could even destroy it if I kept advocating the good that is my hobbyhorse and I want to get accepted and realized at this time and if I continually forced it on the others, for they will then become recalcitrant and pigheaded.”<sup>273</sup>

Man must reconcile his own needs and the needs of his society, and understand that this harmony is a precondition for his freedom. It is an observation whose realization is reliant upon the foundation of men willing to share, willing to live together in a society and eager to work hard in order to make that society great. It is an observation that echoes the plea of Alexis de Tocqueville, who understood that the rulers of his time “sought only to use men in order to make things great;” and wished:

“that they would try a little more to make great men; that they would set less value on the work, and more upon the workman; that they would never forget that a nation cannot long remain strong when every man belonging to it is individually weak; and that no form of combination of social polity has yet been devised to make an energetic people out of a community of pusillanimous and enfeebled citizens.”<sup>274</sup>

These great men are not inculcated through political devices, but only through an awareness of and an attunement to the ground that defines the parameters to such devices. De Tocqueville is arguing for a political scheme that does not enforce its desires upon men, but for one that allows men to be conscious of their own obligations to themselves and to their societies. His great men are not dependant upon any renovation to human

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<sup>273</sup> Voegelin, *Hitler and the Germans*, pg. 84-85

<sup>274</sup> De Tocqueville, Alexis, ed. By Heffner, Richard, *Democracy in America*. Mentor Books, New York: 1956. pg. 312-313

nature but upon a realization of the full capacity of that nature. De Tocqueville dreams of a practicable man, one that need not overstep the boundaries of man as he is to realize his greatness; he dreams of men in deference to God.

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## Vita

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