

The Tragedy of a Freely Given Love: Images of Divinity in Tolstoy and Dostoevsky

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Abstract

This paper examines contrasting images of the sacred in Russian literature by comparing two renowned nineteenth-century Russian novelists—Count Leo Nikaleyovich Tolstoy (1828-1910) and Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky (1821-1881). Rather than attempt to compare these two paradigm figures on all points, a tradition begun by Dmitri Merezhkovsky in his 1901 book *Tolstoy and Dostoevsky* and continued by George Steiner in *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky: An Essay in Contrast* (1960), this paper focuses upon the Tolstoyan and Dostoevskian images of Jesus, and the implications of such for a broader discussion of the meaning and significance of Christian—and perhaps, more generally, religious—suffering. In short, this paper has the following three goals: 1) outline the contrasting religious visions of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, focusing largely upon the “Grand Inquisitor” parable from Dostoevsky’s *Brothers Karamazov*; 2) examine some instances of divergent artistic depictions of Jesus and the Crucifixion, as a way of underscoring contrasting religious worldviews; 3) discuss the place of suffering in religion and religious imagery, specifically within the Christian tradition.

The Radical Freedom of Divinity

According to the Gospels, Jesus’ last words were either: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” (Luke 23:46), or “It is finished!” / “It has been accomplished!” (John 20:30), or “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me!” (*E’lo-i, E’lo-i, la’ma sabach-tha’ni!*) (Mark 15:34; Matt 27:46). What do these differences imply? Which is true? If the last is not the most historically probable, it is certainly the most aesthetically beautiful, as well as religiously interesting. In comparison, Luke’s version strikes one as rather commonplace, since the words don’t evoke anything other than what we might expect—i.e., Jesus’ submission to his fate. John’s is somewhat more dramatic, but rather cold and severe, and not altogether inspiring. Mark’s and Matthew’s cry of anger shows pain, humiliation, suffering, even *doubt!*

Acknowledging, as we must, that these words are one instance among many of Christian (and perhaps Jesus’ own) “misreading” of Jewish Scripture—the phrase is “plagiarized” from Psalm 89—we cannot allow this recognition to impersonalize the cry; in fact, the connection with the Psalm (rather than, say, the contrasting, and more famous Psalm 23: “The Lord is my Shepherd) and the Psalmic corpus, in which we see much doubt, despair, and even contempt for divinity, may deepen the sense of anxiety and hopelessness expressed (see e.g., Psalm 89 and Psalm 22). Not only does it give us pause to rethink Jesus as the “Son” of God (and what this really means), it no doubt caused much embarrassment to many early Christians, who were intent on showing Jesus’s “divinity.” Some Gnostics, for instance, claimed that the divinity of Jesus had fled before the Crucifixion; thus it was merely the human Jesus who calls out in this way. The idea of God on the Cross was hard enough for many to stomach, but the idea of God *suffering* on a broken tree, and calling out, in such a cowardly, or we might say, “human” way, that He, or the part of He who is the Son, has been forsaken by the part of He who is the Father. The idea is almost blasphemous.

The Man of Sorrows

Yet this image, for all its strangeness and power, remains an indisputable aspect of Christian orthodoxy (here I mean “normative” Christianity, not Russian Orthodoxy). A number

of writers and artists, in particular, have reveled in the image of the persecuted, suffering “Man of Sorrows” that the *Eloi, Eloi* gives to us. Perhaps artists find it easier to relate to the “outsider” and “forsaken” element of the Jesus story than to the triumphalist version that took over the Christian self-image after the legitimization and gradual hegemony of the Christian religion after Constantine. I do not think this should be taken further than a conjecture, however, because, as I hope to show here, writers, as well as artists, can stand on either side of this division—or even outside of such. Rather, I think it is more interesting to suggest that there is a particular vision shared by writers and artists, which goes along with the meditation, and even obsession with risk, pain, and suffering; and another vision which seeks, if not to deny, than to relegate these elements to the background, in proposing a new, improved vision of the world.

Dostoevsky’s Religious Vision: Freedom, Suffering, Risk

Let us turn, briefly, to the religious vision of Dostoevsky, as a prime example of a great artist who was most definitely of the former camp. As Nikolai Berdyaev writes of Dostoevsky: For him,

ideas are fiery billows, never frozen categories; they are bound up with the destiny of man, of the world, of God himself. They determine these destinies. They are ontological; that is to say, comprise within themselves the very substance of being, and control a latent energy as destructive as dynamite. (12)

Yet, for all this destructive potential, ideas have “life-giving energy”—they provide sustenance for survival, just as they destroy our certainties and our commonplace assumptions. Dostoevsky’s major works can be understood as feverish duels between various ideas; but what makes them so amazing as fictional works is what the Russian critic Mikhail Bakhtin has called their “dialogism”—the fact that, within *Demons* (1872) and *The Idiot* (1869) there exist a number of voices, none of which is in any way omniscient. Dostoevsky does not, in his novels and stories, preach (though he was prone to do so in his non-fictional musings.) His opinions reveal themselves, but only through a complex exchange of

voices. Though he is sometimes called a “realist,” Dostoevsky is no Zola—his novels contain scant description of physical reality; in a sense, they are not really novels at all, but are extensive plays—*epic drama*, perhaps—in that it is dialogue, usually in feverish night meetings in a hovel, or scandalous scenes in a sitting-room, that drives the action. It is no surprise that he has been called “the Russian Shakespeare.”

Berdyaev provides what is perhaps the best analysis of Dostoevsky’s “spirituality” in his book (though, as the author himself warns, much of it is Berdyaev’s own vision filtered through his subject). Berdyaev stresses the “anthropological” concern of Dostoevsky, for whom the “riddle of the universe is within man, and to solve the question of man is to solve the question of God” (39). Dostoevsky sees the human being in a situation of almost perpetual strife and misery, in a state of suffering that leads to a necessary questioning of divinity, and the power of divinity to “heal the world.” The only resolution for the “conflict” between estranged and alienated “man” and God is through the “God-man,” who is Jesus Christ. This idea, of the God-man, while it is of course recognized in Western Christianity, plays a much greater role in Eastern Orthodoxy. Only through such a “mediator” can the tragic destiny of humanity be solved. Humanism, to which Dostoevsky once adhered, could not adequately address what the Spanish writer Miquel de Unamuno called the “tragic sense of life.”

Such a vision, while it gives some hope, does not deny the reality of human suffering; in fact, it even glorifies suffering to an extent. Only through such, it would seem, can the spirit become truly free. In *Notes From Underground* (1864), Dostoevsky’s first in a remarkable series of novels after his break with the realism and humanitarian radicalism of his youth, the narrator says:

It is possible that, as well as loving his own welfare, man is fond of suffering, even passionately fond of it.... I am sure that man will never renounce the genuine suffering that comes of ruin and chaos. Why, suffering is the one and only source of knowledge.

Berdyaev here, as always, is not an impartial reader; he agrees quite heartily with Dostoevsky’s appraisal, and even suggests “[t]here is a freeing of the spirit and joy to be had from reading Dostoevsky, the joy that one gets from suffering” (30). But this idea raises some serious issues. For one, the glorification of suffering can easily be, and has been in the past, used by those in power (i.e., whether Church or State) to justify the poverty, pain, and misery of those without power. Also, Dostoevsky speaks of the suffering that is, like that of the God-man Jesus, a necessary expiation of the sins of humankind. But what of the less cosmic version: the pain of a starving child, for instance? This example, in fact, haunted Dostoevsky: the problem of *innocent suffering* is raised again and again in his writings. How can such pain be “justified” vis-à-vis a loving deity?

The Grand Inquisitor

This is precisely the question that provokes Ivan, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, to compose his parable called “The Grand Inquisitor.” Ivan explains to his younger brother Alyosha his disgust with God, and with the suffering that God “lets” happen in the world; the example he uses is the *innocent suffering of the defenseless*. Ivan wants “justice”—and not some abstract justice of the heavens, or even a final judgment to be looked toward—but a justice of the world, here and now.

“I don’t want more suffering. And if the sufferings of children go to swell the sum of sufferings which was necessary to pay for truth, then I protest that the truth is not worth such a price” (126). Ivan, as he puts it, believes in God, but he doesn’t like the way God runs things; thus he is “returning his ticket” (126). When Alyosha challenges Ivan, saying that he has forgotten the One who can forgive everything, even the torture of children, Ivan produces his parable. The setting is quite simple: it is the time of the Inquisition, and Jesus returns to the earthly realm—not as a grand arbiter of judgment, but as a brief visitor to the land “where the flames were crackling around the heretics” (128). Jesus is apprehended by a Cardinal—the Grand Inquisitor himself—who the day before had “successfully” burnt a hundred heretics.

In brief, the point of the Inquisitor’s argument is that Jesus has failed the world, in a number of related ways, but primarily by opting for *freedom* over *compulsion* in matters of religion. This choice, which to most contemporary readers seems obvious, is phrased in such a way as to render our “liberal” assumptions somewhat problematic. Most important in the Inquisitor’s own “humanitarianism”—he does not argue for compulsion in religion because he is a power-hungry theocrat, but because human beings are much better off, materially as well as spiritually, when they are not faced with the burdens of freedom. Suffering, he argues, can be eliminated, or at least greatly reduced, but only if we dispense with human freedom. The key passage is the point at which the Inquisitor says: “For fifteen centuries we have been wrestling with Thy freedom, but now it is ended and over for good... today, people are more persuaded than ever that they have perfect freedom, yet they have brought their freedom to us and laid it humbly at our feet” (128). Later, he says, referring to Satan’s temptation of Jesus in the wilderness: “nothing has ever been more insupportable for a man and a human society than freedom” (129). And finally, the Inquisitor suggests that people, after having suffering for so long because of their freedom, will eventually “understand themselves, at last, that freedom and bread enough for all are inconceivable together, for never, never will they be able to share between them! They will be convinced, too, that they can never be free, for they are weak, vicious, worthless, and rebellious” (130).

Dostoevsky’s famous parable produces not merely an image of divinity—whether religion should be a free choice or compulsion—but also a vision of human nature and of what can be expected from human beings. For it may be that our “universal and everlasting craving” is not for freedom and liberty, but rather for the security of having someone or something to worship, and something to worship in common with others. This idea reflects Nietzsche’s later notion of the “herd” or “slave” mentality prominent in Christian history; but while Nietzsche saw this as negative, the Inquisitor suggests, with some justification perhaps, that it is for the benefit of most, particularly the weak and defenseless. Of course, the Grand Inquisitor parable raises many questions, some of which beg for a lifetime of engagement. Here I will try to focus the issue of suffering; more exactly, the image of a *suffering god* and the implications of such.

Nietzsche Between Tolstoy and Dostoevsky

I mention Nietzsche because I would like to suggest that his own difficulties and contradictions in regarding Christianity may be explained by the fact that he stands somewhere between Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, or rather, that the tension in

his own beliefs is a tension of the cohabitation of Dostoevskian and Tolstoyan ideals. R. J. Hollingdale points out that “Nietzsche had no piercing-eyed Christs to give him nightmares, or any horrific pictures of a possible hellish afterlife to keep him awake. God was like his father, the pastor of Röcken”—the perfect model of a country parson (31). Nietzsche did not reject God for his harshness (his *Übermensch* can be just as harsh) but rather for the opposite—i.e., for his weakness. In Nietzschean terms, while Jesus may be to some extent redeemed as a “free spirit,” his failing remains, as we have seen, his humility, his death and suffering. This is precisely the side of Jesus that Tolstoy tried, with all his Olympian might, to avoid. Tolstoy had a fear of death; he was haunted by its mystery, and rebelled at the idea of suffering and final release from life (see, e.g., *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, 1886). His own extraordinary vitality made him question his own mortality, thus he could not even begin to accept the image of a dying god.

Tolstoy’s Religion: Arianism and Paternalism

Dostoevsky once remarked, “The Saviour did not descend from the cross because he did not wish to convert men through the compulsion of an outward miracle, but through freedom of belief” (Steiner 262). This sums up his own stance, which is on the side of the silent Jesus against the Grand Inquisitor. But for Tolstoy this is precisely the “failure” of Christ; in that refusal came the chaos and blindness that has afflicted human beings since his time. “Christ,” says Tolstoy, “had infinitely complicated the task of those who would establish his kingdom by placing the enigma of his silence across the straight path of reason” (262). Tolstoy chastises Jesus for not revealing Himself (if, indeed, he *was* God) in messianic splendor, for though human belief might have been in some sense constrained, doubt would have been removed and evil vanquished, allowing for an immediate Kingdom of God upon the earth. George Steiner adequately sums up Tolstoy’s feelings in this regard: He “could not love a prophet who declaimed that his kingdom was not of this world. The aristocratic temper of the man, his love of physical energy and heroism, rebelled at Christ’s meekness and pathos” (262). Harold Bloom adds that Tolstoy’s Christ was “the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount and nothing more, perhaps less a god than Tolstoy himself” (333). And finally, Gorky:

When he speaks about Christ, it is always particularly poor—no enthusiasm, no feeling in his words, and no spark of real fire. I think he regards Christ as simple and deserving of pity; and although at times he admires him, he hardly loves him. (Steiner 263)

For Tolstoy, Christianity is ultimately neither a divine revelation nor a historical phenomenon but a teaching that gives meaning to life. One of his most popular books, *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1894), has as a subtitle: *Christianity Not as a Mystic Religion but as a new Theory of Life*. As such, there can be no “meaning” to that which destroys or abrogates life, except the meaning of negation. The ever-observant Gorky once remarked that when Tolstoy spoke of God it was as a competitor, as if the author of *War and Peace* and the Creator of the universe were “two bears in one den.” It is somewhat ironic that Tolstoy, who was famous—not only within Russia but as one of the first truly international personalities—for his religious concerns, was in the final analysis, a “secular” moralist. Ivan Karamazov, the atheist

Karamazov brother and author of the sublime Grand Inquisitor parable, is, ultimately, much like Tolstoy—an intellectual rationalist with socialistic tendencies who rejects, not so much God, but the world of suffering created by God; the irrational world where children are tortured and suffering rampant.

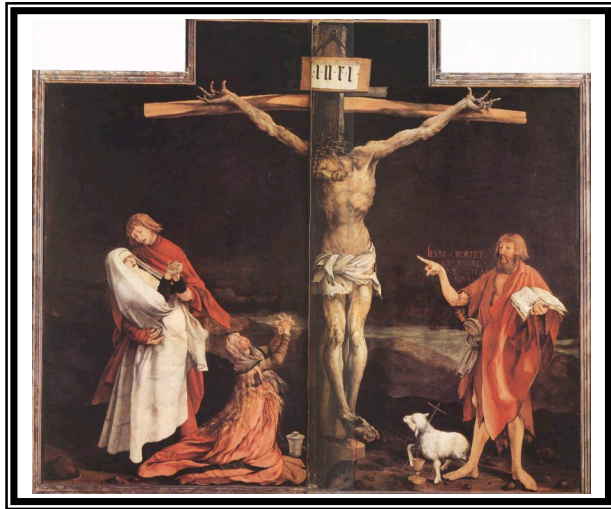
But Tolstoy is even more like the Grand Inquisitor himself—a resemblance that has been emphasized by George Steiner. Steiner believes that far from being coincidental, Dostoevsky actually had his rival in mind when he wrote the parable. Of course, we have no evidence for this, but it is an interesting theory, especially when we consider that Dostoevsky is not totally opposed to what the Inquisitor proposes; indeed, some have argued that it is in fact the Inquisitor who “wins” the argument (or rather, the monologue). The following statement of Tolstoy, from *What I Believe* (1884), adds to the connection. “It is terrible to say,”

but it sometimes appears to me that if Christ’s teaching, with the Church teaching that has grown out of it, had not existed at all, those who now call themselves Christians would have been nearer to the truth of Christ—that is to say, to a reasonable understanding of what is good in life—than they now are. (Steiner 263)

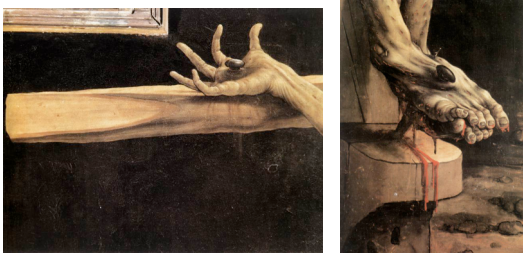
While it is unfair to say, as Berdyaev does, that Tolstoy’s theology is “simple-minded” (just as it is unfair of Gorky to call Dostoevsky an “evil genius”), we can say that it is certainly *single-minded*, unlike that of Dostoevsky, who continually grappled with conflicting beliefs. This is not to suggest that Tolstoy did not have his own religious struggles—he certainly did—but he always wrote his works in a severe and confident manner, expressing only a single vision at any one time. The above passage illuminates Tolstoy’s priorities: first, to the good and human life for all people; and secondly, to belief in God or Jesus Christ—which, for all we might wish to hate him, are precisely the priorities of the Grand Inquisitor. As Steiner points out, if we follow Tolstoy’s logic, replacing God with the Good, and the Good with brotherly love, we come to a theology that has no need of God. But can a theology, or to be more precise, an *ethics*, stand on its own without divine sanction? We are then faced with Dostoevsky’s perennial question, asked by Mitya, the eldest Karamazov brother, and picked up by the bastard brother Smerdyakov to justify his murder of their father: Without God, is not “everything permitted?”

The Suffering Servant: Dürer; Holbein; Grünewald

Thus we are presented with two divergent ways of envisaging, not only the meaning of Christian doctrine, but of the relation of the divine and the human, as well as the mystery of suffering. In the history of Western art, we can see many examples of these two traditions of representation, particularly in depictions of the Crucifixion. The imagery sustained by Dostoevsky belongs to a tradition that might be called The Suffering Servant, i.e., one that emphasizes the humanness of divinity, and the reality and inescapable nature of pain and suffering. This tradition, which recognizes—and even embraces—Unamuno’s “tragic sense of life,” is exemplified by the following paintings, all of which are works of late mediaeval German naturalistic painting.

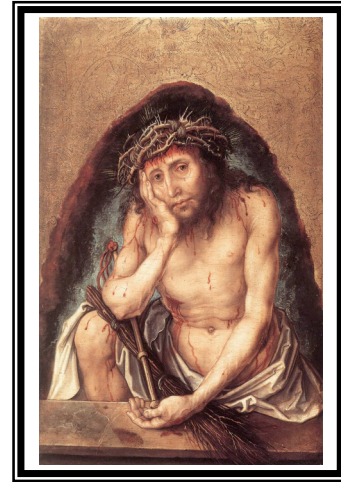


[fig. 1 – Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*, c. 1515, front view]



[fig. 1a – Matthias Grünewald, *Isenheim Altarpiece*, c. 1515, close-ups of hands and feet]

Pain for medieval Christians served as a sign and means of contact with the divine... Had they denied pain, the medieval Christian community would have erased its spiritual value. A meaningless pain would threaten to cast them back upon an utterly meaningless world. They had good reason, then, to transform pain from a private sensation into a public spectacle, in the manner of the flagellants who during times of plague paraded through the streets lashing themselves in guilt, penance, and hope of mercy. Such spectacles drew their meaning from the central reality of medieval life: the human pain of the Crucifixion. No painter has captured the mystery of this central Christian rite—the suffering god—more vividly than the late fifteenth-century German court painter Matthias Grünewald. It is a painting [the *Isenheim Altarpiece*] that uses pain to emphasize the “human-ness” of Jesus and that gives point to the trembled prayer he makes in Gethsemane: “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” (Mark 14:36, Matthew 26:39) (Morris 1991, 48–50)



[fig. 2 – Albrecht Dürer, *Man of Sorrows*, 1493-94]

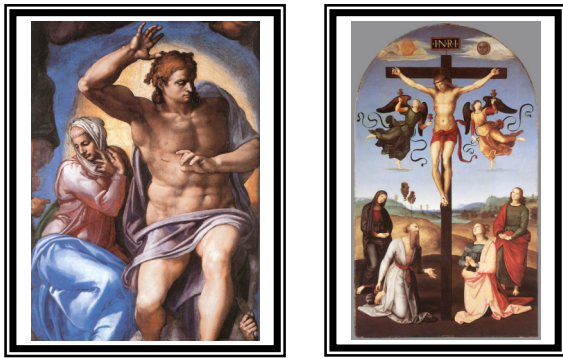


[fig. 3 – Hans Holbein the Younger, *Christ in the Tomb*, 1521]

This final painting by Holbein is referred to in Dostoevsky’s novel *The Idiot*, where one character admits that such an image is enough to make one lose one’s faith, and another asserts that Holbein’s stark portrait reveals the great paradox of Christianity: “How can one believe, looking at such a corpse, that this sufferer would be resurrected?” Tolstoy might answer, quite simply, that one cannot.

A Theology of Glory: High Renaissance Triumphalism

Nietzsche would concur here with Tolstoy—he could not love a Jesus such as that of Dostoevsky, i.e., a Savior who embodies all too-readily the weakness inherent in the reversal of aristocratic virtues found in his “slave morality.” Nietzsche’s own *Übermensch* is nothing of this sort, but more closely resembles the triumphant Christ depicted in much of Italian Renaissance art. The two examples provided below are the very robust Christ of Michelangelo’s *Last Judgement* (part of the Sistine Chapel, 1534-41) at which Pope Paul III apparently fell to his feet in fear, begging forgiveness for his sins; and Raphael’s gorgeous *Crucifixion* (1502–03), which provides an almost diametric contrast to Grünewald’s work.



[fig. 4 – Michelangelo, *Last Judgment*, 1534-41]
[fig. 5 – Raphael's *Crucifixion*, 1502-03]

Coda: Tolstoy's image not triumphant but secular humanist (Blake)

Yet this vision or ideal of Christ, which connects to what Martin Luther disdainfully called the *Theologia Glorificae* (Theology of Glory) perpetuated by the Roman Church, is not Tolstoy's vision. Indeed, this is where Nietzsche parts company with Tolstoy, who was, above all else, a rationalist in matters of religion; and an Arian—his Jesus was hardly a Christ at all, but a moral leader, and ethical teacher. A good example of this ideal may be William Blake's *Christ Blessing Little Children* (1799), which is particularly apposite given the Inquisitor's professed concern for the innocent.

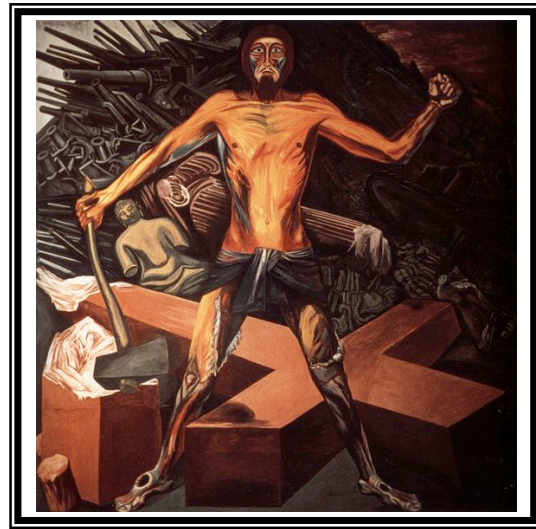


[fig. 6 – William Blake, *Christ Blessing Little Children*, 1799]

In works like his *Confession* and *My Religion* (1884), Tolstoy dismissed “dogmata” like the Trinity as being outlandish nonsense, and the sacraments as “savage customs” suited to a primitive state of civilization. Also, in *What is Art?* (1896), while dismissing Dante, Shakespeare and the Greek tragedians, Tolstoy also condemns both Raphael and Michelangelo as artists who failed to tell the simple truth. Their flamboyant triumphalism was just as disgusting to him as Dostoevsky's hanging, fly-eaten corpses.

Conclusions

An interesting legacy of Tolstoy is the profound influence he had on a young barrister in South Africa, especially *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, which “overwhelmed” Mohandes K. Gandhi when he came upon it in 1894. This is ironic because Tolstoy, who raged against suffering as an aspect of divinity and religion, became a spur to Gandhi's *Satyagraha*—non-violent resistance—in which suffering plays a significant role. Tolstoy, as I suggested, held a very human vision of Jesus, but it was an image of Jesus without divinity, and ultimately without body. Dostoevsky, while struggling with the problem of suffering, concluded that *only* a suffering god on the cross, a god who is very much flesh and blood, could be a for free human beings. Tolstoy, like the Inquisitor, was willing to forsake freedom for an end to pain; Dostoevsky insisted that freedom, even the freedom to do evil, and to suffer evil, was the most significant, and most holy aspect of the Christian faith. These two may seem irreconcilable; I am not sure that they are. Perhaps Gandhi, a non-Christian, but one influenced by both Tolstoy and the Christian tradition, is one who was able, in some ways, to reconcile these two visions: the vision of a god of justice and truth, and a god of freedom and mercy; a god aware of suffering, yet unable to accept it as an inevitable aspect of human existence—or perhaps some versions of Liberation Theology, which fight for justice in the here and now while recognizing the mystery of the suffering god on the cross.



[fig. 7 – Orozco's *Modern Migration of the Spirit*, 1933]

So who wins? The Inquisitor or Jesus? Even though many, most notably D. H. Lawrence, would say the Inquisitor, it is the final scene, the afterword, which gives Jesus the “victory”—his kiss. For as intriguing as the Inquisitor's arguments are (and they are very compelling, even for Dostoevsky), they are cynical words, and devoid of the radical freedom, and the incumbent risk, that Dostoevsky felt was the heart of the sacred. Still, we may persist, as Tolstoy did, in our questioning of the adequacy of such a message; the struggle is never finished, but, like Dostoevsky's novels, works as

dialectic or an “essential tension.” Of course, many people since Tolstoy have given up on Christianity, either because it has caused or allowed so much suffering; or because, as the Inquisitor implies, it is simply too much to ask of mortal men and women.

Gorky says about Tolstoy that “[o]f Dostoevsky he spoke reluctantly, constrainedly, evading or repressing something” (42); perhaps his discomfort arose from a recognition of himself in Dostoevsky’s Grand Inquisitor, just as, for similar reasons, he loathed Shakespeare, and specifically *King Lear*, whose eponymous lead resembles Tolstoy remarkably. Regarding his literary rival, Tolstoy maintained that “The main point to realize is that he was a man of rebellious flesh... [h]e felt a great deal, but he thought poorly... It is curious that he is so much read. I can’t understand why. It is all painful and useless, because all those Idiots, Adolescents, Raskolnikovs, and the rest of them, they are not real; it [i.e., “reality”] is all much simpler, more understandable” (42). Yet, for all this, Tolstoy died, in a lonely train station thousands of miles from his home, like a half-mad Lear trying to escape his own death, and on his death-bed table were two books: the first was the Essays of Montaigne, and the second was *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Appendix

Extracts from “The Grand Inquisitor,” in *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Constance Garnett:

[Ivan Karamazov complains to his saintly brother Alyosha:] I must have justice, or I will destroy myself. And not justice in some remote infinite time and space, but here on earth, and that I could see myself. I have believed in it. I want to see it, and if I am dead by then, let me rise again, for if it all happens without me, it will be too unfair. 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. All the religions of the world are built on this longing, and I am a believer. But then there are the children, and what am I to do about them? That’s a question I can’t answer. For the hundredth time I repeat, there are numbers of questions, but I’ve only taken the children, because in their case what I mean is so unanswerably clear. Listen! 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 for the harmony. Why should they, too, furnish material to enrich the soil for the harmony of the future?... You see, Alyosha, perhaps it really may happen that if I live to that moment, or rise again to see it, I, too, perhaps, may cry aloud with the rest, looking at the mother embracing the child’s torturer, ‘Thou are just, O Lord!’ but I don’t want to cry aloud then. While there is still time, I hasten to protect myself, and so I renounce the higher harmony altogether. It’s not worth the tears of one tortured child who beats itself on the breast with its little fist and prayed in its stinking outhouse, with its unexpiated tears to ‘dear, kind God!’

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