

## GIANCARLO MARINELLI, SERGEY BORISOV

### TEXT FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT JULY 2021

Our proposal for all the philosophical practitioners is to consider a symbolic relationship, a meaningful connection between the philosophical practice and the thought of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. We indeed believe that some of the most essential points, considerably present in every session, exercise or meeting of philosophical practice, are also present in their works. These are the main points:

1. Every concept and theory in philosophical practice is rooted into everyone's experience, and by that we mean also daily life happenings: concepts and theories reflect these experience or they represent a transformation or development of it. This is valid also for the philosophical practitioners proposing a purely intellectual development of the situation, because even the most abstract thought is actually linked to daily life experiences. The growth produced by this much abstract step is considered by them much more important than the first step itself, but the first step is a fundamental and distinctive element of the philosophical practice.
2. The second element is an inevitable, constitutive and continuous relationship between thought – even the most abstract one – feelings and sensations.
3. The third element is the centrality of the dialogue, which means the centrality of the revelation of the other person, of the other self, of what we have inside us, inside our “ego”.

A thought deeply rooted in feelings and sensations is precisely the strongest element of the works by Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.

The second essential aspect in both the thinkers is the centrality of the dialogue, and in particular, of the inner dialogue, which is also the centrality of the polyphony, the inner polyphony in particular.

In Tolstoy and Dostoevsky (in their work in general and also in every character of their novels) “thought” means “dialogue”, more specifically “dialogue of ideas and/or will”, an inner dialogue connected to the feelings and sensations. These are also the most essential elements of the “thought” as conceived in philosophical practice. The main word in this context is “voice”, which has a double meaning: it is “voice” as a concept or a general view when connected to sensations and feelings, but it may also be considered according to an individual, singular perspective. The thoughts are meetings of voices, mainly inner voices, but also the most extreme, reciprocally opposite voices, as experimented by every philosophical practitioner. Here follows a quote from *Death of Ivan Ilych* by Tolstoy. The focus is on the hero, already in advanced disease with no chance to survive:

*“What is it you want?” was the first clear conception capable of expression in words, that he heard.*

*“What do you want? What do you want?” he repeated to himself. “What do I want? To live and not to suffer,” he answered. And again he listened with such concentrated attention that even his pain did not distract him.*

*"To live? How?" asked his inner voice. "Why, to live as I used to—well and pleasantly." "As you lived before, well and pleasantly?" the voice repeated. And in imagination he began to recall the best moments of his pleasant life. But strange to say none of those best moments of his pleasant life now seemed at all what they had then seemed—none of them except the first recollections of childhood. There, in childhood, there had been something really pleasant with which it would be possible to live if it could return. But the child who had experienced that happiness existed no longer, it was like a reminiscence of somebody else.*

In Tolstoy this dialogue of inner voices is expressed, amplified and modulated as an expression of different perspectives, living in different sensations or feelings. Tolstoy reveals and intensifies this dialogue inside the same sensations, which is inside the same body's perceptions; on the other hand, Dostoevsky is more focused on producing a development of this inner dialogue and inner conflicts and so, on giving a full ideological development to these deeply elaborated sensations and feeling.

The movement of philosophical practice clearly expresses in these points its most evident characteristics and specific identity. Each philosophical practitioner can easily recognize these aspects in his work.

In accordance with the words previously mentioned, I also attach to this document a lecture of four other very short texts, in detail another one by Tolstoy, a couple by Dostoevsky and the last one by Merezhkovsky.

*"Yes, I am making them wretched," he thought. "They are sorry, but it will be better for them when I die." He wished to say this but had not the strength to utter it. "Besides, why speak? I must act," he thought. with a look at his wife he indicated his son and said: "Take him away... sorry for him... sorry for you too..." He tried to add, "Forgive me," but said "Forego" and waved his hand, knowing that He whose understanding mattered would understand. And suddenly it grew clear to him that what had been oppressing him and would not leave him was all dropping away at once from two sides, from ten sides, and from all sides. He was sorry for them, he must act so as not to hurt them: release them and free himself from these sufferings. "How good and how simple!" he thought. "And the pain?" he asked himself. "What has become of it? Where are you, pain?" He turned his attention to it. "Yes, here it is. Well, what of it? Let the pain be." "And death... where is it?" He sought his former accustomed fear of death and did not find it. "Where is it? What death?" There was no fear because there was no death. In place of death there was light. "So that's what it is!" he suddenly exclaimed aloud. "What joy!" To him all this happened in a single instant, and the meaning of that instant did not change. For those present his agony continued for another two hours. Something rattled in his throat, his emaciated body twitched, then the gasping and rattle became less and less frequent. "It is finished!" said someone near*

*him. He heard these words and repeated them in his soul. "Death is finished," he said to himself. "It is no more!" He drew in a breath, stopped in the midst of a sigh, stretched out, and died.*

Tolstoy, *Death of Ivan Ilych*

*The most abstract thoughts enter not only the intelligence, but also the hearth and will, they enter our real life and pierce the heart once, and then the wound remains forever.*

Dostoevsky, *Diary of a Writer*

*'No? You don't think so?' Svidrigailov went on, looking at him [Raskolnikov] deliberately. 'But what do you say to this argument (help me with it): ghosts are, as it were, shreds and fragments of other worlds, the beginning of them. A man in health has, of course, no reason to see them, because he is above all a man of this earth and is bound for the sake of completeness and order to live only in this life. But as soon as one is ill, as soon as the normal earthly order of the organism is broken, one begins to realize the possibility of another world; and the more seriously ill one is, the closer becomes one's contact with that other world, so that as soon as the man dies he steps straight into that world.*

Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*

*We are accustomed to believe that the more the thought is abstract, the more it is cool and dispassionate. But it is not so... In the heroes by Dostoevsky and in the reflections of the characters by Tolstoy we see for example how abstract thoughts can be passionate and how the most metaphysical premises and allegations are rooted not just to our reason, but also to our heart and body, to the feelings, to the will. There are thoughts that pour oil on the fire of passions, that turn on (whether we are aware or not) flesh and blood of men with more strength than the most compelling and pure body appetites. There is a logic of passion, but there are also passions of logic.*

Merezhkovsky, *Tolstoy and Dostoevsky*