Ideas of Community in the Thought of Pierre Leroux and of Feodor Dostoevsky: *Agape*, *Philia* and *Eros*

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Contents

ABSTRACT …… iv

INTRODUCTION …… 1

CHAPTER ONE
Two Critics of "Possessive Individualism" …….. 11
- ***1.1. Introduction*** ……... 11
- ***1.2. Leroux as a liberal*** ……..... 27
- ***1.3. Leroux's anthropology: Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*** ……... 37
- ***1.4. Division of society, division of the self and eclecticism*** ……... 42
- ***1.5. Freedom according to Leroux*** ……... 47
- ***1.6. Property according to Leroux*** …… 58
- ***1.7. Dostoevsky as political thinker*** …….. 68
- ***1.8. The poor and the ontological meaning of capitalism*** …….. 70
- ***1.9. "Possessive Individualism" in Russia*** …… 82
- ***1.10. From individualism to the revolutionary affirmation of the will-to-power***
  - ***1.10.1. Raskolnikov*** …….. 93
  - ***1.10.2. The case of "The possessed"*** ……... 98
- ***1.11. Conclusion*** …… 105

CHAPTER TWO
Varieties of Socialism and of Utopia ……. 115
- ***2.1. Introduction*** ..…… 115
- ***2.2. Dostoevsky's critique of socialism: "Shigalovism"*** ……. 130
- ***2.3. Leroux's critique of Fourier's socialism*** ……. 144
- ***2.4. Introduction to utopia*** ……... 149
- ***2.5. Transformation of utopia in the 19th century*** …….. 158
- ***2.6. Saint-Simon: oscillation between transcendence and immanence*** 171
- ***2.7. The Saint-Simonian School: utopia transformed into political program*** …….. 180
- ***2.8. The Grand Inquisitor and the incompatibility between freedom and unity*** ……. 193
- ***2.9. Dostoevsky: a dialogical utopia*** …… 207
- ***2.10. Leroux: utopia as a new continent called Humanity*** ……..... 221

CHAPTER THREE
A Tree of Life …….. 236
- ***3.1. Introduction*** ……..... 236
- ***3.2. A Portrait of Versilov*** ……. 241

3.3. ***Leroux's humanism as compared to Versilov's*** 248
3.4. ***Leroux's and Dostoevsky's relations to Christianity*** 257
3.4.1. The Fall in Dostoevsky's and Leroux's works 258
3.4.2. Revelation and communion in the understanding of Leroux 262
3.4.3. Leroux: "les deux infinis" or God and Humanity 266
3.4.4. The presence of Christ and the Christian life in Dostoevsky's work 269
3.4.5. The Russian monk as the image of Christ 278
3.5. **Agape *and* Philia** 281
***3.5.1. Guidelines for* philia, agape *and* eros** 282
***3.5.2. Dostoevsky:* philia *as sub-division of* agape** 289
***3.5.3. Leroux:* philia *overcomes* agape** 297
3.6. ***Community, solidarity and association in Leroux's republican thought*** 308
3.6.1. Leroux's critique of eclecticism and his understanding of tradition 308
3.6.2. Religion and philosophy united in a superior form: the democratic religion of Humanity 314
3.6.3. The role of primitive Christianity in Leroux's republican thought 318
3.6.4. The life of relation and the sovereignty of the people 326
3.7. ***Organic togetherness in Dostoevsky's thought*** 329
3.7.1. Raskolnikov's way back to the Russian soil? 330
3.7.2.* Tselnost *and* sobornost*: two concepts developed by the Slavophiles 334
3.7.3. Dostoevsky: the incompatibility between freedom and unity in the West 339
3.7.4. Russian soil and universalism 344
3.7.5. The Church-idea or Dostoevsky's Christian utopian socialism 348

CONCLUSION
A Contest between Life and Death 359

BIBLIOGRAPHY 367

Abstract

In this thesis I compare Pierre Leroux, a French utopian socialist (1797 – 1871), with Feodor Dostoevsky, the well-known Orthodox Russian novelist (1821 – 1881). I argue that both authors reacted against what they considered to be the dissolution of the social order, brought about by the increasing nineteenth-century bourgeois individualism. On the other hand, they reacted as well against the opposite phenomenon, the idea of a universal socialist state, which was, in fact, according to them, the outcome of bourgeois individualism. My purpose is to bring close and to compare Leroux's republican socialism with Dostoevsky's Christian socialism, and to explore to what extent the two authors give similar answers to a common problem. In order to better explain their thought, I divide my thesis into three chapters. The first analyzes and compares Leroux's and Dostoevsky's critiques of individualism. If Leroux reaches the conclusion that the ultimate expression of individualism is Malthusianism, Dostoevsky argues that individualism ends in nihilism. The second chapter analyzes the type of socialism against which Leroux and Dostoevsky reacted, as well as the critiques of the two authors. I argue here that Saint-Simonian socialism – the main object of Leroux's critique – and the socialism of the Grand Inquisitor – a Dostoevskyan character – are the expression of a certain utopian thought which considers the requirement for freedom incompatible with the requirement for unity. In the last chapter, I analyze the ideas of community of Leroux and of Dostoevsky, which are centered on *philia*, in the case of the former, and on *agape*, in the case of the latter. *Philia* and respectively *agape* are the expression of organic social relations, through which the two requirements, of freedom and unity, are made compatible, and which create unity in multiplicity. Their ideas of community appear as active utopias, grounded on the life of relation in a spontaneous, organic community.

Introduction

José Ortega y Gasset considers the statement that life would be essentially egotistic as an incommensurable error. Life, in his view, is essentially altruistic. It "represents the cosmic fact of altruism and exists as a perpetual movement of the Se1lf towards the Other".[1] In the nineteenth century, on the ruins of the Old Regime, the liberal contractualist order seemed to grow always stronger, generating panic in its opponents who would respond by defining the social body in terms of a concrete organism. The liberal contractualist order, which has remained victorious until now in the West, has declared society an aggregate of individuals/atoms, with no essential connection between them. Pierre Leroux calls this philosophy of the individual a philosophy of the human being without humanity. He argues that, by accepting this premise, we have to be aware that we accept implicitly the relation between master and slave.

The subject of this thesis is the comparison between Pierre Leroux, a French utopian socialist who wrote in the first half of the 19th century (1797 – 1871), and Feodor Dostoevsky, the well-known Orthodox Russian novelist who wrote in the second half of the 19th century (1821 – 1881). Both authors reacted against what they considered to be the dissolution of the social order, brought about by the increasing bourgeois individualism of the 19th century. But their reaction was extended also against the opposite of this phenomenon – which was, in fact, according to them, its outcome – that is, the idea of a universal socialist state, championed by authors such as Saint-Simon, who represents a

[1] José Ortega y Gasset, *Tema vremii noastre* (*El tema de nuestro tiempo*), translated into Romanian by S. Marculescu, Humanitas, Bucuresti, 1997, p.124.

branch of utopian socialism different from that of Leroux. The general interest of the thesis consists in comparing the ways in which Dostoevsky and Leroux analyze these phenomena and the ideas they propose instead. The specific interest lies in discovering the common aspects of their ideas of community which are centered on organic living together.[2] Leroux and Dostoevsky share with the reactionaries and the utopian socialists of their time the belief that social unity should replace the social order grounded on individualism. But, on the other hand, they are not at ease either with the belief of the reactionaries or with that of the utopian socialists, like Saint-Simon, concerning the form this unity should take. According to Leroux and Dostoevsky, social unity, for both camps, is grounded on formal institutions imposed from the outside. Leroux and Dostoevsky try to re-think the social body, which Leroux calls *l'Humanité*, and Dostoevsky calls "universal brotherhood in Christ", a concept identical with the Slavophile concept of *sobornost*. The core principles of their ideas of social body are *agape* (generally translated as love), for Dostoevsky, and *philia* (generally translated as friendship), in which *agape* is a historical moment, for Leroux. According to them, only *agape* or *philia*, not institutionalized in a formal manner, could respond to the profound and natural human need of both freedom and unity. So that unity could manifest or be at work in the world, it needs the proper religious background which, in Dostoevsky's case, is an authentic Orthodox Christianity, and, in Leroux's case, is a certain form of a "religion of Humanity".

Leroux, who has been highly neglected, is an important author because he propounded and fashioned a certain type of socialism, where freedom and unity are not mutually

[2] The organic living together that they imagine is a spontaneous organization of society, totally different from the organicism of the Saint-Simonians, for instance, which understands society in terms of a concrete body, whose unity is organized from top to bottom.

exclusive, but presuppose one another. It is worth rediscovering his thought in order to understand possible meanings of the term "socialism" that were in use in early 19th century, but have been forgotten and, moreover, identified as a primitive discourse which found its accomplishment in Marx. We find in Dostoevsky important themes present in Leroux – such as humanity, brotherhood as the balance between freedom and equality, or organic community – which reveal him as an engaged political thinker and as a Christian socialist[3]. It is true that a comprehensive analysis of the subject of Humanity in the 19th century could be extended to a much larger comparison that could include a wide range of authors, such as Victor Hugo, George Sand, Pierre-Simon Ballanche, Leo Tolstoy, Alexander Herzen, among many others. But Leroux – who experienced both liberalism and Saint-Simonism – is one of the first philosophers to have reacted, in a manner very similar to Dostoevsky, against both individualism and the understanding of Humanity as a concrete body, where individuals can be sacrificed for the higher good of the organism.

Dostoevsky's relation with Europe can be basically reduced to his relation with France, because, for him, France is *the* representative of Europe. In Dostoevsky's opinion, the destiny of modernity is the destiny of socialism. The question is what kind of socialism Europe will see: one that continues the ideal of Catholicism and, implicitly, of the Roman Empire, that of geographical universal unity under one power that can feed all, at the cost of people's freedom, or one that represents the ideal of organic free and voluntary unity, where the requirement for freedom and that for unity are fulfilled together. Both ideals can be found in France, according to Dostoevsky, the former being, nevertheless, the predominant one. He identifies the second ideal in the novels of George Sand. While it would have clearly

[3] Leroux and Dostoevsky can then be said to be at the origins of a tradition of thought represented, among many others, by Charles Péguy.

been interesting to compare Sand and Dostoevsky, it is, nevertheless, important to keep in mind that the philosophical basis of Sand's novels can be identified in Leroux. Moreover, Leroux is a representative figure of utopian socialism and the analysis of his philosophy can offer the broad picture of the nineteenth-century utopian socialism. While a comparison could have been made between Dostoevsky and Charles Fourier or Étienne Cabet whose utopian socialism he criticized, I believe it would not have revealed the complexity of Dostoevsky's relation with this current of thought. In my opinion, the comparison with Leroux underlines Dostoevsky's own preference for a Christian utopian socialism which is inspired by that of Leroux (indirectly, through Sand's novels) and which criticizes exactly the same branch of utopian socialism that Leroux criticizes.

I could have chosen to bring together Leroux and Tolstoy, for example, but the comparison between Leroux and Dostoevsky appeared more challenging to me. While Leroux and Tolstoy represent variations on the same project of modernity – although one could find significant differences between their philosophies – Leroux challenges Dostoevsky and vice versa: they represent two paths of modernity which converge up to a point. Their most significant difference is the same as the most significant similarity between Leroux and Tolstoy: the relation between transcendence and immanence. While Leroux struggles to preserve transcendence in his philosophy, transcendence is, nevertheless, dissolved into immanence, not without some anxiety. By contrast, for Dostoevsky, transcendence is fully present and active in immanence without, however, being dissolved in it, as it will be seen throughout this thesis.

In order to furnish a better explanation of Leroux's and Dostoevsky's thought, I divide the thesis into three chapters. The first treats the issue of individualism; the second the issue

of utopian socialism; and the third analyzes Leroux's and Dostoevsky's alternatives of community.

Chapter one is divided into eleven sections. I begin with a short history of individualism and of capitalism, as it has been made by authors such as R.H. Tawney, Karl Polanyi, C.B. Macpherson, etc. The next section presents the beginning of Leroux's intellectual evolution, marked by his participation to the liberal journal *Le Globe*. The role of this section within the whole thesis is to show that Leroux has never given up certain themes of the liberal philosophy developed during this period, and on the other hand, to explain his disappointment with liberalism, as a whole, and his attraction towards Saint-Simon's philosophy. Starting with the following section, I intend to analyze the connection Leroux perceives between specific conceptions of human nature, on the one hand, and freedom and the idea of property, on the other. Leroux believes that, in its essence, political and economic liberalism is grounded on Hobbes' principle of "war of all against all", which is an ontological tenet. It claims that the individual is self-sufficient and that its very being in the world is threatened by any other individual, since the individual's primary aim is self-preservation. The liberal contractualist order then brings what Leroux calls "disassociation" and transforms the world into a world of division, a world of atoms in a perpetual movement and a perpetual desire for power. In a social order grounded on the primacy of rights, believes Leroux, the right of the strongest is eventually affirmed, the utmost expression of this conception being Malthus' philosophy. On this background, Leroux distinguishes between false and authentic property. False property is, in essence, that which uses and humiliates another, because it is grounded on the division between the rich and the poor. Authentic property is that which affirms spontaneous association and involves the

distribution of wealth by society.

In sections from 1.7. to 1.10., I analyze Dostoevsky's approach to individualism and capitalism. According to Dostoevsky, the bourgeois individualist philosophy is also grounded on self-sufficiency and self-satisfaction, and, implicitly, on the incapacity to recognize the other as human, as sharing something essentially common with oneself. This, he believes, leads to indifference towards the suffering of those disadvantaged in society and even to the fear of them as potential usurpers of the bourgeoisie's position. The fear of the other, according to Dostoevsky, is deeply rooted in fallen human nature (although it is by no means the only or the most powerful element of human nature). Self-sufficiency and self-satisfaction are then the fundamental aspects Dostoevsky identifies in the Western bourgeois society. He believes that they have been adopted by the Russian Westernizers of the 1840s, who have alienated themselves from the people. The final outcome of bourgeois individualism is most visible, in Russia, in the "offspring" of the Westernizers of the 1840s, *i.e.*, the nihilist generation of the 1860s. This is why the last section deals with the nihilism of Kirilov, the character from *The Possessed*, who wants to prove through his suicide that humanity is capable of absolute freedom.

Chapter two is divided into ten sections and deals with the ideal of the universal socialist state which, as I said, Leroux and Dostoevsky consider at the same time as a response and as the outcome of bourgeois individualism. The interest of this chapter is twofold: on the one hand, I intend to analyze a certain version of utopian socialism against which Leroux and Dostoevsky reacted, and, on the other hand, I intend to show the similarity between Leroux's and Dostoevsky's critiques. I believe there is a strong utopian element in both Leroux and Dostoevsky. In this thesis, I analyze how this element is taking shape in their thought and I

argue that it rejects both the individualist conception of freedom and the idea of formal unity, while it affirms the reconciliation between freedom and unity.

I begin this chapter with a brief presentation of different forms of nineteenth-century socialism in France and in Russia. In section 2.2., I present the system put forward by Shigalov, a character from *The Possessed*. The character belongs to the generation of the 1860s and his conception of the future organization of humanity has been influenced by the famous nihilist character, Stavrogin. The latter has taken the bourgeois right to self-preservation to mean self-affirmation and will-to-power. In section 2.3., I intend to discuss Leroux's reaction against the idea of socialism put into practice through absolute freedom, expressed by Charles Fourier. In a manner similar to Dostoevsky, Leroux argues that socialism realized through absolute freedom is transformed into tyranny.

In the following sections of chapter two, I will first present the evolution of utopia and the transformations it has suffered in the 19th century. Utopia appears as an ambiguity, as a balance between transcendence and immanence. Utopian thinkers in the 19th century begin to identify transcendence with the Idea of the perfect model of society. This transformation in the form of utopia (which in the 19th century is called "socialist utopia") begins with Saint-Simon. Saint-Simon and Saint-Simonism – the school of thought grounded on his philosophy and founded after his death – are essential for the comprehension of Leroux's thought. Disappointed by liberalism, Leroux was attracted by Saint-Simon's philosophy and joined for a year the Saint-Simonian School. His mature thought will combine elements from both liberalism and Saint-Simonism, while rejecting, at the same time, the essence of both. I also believe that a comparison between Saint-Simonism and what we could call the "utopian socialism" of Dostoevsky's character, the Grand Inquisitor, is illuminating for the

understanding of Dostoevsky's reaction against communism which he sees as the combination between the idea of papal rule and the organization of society on socialist egalitarian principles.

Leroux and Dostoevsky identify the same "secret" in the Saint-Simonians and, respectively in the Grand Inquisitor. Despite their hatred towards the individualist bourgeois order and, implicitly towards freedom, they are the final product of the individualist bourgeois order. They perceive themselves, according to Leroux and Dostoevsky, as self-sufficient and, as a consequence, they affirm their self upon those who presumably are incapable to manifest their self-sufficiency. I continue the last two sections by drawing the general lines of Dostoevsky's and Leroux's forms of utopia, in order to contrast them with the forms of utopia of the Saint-Simonians and of the Grand Inquisitor. But the content of their forms of utopia is discussed at length in the last chapter.

The final chapter, which consists of seven sections, deals with Leroux's and Dostoevsky's forms of utopia whose content is represented by their ideas of community. In order to explain their utopian thought, I will concentrate on their concepts of humanity, of *agape* and of *philia*. I will begin the chapter with a comparison between Leroux and Versilov, the character from a *Raw Youth*, a nobleman from the generation of the 1840s, alienated from the people, whom Dostoevsky describes as an idealist and as a deist. The importance of the comparison comes from the fact that Dostoevsky is in partial agreement with the ideas of this character, as the ideal Russian, for him, would be a combination between Versilov and the Russian peasant, in other words, a Versilov rooted in the Russian people. This combination finds its final expression in Alyosha Karamazov. The comparison is important also because I intend to show that Leroux shares with this Dostoevskyan

character the belief that the realization of Humanity's spontaneous organic unity is possible when Humanity becomes aware of its fragility.

In the next sections, I will concentrate on Leroux's and Dostoevsky's relations to Christianity, which inform their ideas of *philia* and, respectively, of *agape*. Leroux emphasizes that Christianity is a moment in the realization of *philia*, while Dostoevsky's understanding of *agape* is fully Christian. The main difference between their comprehensions of Christianity comes from their perception of the Fall. Dostoevsky does not approach this issue directly, but it results from his whole work that, when he presents the human attraction towards both good and evil, he refers to *fallen* human nature which has been restored by Christ. Leroux, on the other hand, perceives the Fall exclusively as a myth, the subject of the Fall being not a human person, but Humanity, in an amorphous state. What unites them is the fact that they both perceive human history after the Fall as a history of division and of attempts of certain individuals or groups to take into possession others. I will analyze afterwards how the concepts of *agape* and *philia* appear in Christianity, in Dostoevsky and in Leroux. If in Christianity and in Dostoevsky, *philia* is a sub-division of *agape* (brotherly love in the light of the divine love and of Christ's Incarnation), in Leroux, *agape* appears as a historical moment in the realization of *philia*, which takes parts from and overcomes *agape*. In the next sections, I will analyze Leroux's republican thought and the role of *philia*, which he considers as the "symbolic constitutive law" of the Republic. In the last part, I will analyze the Dostoevskyan representation of *sobornost* which makes Dostoevsky to appear as a Christian socialist. Since his understanding of *sobornost* is borrowed from the Slavophiles, I will also explain the concepts of *tselnost* (integrality of knowledge) and *sobornost* (togetherness) in the Slavophile thought.

For both Leroux and Dostoevsky, community is dialogical and, thus, capable to proceed as a whole to the quest for the Good. Individuals affirm not their own freedom, but the other's freedom, and this spontaneous act institutes, in a manner respectable for both themselves and the others, their own freedom. Because individuals are bound together by *agape* or *philia*, freedom or one's manifestation in the world instantly affirms unity. And it is here that Leroux's and Dostoevsky's utopias meet. Humanity has before it its ideal which is not a detailed model of perfect society, but consists in the fullness of inter-subjective relations, and is in a perpetual state of aspiration toward the ideal. It results from this comparison that they both share the belief that there are only two possible foundations of the world. One rests on the assumption that our being is a gift and the other rests on the assumption that our being involves self-preservation and self-affirmation. Once we accept the latter assumption, we accept also the inherent logic of power which, according to the two authors, is the ontological affirmation of death.

Chapter One

Two Critics of "Possessive Individualism"

Le fonds de notre mal est de nous aimer d'un amour aveugle, qui va jusqu'à l'idolâtrie. Tout ce que nous aimons en dehors, nous ne l'aimons que pour nous.

– François Fénelon

1.1. Introduction

We receive our being as a gift. Yet we are used to taking it for our right to individual fulfillment, a fulfillment which owes nothing to fellow human beings, to society or to God. The individual will, freed from any external influences – family, country, tradition – represents the irrefutable foundation of our modern culture.

The Western European world, beginning with Thomas Hobbes, has made of the right to self-preservation its cornerstone and the central desire of the rational individual, reducing, in fact, the meaning of being human to the right to self-preservation, from which all other rights and duties spring. This is what Pierre Manent, C.B. Macpherson, Jean-Claude Michéa and Leo Strauss, among others, argue. According to Louis Dumont, the terms "individualism", "atomism", "secularism" characterize the modern society, in contradistinction to traditional societies.[4] The subject of the modern society is the abstract, autonomous, a-social individual

[4] Louis Dumont, "La conception moderne de l'individu. Notes sur sa genèse, en relation avec les conceptions de la politique et de l'État à partir du XIIIe siècle", in *Esprit*, no.14, février 1978, pp.18-19.

who, by virtue of being human, is the equal of any other individual and is entitled to certain rights, independently of his position in society. By contrast, the subject of the traditional society is a concrete person who is an integral part of a social community which is prior to him, gives account of his humanity and, thus, gives sense to his life.[5] According to Louis Dumont, the origins of the modern society are to be looked for in the thought of William of Occam who, in response to Thomas Aquinas' theory of "universals", contended that there is nothing such as "animality" or "humanity", but that there are only individual beings.[6] Dumont argues that the most important consequence is that we cannot derive any longer general terms which could be used as normative conclusions.[7] Although William of Occam does not talk of the social contract or of the sovereignty of the people, these concepts are announced by his nominalism. According to Dumont, it is here that we should look for the end of the "community" and the beginning of what he calls *societas*, *i.e.*, a contract through which individuals decide to associate for the creation of a society.[8] The Lutheran Reformation was, in Dumont's view, the final *coup* that marked the beginning of the "individual State" and transformed religion into a problem of individual conscience. This gave birth to religious wars which, at their turn, gave birth to the idea of religious tolerance and established the freedom of conscience as the cornerstone of political freedom.[9]

According to Manent, Macpherson and Strauss, although there had been an entire history that shaped individualism until Hobbes, it was he who sealed the philosophy of individualism through his theory of the social contract, by rejecting and replacing the assumption that the *polis*was prior to the individual with the assumption that the individual

[5] Ibidem, p.20; Pierre Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, Calmann-Lévy, Paris, 1987, p.9.
[6] Louis Dumont, "La conception moderne de l'individu", p.21.
[7]Ibidem, p.22
[8]Ibidem, pp.23, 29-30.
[9]Ibidem, pp.27-28.

was a-political and a-social.[10] The first consequence is that "the basis of natural law" is no longer given by the end of man, but by "his beginnings", *i.e.*, the fear of violent death or the desire for self-preservation.[11] The second consequence is that, since there is no ultimate end of man, society itself does not have an ultimate end, therefore all sciences developed by man do not work for the fulfillment of any such ultimate end. Each science, meant to increase the well-being of the individual, enjoys as much autonomy as the individual/atom does because there is no Good, but only the good of the individual.[12]

C.B. Macpherson and Louis Dumont are right in identifying the principal inconsistencies in Hobbes, which could represent, at the same time, the strength of his philosophy. Macpherson discovers the inconsistency of Hobbes' philosophy in the fact that he could not draw, in reality, the idea of "war of all against all" from nature, but only from a certain type of society, which Macpherson says was prevalent in the seventeenth-century English society, that is, the "possessive market society", the only one that "permits invasion of each individual by each other, but also compels moderate men to invade".[13]In Dumont's opinion, the inconsistency lies in the fact that, although Hobbes talked of a society whose legitimacy was the self-sufficient individual/atom, he eventually arrived at arguing that the individual's self-preservation was not possible in the absence of the Sovereign on whom the individual was strongly dependent.[14] According to Manent, if in the Hobbesean state of nature, individuals are menaced by violent death, in Locke's state of nature, individuals are initially

[10]Pierre Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, pp.55-58; C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1965, pp.45-59; Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1953, pp.168-171.

[11] Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, pp.181-182; Pierre Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, pp.61-62.

[12]Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, pp.168-169.

[13]C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, p.67.

[14] Louis Dumont, "La conception moderne de l'individu", pp.38-39.

menaced "not by other individuals but merely by hunger".[15] As such, initially, in the state of nature, the individual's most important relation is that with his own body and with nature which is of very little value if it were not for the individual's labour capable to increase nature's productivity. Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* begins as a Christian project, setting two limits to the individual's acquisition (not to take more than one can consume and to leave enough for the others), but his whole approach consists in abolishing these limits, so that, in the end, there is no limit to the acquisition of the self-sufficient individual.[16]

I do not intend to write here a comprehensive analysis of Hobbes and of the liberal philosophy which followed after him, nor do I pretend that the interpretation I am offering here (which I borrow from the authors cited above) is the only legitimate one. My purpose in this part of this chapter is to offer one brief history of the liberal philosophy which, in the opinion of Leroux and Dostoevsky, accounts for what they considered to be the dissolution of the social order. I am aware that, as Macpherson rightly points, Hobbes, unlike Locke, could also offer the grounds for a theory of the welfare state or a "moral theory of political obligation" of the individual "to a wider political authority".[17] Macpherson is right again in noting, like Dumont and Manent, that Hobbes made this individual political obligation to a political authority dependent on the equal insecurity of all. But people have always been aware of their unequal degree of insecurity – Macpherson may be right in arguing that it was the 19th century which challenged Hobbes' theory, when a class consciousness began to crystallize among an industrial working class, and people had objective reasons to feel that some were more insecure than others. Nevertheless, the idea of equal insecurity of all still

[15] Pierre Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, p.93.
[16] Pierre Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, pp.105-109; C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, pp.200-202; Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, pp.222-225.
[17] C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, p.276.

remains Hobbes' strength because the individuals' belief, that "the destruction of every individual" is a real possibility (as it has been proven throughout the 20th century by the technical development of the methods of war), appears as a "source of internal cohesion", and the grounds for a "moral theory of political obligation"[18]. But "political *obligation*" is not solidarity and is grounded on nothing else but Hobbes' initial premise of individualism, since the individual expects help not from an organic community with which he has in common something more than the feeling of insecurity, but from the state. Therefore, the Hobbesean point of view of "political obligation", together with its sustaining argument that it is unreasonable to wait for a political regime grounded on the spontaneous capacity for virtue, on the responsibility and the goodness of individuals, is certainly legitimate. But the questions which I am raising in this thesis, through the voices of the two authors analyzed, Pierre Leroux and Feodor Dostoevsky, whether Hobbes' description of human nature is the true human nature, and whether, starting from a different understanding of human nature, a political regime which credits the common capacity for virtue, rather than the equal feeling of insecurity, is possible, are undeniably no less legitimate.

This discussion, not specifically about Hobbes, but about the Hobbesean principles, will be taken over towards the end of this chapter. The *Leviathan*, like all great books, has changed something in people's reflection upon the world. Surviving a violent civil war, having precursors, from William of Occam to Machiavelli, in whose works the germs of Hobbes' ideas are to be found, made Hobbes to construct a solid basis for society, composed of three main points, *i.e.*, the idea of equal insecurity of all, the principle of individualism and that of materialism. These three principles are considered by Leroux and Dostoevsky – even though the latter does not mention Hobbes – as the founding principles of their society.

[18] Ibidem.

Their interpretation resonates with Macpherson's analysis, according to which, the development of these principles makes Hobbes the founding father of our society. According to Hobbes, the individual transfers all his rights to the Sovereign, butnot his will, which no one can take away from the individual and no one can contest. The Sovereign is willed by the individuals, and, as Manent says, this makes political legitimacy dependent solely on the individual will.[19] The other principle concerns the substitution, operated by Hobbes, of theology with geometry, arithmetic and physics. As Leo Strauss asserts in *Natural Right and History*, when Hobbes replaced theology with natural sciences, he did this because the latter dealt with figures and calculations and, in this way, man could become the only sovereign of the world, because we know only what we make. And through geometry, arithmetic and physics, man could "make" the world *in abstracto*.[20] Hobbes' materialism is linked to a form of nominalism. The idea that man could "make" the world *in abstracto* proves that man does not have access to the reality of the world's substance, but to abstract representations of the world, which do not have a common fundament. Thus, when it handled social, political and economic phenomena, the new political science, influenced by the progress of natural sciences, was no longer concerned to distinguish right from wrong, but applied "a new calculus to impersonal" social, political and economic forces, as R.H. Tawney argues in his book, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.

The dualism between individualism and some kind of social body has characterized the whole of modernity, according to Dumont. We encounter it, for example, in Rousseau and in the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme* – although it is differently formulated. As Manent sustains, for Rousseau, society, being corrupt, divides the individual – for example between

[19] Pierre Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, p.63.
[20]Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, p.174.

a Christian and a citizen – while the natural man was good because he was a self-sufficient whole. Therefore, the good society is the one most similar to nature, the one which identifies each individual with itself.[21] But in order to arrive at this "natural society", "*l'aliénation totale de chaque associé avec tous ses droits à toute la communauté*" is required.[22]As a consequence, says Manent, the only certain way to accomplish this identification is to put the public interest in contradiction with *all* private interests. And thus, the unity of all will become evident in the oppression of all. As Manent argues, even though Rousseau is equally far from Jacobinism as he is from liberalism, it is not absurd that Robespierre believed that he put into practice Rousseau's theory.[23]

Although *la Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme* was indebted to Rousseau's theory, Dumont says, it marked the triumph of individualism. Already its second Article – "*Le but de toute association politique est la conservation des droits naturels et imprescriptibles de l'homme. Ces droits sont la liberté, la propriété, la sûreté et la résistance à l'oppression*" – contradicted Rousseau's idea concerning the total alienation of each member to the community[24] and asserted the Lockean principle instead. This is the reason why between 1815 and 1830, a number of French thinkers condemned more or less the outcome of the French Revolution. Some, like the theocrats, condemned the French Revolution as a whole, reaffirming the holist tradition, while others, like the socialists, rejected hierarchy and tried to combine individualist and holist aspects of society.[25]

Jean-Claude Michéa believes that individualism, which destroyed the traditional, holist

[21] Pierre Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, p.162.
[22] Louis Dumont, "La conception moderne de l'individu", p.45.
[23] Pierre Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, p.170.
[24] Louis Dumont, "La conception moderne de l'individu", p.45.
[25] Ibidem, pp.49-53.

social order, has rendered account of both liberalism and socialism, after the French Revolution. But while the latter wanted to include in its social organization also holist principles, liberalism, according to Michéa, has been the only political philosophy marking a total rupture with the socio-political tradition.[26] Michéa argues, like Strauss, that the social order that emerged in the aftermath of the French Revolution replaced the traditional understanding of virtue with the virtue of "peacebleness",[27] the only war acceptable being now "*la guerre de l'homme contre la nature*"[28]. Michéa thus believes that Nietzsche was right to note that in a society which "adored security as the supreme divinity", labour represented "the best police-force".[29] In this sense, Michéa, Macpherson, and Polanyi, all sustain that political liberalism is intrinsically linked to economic liberalism.

As Adam Smith stressed, if rational individuals followed their rational interests, the result could be nothing but spontaneous social, political and economic harmony. Karl Polanyi contends that the Industrial Revolution proved quite the contrary: the passage from order to a terrible disorder. Until the Industrial Revolution, economy was embedded in the wholeness of society which had its own ultimate end. Since this Revolution, economy has been disembedded and became its own end, a process which produced the division between capitalists and labourers, as Marx also sustained.[30]

R.H. Tawney argues instead that capitalism, understood as "the direction of industry by the owners of capital for their own pecuniary gain", and the capitalist spirit, understood as "the temper […] prepared to sacrifice all moral scruples to the pursuit of profit", had been

[26] Jean-Claude Michéa, *L'empire du moindre mal*, Climats, Paris, 2007, p.19.
[27] Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, p.187.
[28] Jean-Claude Michéa, *L'empire du moindre mal*, p.28.
[29] Ibidem, p.57.
[30] Karl Polanyi, *La Grande Transformation*, translated by Catherine Malamoud and Maurice Angeno, Gallimard, Paris, 1983, pp.75-86.

familiar to the medieval "economic imperialism of Catholic Portugal and Spain".[31] Yet, the medieval political edifice, until the 16th century, rested on the fundamental assumption that "the ultimate standard of human institutions and activities was religion".[32] The Church, as Tawney asserts, regarded with suspicion any activity that asked for a space for itself, especially an activity such as the economic one, capable of stimulating powerful appetites and of generating avarice which Thomas Aquinas, for instance, would clearly define as a "deadly sin".[33] As such, a society grounded on a religious theory – a society which nevertheless suffered, in practice, from many imperfections – took its necessary precautions, for example, by declaring property first a "responsible office" and only afterwards a source of income. When society, redefined as a social contract, declared property "an unconditional right", obligations, says Tawney, naturally became nothing more than a figure of speech, since "whether [they] are fulfilled or neglected, the right continues unchallenged and indefeasible".[34] From here to a disembedded economy which offers a large space to the satisfaction of desires, there is only one small step. And, as Tawney says, it is only natural for "a society which reverences the attainment of riches as the supreme felicity [...] to regard the poor as damned in the next world, if only to justify itself for making their life a hell in this".[35]

In the nineteenth-century capitalist society, argue Polanyi and Tawney, religion was reserved a limited space in the social life – the inner chamber in one's soul –, while social relations came to be embedded in the economic system.[36] According to Michéa, it was

[31] R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of* Capitalism, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1926, p.93.
[32] Ibidem, p.32.
[33] Ibidem, pp.43-44.
[34] Ibidem, p.152.
[35] Ibidem, p.265.
[36] Karl Polanyi, *La Grande Transformation*, p.88.

against this model of society, which was exported all over Western Europe, that the nineteenth-century socialists directed their critique. But Paul Bénichou says that it would be a mistake to simply identify the liberal doctrine with economic liberalism, as economic freedom was only one aspect that saw the light of the day in the aftermath of the French Revolution which emphasized first and foremost the declaration of human rights, the right to enjoy one's property being one among many other rights and, as Bénichou says, "*le moins absolu d'entre eux*".[37] Bénichou is then right to argue that treating human rights as a mere cover for an unlimited economic individualism and understanding freedom only as the right to accumulate riches on the account of others may be dangerous, since this approach may contain the germs of a "dictatorial philosophy".[38] That being said, this danger does not, on the other hand, dismiss Michéa's observation that early 19th century was marked by the debate between defenders of a society grounded on the individual right – that had replaced the Good as the foundation of society –, a society presented by the liberals as a just society, and defenders of a "decent society", in the context where masses of labourers(former disinherited peasants) were moved into cities, artificially built around factories (a phenomenon taken over later, in the 20th century – and marked by a much greater violence – by communism). Thus, Macpherson, Michéa and Polanyi are not mistaken to note that, in a society which leaves the care of organizing life to the market – and implicitly reduces freedom to the freedom to accumulate or to consume – and requires of its members merely the "respect of their mutual indifference", the maxim "vivre et laisser vivre *finit toujours, là où ne règne pas un minimum de* common decency*, par se transformer dans les faits en* vivre

[37] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, Gallimard, Paris, 1977, p.16.
[38] Ibidem.

et laisser mourir".[39]

The fact that capitalism replaced the cultivation of virtue with self-interest that is supposed to moderate self-interest – as a wide variety of authors have argued, from Jean-Claude Michéa to John Milbank – is translated as the triumph of the economic over the political. One effect is what John Milbank calls the obliteration of "the Christian sphere of public charity", giving as an example Sir James Stewart, the "theorist of primary accumulation", who "scorns the Catholic practice of Spain where the surplus of public wealth is given to the needy" as "the miracle of manna from heaven".[40] Milbank argues that in Sir James Stewart's opinion, "political economy advocates a more regular and invariable providence: the regulation of need, and not charity, is a more reliable means of social control".[41]

As Milbank stresses, the triumph of the economic is equivalent to "the triumph of mere abstract power". Since the preference of one individual enters into direct conflict with the preference of another, in the absence of any consensus about ultimate ends, the only way to settle such conflicts is force, institutionalized in the form of the self-regulated market and ultimately, in the form of the liberal state.[42] Milbank's brilliant analysis shows that the narrative of power has been in existence ever since Antiquity. Ancient Rome celebrated Romulus, who, by a strong and violent hand, was capable to put an end to prior violence, and founded the powerful city by shedding the blood of his brother. This, says Milbank, is what Augustine describes as *Civitas terrena*, founded upon fratricide, the murderer being always

[39] Jean-Claude Michéa, *L'empire du moindre mal*, p.54. The italics in the quoted text belong to Michéa. In the rest of this thesis, the italics in a quoted text always belong to the author of the text, unless I mention that I added italics.

[40] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, Second Edition, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2006, p.31.

[41] Ibidem.

[42] Ibidem, p.199.

celebrated as the founding hero. Ancient Rome, as Augustine asserts, has been replaced by another beginning: Christianity, grounded not upon "a succession of power", but "upon the memory of the murdered brother, Abel slain by Cain" and, thus, upon the "memory of all the victims".[43] The only sacrifice required by the Christian God is the offering of love (*agape*)[44] which, in the words of Milbank, "involves no real self-loss", "just as the act of creation takes away nothing from God".[45] The offering of love involves rather the "reception of and orientation to" the others and ultimately to the absolute Other, God.[46] Henceforth, argues Milbank, Nietzsche was right in his depiction of Christianity as the religion that defines violence, the proud arbitrary will and the celebration of individual achievement, "as the very essence of evil".[47] Milbank concludes that the critique of capitalism, as of any other narrative of power, cannot be made but in ontological terms, starting from the assumption that our being is a gift, because the only other possible assumption – that our being is not a gift but is founded on itself and therefore involves our right to self-preservation and fulfillment – is part of the logic of power.

The critique brought to the nineteenth-century capitalist society by "*les nouveaux catholiques*", such as Pierre-Simon Ballanche, by socialists, like Pierre Leroux, by novelists like Charles Dickens and Victor Hugo, to mention just a few names, is not directed against the fact that the doctrine of human rights is a cover for the freedom to accumulate riches, but specifically against what Milbank defines as the logic of power. Thus, we can say that their critique penetrated the essence of capitalism more deeply than Marx because it underlined

[43]Ibidem, pp.393-394.

[44] I discuss in the third chapter the differences between the concepts *agape*, *philia*, and *eros*. For now, it should be remembered that I use the terms "love" and "charity" as substitutes for *agape*, and "friendship" as a substitute for *philia*.

[45]John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p.395.

[46]Ibidem.

[47]Ibidem, p.286.

that capitalism inaugurated a completely different understanding of human action that intended to replace moral with amoral regulations. Without despising economy, they wanted to bring the economic activity from its newly acquired status of master to its old status of servant, noting that economy, transformed into a master of society, represented, in the words of Milbank, "a realm of indifference to objective goodness, beauty and truth".[48] They urged that the economic activities should maintain their instrumental character and that this could be done only by preserving as a reference an ideal which escaped from the logic of economic activities and which defined the true nature of man.

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* *

The critique of individualism operated by Leroux and Dostoevsky is situated within the general background of early socialism which was committed to collective norms of Justice. Most of the works of Leroux and Dostoevsky that I will analyze in this chapter will be used also in the next two chapters, because the work of each of them is a whole and this feature is reflected in each book.

The decision in choosing Leroux's works is more difficult than in the case of Dostoevsky, because Leroux wrote an immense number of articles, some of which do not bear his signature or are extremely difficult to find, and he often published the same article with different titles. For instance, the article "De la Philosophie et du Christianisme", published in 1832, is the same as the article "Aux Politiques", published in 1842, and gathered, together with other articles of Leroux, in 1994 by Jean-Pierre Lacassagne in the book *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*. Leroux transformed many of his articles,

[48]Ibidem, p.202.

first published in *Encyclopédie Nouvelle*, founded by himself and Jean Reynaud, in 1834, into books or extended them later, into larger articles. For example, Leroux's book, *De l'Égalité*, published in 1838, appeared first as an article in *Encyclopédie Nouvelle*, in 1834. Likewise, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme* was published as a book in 1839 after it had appeared first as an article in the same *Encyclopédie Nouvelle*. Parts from the article *Conscience*, also from *Encyclopédie Nouvelle*, were taken over in *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*. In my analysis, I opted for books since they are easier to find and most of them take over and develop previous articles.[49] Especially for Leroux's youth articles (until 1831), I used Bruno Viard's anthology, *À la source perdue du socialisme français*. I consider Leroux's mature writing period starting with the end of the year 1831, when he left the Saint-Simonian group, to which he had belonged since 1830, after he had coquetted with British political economy, between 1824 and 1830. Thus, in what concerns his mature period, I opted in this chapter, for the following works: *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques* (edited by J.-P. Lacassagne), *De l'Égalité* (1838), *Réfutation de l'éclectisme* (1839), *De l'Humanité* (1840), *Le carrosse de M. Aguado* (1848), *De la Ploutocratie* (1848), and *Malthus et les économistes* (1849). I will not analyze his works chronologically because, as I have already mentioned, ideas in an earlier work are taken over and developed in a later one – one feature of Leroux's work is that it is repetitive – and there is no dramatic change in his thought, after 1831.

In Dostoevsky's case, I chose, for this chapter, his *Diary of a Writer* – essential for the whole thesis, as here we find exposed Dostoevsky's clear-cut ideas – and some of his novels that discuss the issue of individualism and the development of self-will: *Poor Folk* (1846), *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions* (1862), *A Raw Youth* (1875), *Humiliated and Insulted*

[49] In this sense, the sites http://gallica.bnf.fr/, http://www.amisdepierreleroux.org/ (Association des Amis de Pierre Leroux) and http://books.google.fr have been of great help in my search for Leroux's books, many of which do not exist as hard copies, in Canada.

(1861), *Crime and Punishment* (1866) and *The Possessed* (1872). The part on Dostoevsky begins with the analysis of individualism in general, and in Europe, in particular, and, starting with *A raw Youth*, I will concentrate on the form individualism takes in Russia, in the opinion of Dostoevsky. As it will be argued later, in his novels, Dostoevsky "tested" his ideas, in the sense that here he put his own ideas on equal footing with other ideas, that he encountered in society, so that each idea would follow its own logic. *The Diary of a Writer* is used throughout the whole part on Dostoevsky because it allows us to identify Dostoevsky's own ideas in the novels. In the evolution of this thesis, *The Possessed* and *Crime and Punishment* make the connection with the next two chapters. *The Possessed* makes the connection between chapter one and chapter two, because it shows the development of self-will from bourgeois individualism to communism, while *Crime and Punishment* makes the connection between chapter one and chapter three, because it shows the consequences of individual will in Raskolnikov and describes his attempt to make the way back to the human community or to the common humanity.

In the remaining of this chapter, I will analyze Leroux's and Dostoevsky's positions in relation to bourgeois society. I will emphasize and explain why, in their view, the critique of individualism, which is the essence of bourgeois society and of its economic expression, capitalism, should be made in ontological terms. This chapter will open the path to the understanding of their conceptions of human nature and of humanity, the general subject of the thesis and the particular subject of the third chapter. I divided this chapter into eleven sections, five on Leroux, five on Dostoevsky and the Conclusion. The first section, 1.2., places Leroux in the social and intellectual context of the first half of the nineteenth-century French society. The section presents first Leroux's youth sympathy (between 1824 and

1830) for political and economic liberalism. It is not only meant to present Leroux's intellectual evolution, but also to explain his subsequent attraction towards Saint-Simon's philosophy, which I will analyze in detail in the next chapter. The section is important, too, for the understanding of the fact that, during this period, he came into contact with a certain conception of freedom that he will never reject in totality, and which explains his future critique of the authoritarian Saint-Simonian doctrine. Section 1.3.introduces Leroux's mature thought. It is centered on his conception of the triad *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*, which, as it will be seen in the third chapter, represents the central part of his humanitarian and republican philosophy. I explain here the meaning the triad has for Leroux and his opinion on the way in which the French Revolution should have accomplished it. I will insist on this issue in the third chapter, but I present it briefly here because it explains his understanding of freedom, which I will approach in a following section. Section 1.4.brings forth Leroux's analysis of the way in which the post-revolutionary French society betrayed its mission, which should have consisted in the realization of social unity, while the outcome was instead a profound division: within the individual, between him and his fellows and between him and nature. The philosophical expression of this division is, according to Leroux, the eclectic philosophy, sustained by the doctrinaires, his former colleagues from the journal *Le Globe*, during his youth liberal period. Section 1.5.analyzes Leroux's understanding of freedom which, according to him, corresponds to his idea of the true human nature. In Leroux's opinion, the bourgeois individualist conception of freedom is contrary to human nature and ends in the negation of freedom. This section introduces the next which deals with Leroux's conception of property, and here I end the part on Leroux. In 1.7., I propose one possible reading of Dostoevsky – grounded on Mikhail Bakhtin's study – which presents him not just

as a novelist but also as a political thinker. In section 1.8., I analyze Dostoevsky's critique of bourgeois society and, implicitly, of its incapacity to truly realize the triad freedom, equality, brotherhood. With this, I introduce the next section, where I analyze Dostoevsky's criticism of the fact that the bourgeois principles and mode of living have been adopted by the Russian intelligentsia. The two sections are meant to show the similar ways in which Leroux and Dostoevsky perceive the division inherent in the bourgeois society and mode of living. In 1.10.1., I analyze the evolution Dostoevsky describes from individualism to communism, in Raskolnikov, the character from *Crime and Punishment*. According to Dostoevsky, individualism and communism have a common ultimate end, nihilism. This aspect is discussed at greater length in the next section, where I analyze the case of "the possessed". I intend to emphasize the relation Dostoevsky sees between individualism and nihilism. The last section consists in concluding remarks on the similarity between Leroux and Dostoevsky concerning the individualist bourgeois society.

1.2. Leroux as a liberal

In 1791 France, most of the elected members of the Legislative Assembly belonged to the old Third Estate and were, according to P.M. Jones, the "revolutionary class-in-the-making", represented by "well-to-do peasants and tenant farmers of country parishes, ex-seigniorial officials and small-time professionals, like doctors, barber-surgeons, land surveyors, teachers, millers etc."[50] Although supposed to be an achievement of the French Revolution, political freedom was denied, during the Revolution and during the 19th century,

[50] P.M. Jones writes in his book, *The French Revolution.1787-1804,* 2nd ed., Pearson, Harlow, 2010, pp.50-51, that "only about 5% (twenty six clerics and twenty ex-nobles) hailed from the former privileged classes".

as Maxime Leroy says, to "unequal and intolerant citizens". Persons characterized by "suspect" words, such as "aristocrat" or "royalist", were denied political freedom in 1793, whereas during the 19th century, the poor were denied political freedom in a censitary state.[51] The society born after the Revolution had as a task to redefine freedom and to prove that it could have a consistent meaning, other than the reign of terror. This task was first assumed by the liberals, some of the principal representatives, at the time, being Benjamin Constant, Madame de Staël, the doctrinaires François Guizot, Victor Cousin, Théodor Jouffroy etc.

The liberals believed that the triumph of the third estate could best sustain and preserve the liberties and interests of the "new France", because their regime was a *juste milieu* between the absolutist monarchy and the sovereignty of the people, both of which had proven to suppress the individual.Especially after 1830, it became clear that the "winner", in the aftermath of the French Revolution, was a bourgeois world – represented by Louis-Philippe and Guizot – a world of enterprise and profit, governed by a few moral principles, remnants of the old world. The revolution of 1830 established the freedom of the press, diminished the census and declared the equality of confessions, following the tradition of 1789.[52] When saying that the bourgeois world was victorious in this period, it might be more helpful, for our political analysis, to understand this in terms of a bourgeois spirit, rather than in terms of a specific class. Jules Michelet sustains that it would be difficult to define the borders of the bourgeoisie. According to the French historian, the bourgeoisie "*ne renferme pas exclusivement les gens aisés, il y a beaucoup de bourgeois pauvres. Dans nos campagnes, le même homme est journalier ici, et là* bourgeois*, parce qu'il a du bien. Cela*

[51] Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, 3e Edition, Gallimard, Paris, 1950, pp.31-32.
[52] Ibidem, p.376.

fait, grâce à Dieu, qu'on ne peut opposer rigoureusement la bourgeoisie au peuple".[53] A principal feature of the bourgeois world, in Michelet's opinion, was the isolation and the fragmentation of the social, as well as of the individual, life: "*On se serre dans sa classe, dans son petit cercle d'habitudes où l'esprit, l'activité personnelle, ne sont plus nécessaires. La porte est bien fermée… Egoïsme inintelligent…*"[54] Thus, it is a certain attitude, a certain state of mind, that makes the bourgeois, "*une certain mesure d'indépendance et de loisir*".[55]

At the same time, the bourgeois world was refractory to social reforms. The Civil Code of 1803 did not mention the rights of labourers, neither was it concerned with the justice of the labour contract. It was starting with the 1830s that a consciousness of labourers – who perceived themselves as inferior – began to take shape. As Michelet sustained, it was the forming consciousness of "*un misérable petit peuple d'hommes-machines*" in the middle of "*un peuple d'hommes*".[56]

One of the great merits of Leroy's book, *Histore des idées sociales en France*, is that it offers a complex radiography of the nineteenth-century French social life, by quoting a number of works, for instance, a study of doctor Villermé, or that of a Catholic economist, Alban de Villeneuve-Bargemont, who, by no means hiding the vices of this category of people, present the general state of labourers, as well as statistics concerning the number of working hours, the diseases to which the labourers were predisposed or the rate of unemployment. In his study, *Tableau de l'état physique et moral des ouvriers employés dans les manufactures de coton, de laine, et de soie*, Villermé writes that these fields of work used the labour of children, many of which were under the age of eight, the working conditions

[53] Jules Michelet, *Le Peuple*, 140 et sqq., in Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.377.
[54] Ibidem, p.378.
[55] Ibidem, p.377.
[56] Jules Michelet, *Le Peuple*, 76, in Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.390.

were unhealthy, the labourers often suffering from pulmonary diseases and phthisis, and the general length of the working day was of thirteen hours – and Villermé makes a comparison with the slaves in Antilles, who worked nine hours per day, with three resting hours.[57]This situation, Villermé notes, tends to sustain large, industrial properties, at the expense of the small property because, as he says, even though "*la loi n'accorde pas de monopole aux gros industriels contre les petits […],par le fait, les capitaux considérables des premiers leur en donne [sic] un*".[58]Maxime Leroy points out that what impressed Michelet, Villermé or Villeneuve-Bargemont was the fact that these labourers were completely abandoned by society. In his *Économie chrétienne*, Villeneuve-Bargemot notes that society abandoned the labourers "*aux chefs et entrepreneurs des manufactures*", in whose hands it left an unlimited power "*de réunir autour d'eux des populations entières pour en employer les bras suivant leur intérêt, pour en disposer, en quelque sorte, à discrétion, sans qu'aucune garantie d'existence, d'avenir, d'amélioration morale ou physique soit donnée de leur part, ni à ces populations, ni à la société qui doit les protéger*".[59]

This is the general context, very briefly sketched, in which Pierre Leroux began and developed his career as a journalist and philosopher. Leroux's first articles were published in the Parisian journal, *Le Globe*, which was first published on September 15, 1824, and which defined its purpose in the following terms: "*Étendre et fortifier l'union des peuples, en faisant connaître en France les productions importantes publiées chez les nations étrangères, quel qu'en soit l'objet; réunir en un même faisceau toutes les connaissances humaines, n'en exclure aucune, accorder à chacune sa place, et faire sentir par leur*

[57] Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, pp.383-385.

[58] Louis René Villermé, *Tableau de l'état physique et moral des ouvriers employés dans les manufactures de coton, de laine et de soie*, II, 301, in Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.387.

[59] Octave Festy, "A. de Villeneuve-Bargemont et la condition des ouvriers français aux environs de 1830", *Revue des sciences politiques*, 15 août 1919, in Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.390.

rapprochement qu'elles tendent toutes au même but."[60]

Leroux was taking care of the typography of the journal and occasionally also published articles. Between 1824 and August 1830, *Le Globe* was a liberal journal, whose main representatives were the doctrinaires Guizot, Rémusat, Cousin and others. The fact that most of the articles in *Le Globe* were not signed makes it difficult to identify all of Leroux's articles. Jean-Jacques Goblot and Jean-Pierre Lacassagne identified many of his articles written between 1824 and 1830, which reveal Leroux as an anglophile and a liberal. He shared the faith of Benjamin Constant and Madame de Staël, that the perfectibility of humankind and the private enjoyment of liberties could set the grounds for a more peaceful, egalitarian and democratic regime. As Paul Bénichou and Vincent Peillon argue, Leroux's thought never fully separated from the liberal doctrine. Even in his later works, he continued to share with Benjamin Constant the faith in a "*logique de la transcendance qui se heurte à la difficulté de concilier la liberté humaine et un plan providentiel*".[61] For Constant, as Bénichou states, man's need to define himself in relation with and starting from "*l'évidence d'une plénitude divine*" affirms this transcendence which, at its turn, affirms the indefinite perfectibility of humanity or, in other words, human dignity.[62]

Most of Leroux's first articles, fragments of which were gathered in the anthology of Bruno Viard, are descriptions of Oriental and African regimes, that emphasize the misery, the despotism and the cruelty encountered here, but also the spiritual riches – an idea that will be taken over in his later works. In the period between 1824 and 1830, Leroux admired the English political economy because of its emphasis on free competition and believed that

[60] M. des Granges, *La presse littéraire sous la Restauration*, 1907, p.139, in Jean-Jacques Goblot, *Aux origines du socialisme français: Pierre Leroux et ses premiers écrits (1824-1830)*, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, Lyon, 1977, p.4.

[61] Vincent Peillon, *Pierre Leroux et le socialisme républicain*, Le Bord de l'eau, Lormont, 2003, p.161.

[62] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, pp.21, 25.

from such a system it was only truth that would come out victorious, while everything pernicious and false would disappear by itself. For example, he expressed the belief, in two articles published in April 1825 and February 1827, that slavery did not need a complicated legislation in order to be abolished, but that free competition would prove it inefficient. According to the young Leroux, the success of free competition rested on an idea invented by the English, that of *intérêt bien compris*, which proved that a free individual receiving a salary would be interested to do a much better job than a slave.[63] He championed the project of a European Union which would rest on the principles of free competition and free trade. In his opinion, the old world was grounded on war and conquest, the means by which the great empires and monarchies had been established. The French Revolution, said Leroux, proved illegitimate the pretences of superiority of some individuals over others and of some nations over others; it proved that "*la conquête, c'est la centralisation*".[64] The Revolution opened the path to the great society of humanity about which it could be said "*ce que Pascal disait de l'univers:* Centre partout, circonférence nulle part".[65] It was free trade, in Leroux's opinion, that could champion decentralization because it offered equal chances to everyone and did not allow any economic advantage of great nations over small ones, or of the center of one country over its provinces. This would decentralize empires and would allow each province and each village to develop its own economic activity and to compete freely on the European market.[66] In 1841, as Jacques Viard notes, Leroux had already renounced the

[63] Pierre Leroux, "Angleterre. Formation d'une société pour encourager la culture et la fabrication du sucre par le moyen du travail libre", April 2, 1825; "De l'esclavage et de la situation de nos colonies françaises par A. Billiard", February 6, 1827, in Bruno Viard (ed.), *À la source perdue du socialisme français*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1997, pp.64-66.

[64] Pierre Leroux, "Philosophie de l'histoire. De l'Union européenne", *Le Globe*, November 24, 1827, http://www.amisdepierreleroux.org/bibliographie/unioneuropeenne.htm

[65] Ibidem.

[66] Ibidem.

principles of free competition and *intérêt bien compris*, but still affirmed – only in a more complex manner – the idea of solidarity, writing in *Revue indépendante*:

> *nous devons travailler à l'Union européenne, en vue de décentraliser les empires, de voir les peuples, les colonies, les esclaves, les prolétaires, les femmes, se relever avec la conscience de leurs droits et de leur dignité, en vue de faire de chaque nation un corps de citoyens destinés à travailler ensemble, et de rendre de plus en plus solidaires les individus-nations, les civilisations et les religions*.[67]

The article *De l'Union européenne* is one of the most interesting written by Leroux in his youth, because here we find the germs of many of his mature ideas. Leroux contests what he believes to be the foundation of the European world until the French Revolution, *i.e.*, the principle that peace could emerge out of a fundamentally warlike human nature, expressed by Bodin, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Grotius and Pufendorf. The great invention of Hobbes, according to Leroux, was to make peace dependant on an absolute sovereign. But, he continues, this peace could not be authentic, because saying to people, "*Soyez au fond du cœur traîtres, envieux, fripons, tels enfin que la nature vous fit: la loi est là, souveraine et toujours juste*"[68], means to equate peace with an act of violence that ends a previous war and, henceforth, does not offer an ontological priority of peace over war. This, according to Leroux, means to identify the useful with the just. Even though Leroux does not mention Augustine, here, it is worth drawing a comparison between Leroux's reflection and the contrast Augustine operates between two types of peace. According to Augustine, there is an apparent or unequal peace, identified as the victory of a dominant force, of the conqueror over the conquered. Leroux talks, in this article, as well as in his mature works, of a peace, understood as the victory of the patricians, of the military nobility, or of the capitalists over the plebs, or proletarians, a victory which gives the former the right "to do as they please"

[67] Pierre Leroux, *Revue indépendante*, 1841 (article not specified), in Jacques Viard, *Pierre Leroux, Charles Péguy, Charles de Gaulle et l'Europe*, l'Harmattan, Paris, 2004, p.26.

[68] Pierre Leroux, "Philosophie de l'histoire. De l'Union Européenne".

with the latter. The other type of peace, says Augustine, is that which comes together with the accomplishment of justice for all, as the result of common love, and which also involves a victory, but not of a stronger individual over a weaker one, but over one's passions. This, maintains Augustine, is real peace, while the first type is a precarious peace, because it ends a war by an act of violence, or by setting a sovereign force that keeps a balance between individuals or states which seek power over others.[69] We discover in Leroux a similar idea. In his view, for the authors mentioned above, Bodin, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Grotius and Pufendorf, there is only a difference of degree between peace and justice, on the one hand, and war, on the other. Thus, argues Leroux, the useful, a category which had become a standard-value in political science, was introduced also as a standard-value in metaphysics, replacing the just and the good. Leroux proposes a metaphysics grounded on three different names: Thomas More, François Fénelon and Charles-Irénée, abbé de Saint-Pierre, who are attached to a conception of peace defined not only as a category different from war, but as *the* supreme category.[70] It is worth keeping in mind these ideas, because they will be taken over and developed by Leroux in his later works.

Already in the period between 1824 and 1830, Leroux was concerned with social issues. He admired England and United States for their reforms in creating an educational system open to all and for recognizing that it was the duty of society to educate the individuals. According to Leroux, public education and the opening of the scientific findings to all were the means to alleviate some of the difficulties of the labourers and to correct vices.[71] Leroux saw in the system of public education another major benefit, that of individual emancipation.

[69]John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, pp.392-293.
[70] Pierre Leroux, "Philosophie de l'histoire. De l'Union Européenne".
[71] Jean-Jacques Goblot, *Aux origines du socialisme français*, pp.8-11; Bruno Viard, *À la source perdue du socialisme français*, pp.70-72.

He praised the egalitarian educational system of the United States, which offered the same education to all individuals, irrespective of the social position of their families, a thing which, according to Leroux, made the individual less constrained by family ties and social hierarchy and more responsible towards his country.[72] An elitist educational system left the poor uneducated, while the society, without feeling any guilt or responsibility for their vices, applied the only treatment it knew for their crimes: the penitentiary system.[73]

As I said, Leroux's articles in *Le Globe* contain the germs of many of the ideas of his mature works: the concepts of social responsibility of all, of solidarity, of spiritual unity of humankind, which will later take the form of a religious mysticism. He will also lose his youth optimism concerning the capacity of the liberal concepts, of "*intérêt bien compris*", of "*coalition des intérêts*", and of free competition, to contribute to the well-being of the society as a whole.

After the revolution of 1830, the liberals, who had played an important role in *Le Globe*, left the journal, and, in Maxime Leroy's words, their jobs of writer, critic, historian, poet, for higher, official, positions in the constitutional liberal state.Sainte-Beuve writes:

> *Une des premières sources du mal, ç'a été, à un certain moment, la retraite brusque et en masse de toute la portion la plus distinguée et la plus solide des générations déjà mûries, des chefs de l'école critique, qui ont déserté la littérature pour la politique pratique et les affaires. Les services que ces hommes éclairés ont rendus en politique peuvent être reconnus, mais sont incontestablement moindres que ceux qu'ils auraient rendus à la société en restant maîtres du poste des idées et en y ralliant par la presse ceux qui survenaient à l'aventure. Leur absence n'a pas peu contribué à laisser le champ libre à l'industrialisme et à tous genres de cupidité et de*

[72] "*Partout où le principe de l'égalité a prévalu, le citoyen et la patrie sont en rapport direct et s'unissent par des dons mutuels*". Pierre Leroux, "États-Unis. Écoles libres de la Nouvelle-Angleterre", March, 1825, in Bruno Viard (ed.), *À la source perdue du socialisme français*, p.71.

[73] "*Nous levons des impôts pour avoir en commun des routes, des canaux, et des monuments; mais nous ne voulons pas avoir en commun d'instruction publique, nous voulons qu'elle s'achète*", Ibidem, pp.71-72. Leroux, like Dostoevsky, was an adversary of the elitist theory that only a small percentage of the population was capable of receiving an education and of learning.

prétentions.[74]

The life of *Le Globe* "*doctrinaire*" ended in August 1830 and in November the journal was sold to the Saint-Simonian group, where Leroux participated until 1831. Between August and November, Leroux remained the only administrator of the journal whose orientation was now, as Goblot says, republican or left-liberal.[75] Leroux's thought was to become more systematic after he quitted the Saint-Simonians in 1831, and it revealed a rich philosophy, where we could identify a profound analysis of his contemporary society, an anthropology and a phenomenology.

[74] Sainte-Beuve, *Portraits Contemporains*, III, 425, 431, in Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.195.

[75] Why did Leroux sell *Le Globe* to the Saint-Simonians? He did it surely out of conviction, and he explained his reasons in an article, called "Profession de foi", published in January 1831, in his Saint-Simonian period, which he re-published in 1850, with the expressive title: "Plus de libéralisme impuissant" (Bruno Viard (ed.), *À la source perdue du socialisme français*, p.99). Liberalism disappointed Leroux on many levels. He was disappointed by the doctrinaires who, as I said, left the journal and their philosophic formation in order to become state-officials. Leroux also noted that between 1814 and 1830 the bourgeoisie – called also "*nouvelle aristocratie*" or "*aristocratie bourgeoise*" by *l'Organisateur*, a Saint-Simonian publication – continued, in fact, the Old Regime. The bourgeoisie, believed Leroux, took over and enjoyed the privileges of the aristocracy. The Revolution had theoretically abolished privileges and proclaimed equality, but the division between those with and those without privileges remained, in reality (Jean-Jacques Goblot, *Aux origines du socialisme français*, p.23). Being himself part of the working class, he denounced the fact that the mass of the people was suffocated by the privileges of the bourgeoisie, without being able to make its voice heard. He came to the conclusion that the doctrine of the *intérêt bien compris* was incapable to produce spontaneous social harmony, but, on the contrary, divided society between winners and losers. Already in 1827 he began to manifest his interest in the thought of Saint-Simon, whom he had met once in 1825. He was interested in the core issue of Saint-Simon's work, the principle of attraction, on the grounds of which Saint-Simon propounded a theory of social unity. The religious renewal and the emancipation of the proletariat were the Saint-Simonian ideas that attracted Leroux the most. He wrote in his article, "Profession de foi": "*... l'inspiration religieuse s'y était mêlée à l'industrie et à la science, pour les unir et les féconder. […] L'émancipation complète de la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre, le classement selon la capacité et les œuvres, avaient de tout temps été pour nous des croyances d'instinct […]. Un tel dogme achevait de nous révéler à nous-mêmes notre pensée, et répondait à […] tous les désirs de notre cœur*" (Pierre Leroux, "Profession de foi", in Bruno Viard (ed.), *À la source perdue du socialisme français*, p.100). Between 1830 and 1831, Leroux was part of the Saint-Simonian group and became an "apostle" who spread Saint-Simonism in France. But he was soon to be disappointed by the theocratic tendencies and by the theories on "*l'amour libre*" of Père Enfantin. He saw in the Saint-Simonian preference for dogmatic authority a rigidity which annulled critical reason and the individual right of examination. On November 19, 1831, he read in front of Enfantin the letter which announced his breach with the group: "*Je crois que nous devons entrer maintenant dans une époque de liberté, où nous devons examiner avant de suivre l'enseignement d'un seul homme. Je vous déclare donc que je ne reconnais plus votre autorité, que je me retire de votre communion ...*" (Letter to Enfantin, in Bruno Viard (ed.), *À la source perdue du socialisme français*, p.111). I will discuss in detail the thought of Saint-Simon, the Saint-Simonian School, Leroux's initial adhesion and his breach and subsequent critique of Saint-Simonism in the next chapter.

1.3. Leroux's anthropology: Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité

What does Leroux understand by freedom? The concept has a complex significance in his thought and he believes that it is an unfortunate choice to define the concept as an abstract one, separated from the other concepts that define man. Man is a being who leaves his imprint in the world, acts upon and manifests himself in the world. Ploughing a field, building a cathedral, a bridge or a factory, are actions as concrete as taking the pen and writing, as inflicting moral suffering or bringing joy to another mortal being. The latter actions, even though defined as thoughts or words, give birth to other thoughts and feelings in other human beings who, under their influence, act, too, upon the world. This is called freedom or the right to act, a right with which any man is born. According to Leroux, man can act upon the world specifically because there is an objective world which, in its turn, acts upon him. Since man is a subjectivity in a continual relation with an objective reality, Leroux sustains that man is defined first and foremost as sensation or desire (which includes in its definition also power) to act. The first purpose of politics then consists in providing those conditions which allow people to manifest their freedom: "*Faire que les hommes soient libres, c'est faire qu'ils existent ou [...] qu'ils se manifestent. Manquant la liberté, il n'y a que le néant et la mort. La non-liberté, c'est la défense d'être.*"[76]

Since all men act in the world, the actions of each individual cause certain feelings to arise in others. Thus, saying, like Hobbes, that men are similar to atoms in a perpetual movement that ceases only in death, means to have a very partial view on human nature

[76] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Égalité* (first published in 1838), Boussac, Imprimerie de Pierre Leroux, 1848, p.2, http://books.google.fr/books?id=0Zz8AE1p7KMC&printsec=frontcover&dq=pierre+leroux+de+l'egalite&hl=fr&ei=a78VTp3HGoa58gPN3cUF&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false

because, according to Leroux, man is not only active, but also sensitive. Therefore, each individual feels the need that his feelings, arisen in him as a consequence of the others' actions, be recognized by his fellows. Leroux defines this by the term brotherhood: "*Fraternité veut dire: [...] l'homme ne peut pas être en présence de son semblable, ni contracter avec lui, sans avoir un sentiment à son égard; or, l'idéal du citoyen, c'est d'aimer tous les autres hommes, et d'agir conformément à cette charité, à cet amour.*"[77]

Men are also characterized by intelligence or by the need to reflect upon the reason for which all people have the right to manifest themselves and the duty to love one another. This is defined by Leroux by the term equality, meaning that all people are endowed with the capacityof reflection. Brotherhood is identified by Leroux with Christianity. But brotherhood, in itself, or Christianity, is not sufficient because Christians, although recognizing the feelings that are arisen in each individual, have the tendency to concentrate their love on God and to retreat from the world, leaving it in the hands of others, most often of vicious characters. Thus, they do not understand why it is necessary to recognize everyone's equal right, including *their* right, to act upon the world.[78] Nevertheless, in the absence of brotherhood, either freedom affirms itself as absolute or equality affirms itself as absolute, engendering either anarchy or despotism, which are not two opposite terms, as we may think at first sight. Since each man recognizes nothing but his individual right to manifest himself, there will be no limit to his right or, in other words, to his desire and power to act upon the world. If freedom is understood as an unlimited right to act, to manifest one's will, there is no society, but only an agglomeration of individuals in a perpetual antagonism and war, according to Leroux: "*C'est au nom de la Liberté*", says Leroux, "*qu'en tout temps*

[77] Ibidem, p.3.
[78] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, Deuxième édition, Perrotin, Paris, 1845, tome premier, pp.19-21.

et en tout pays les esclaves ont brisé leur chaînes et terrassé leurs tyrans; mais ce mot [...] n'a jamais engendré ni clémence ni paix. Nulle morale ne peut résulter d'un mot qui exprime le droit d'être, de se manifester, d'agir ..."[79] This then gives birth to the opposite tendency, that of imposing an exterior limit to the unlimited right and power to act, because, says Leroux, most people are frightened by the destructive nature of this anarchic and unlimited right to act. Thus, equality understood as everyone's capacity to reflect upon the right to manifest oneself and the duty to love one another can be reduced to a dogma which declares the equality of the individual rights to act. Since individuals do not reflect spontaneously and freely upon the duty of *philia*, an exterior sovereign force imposes equality.

It should be clarified that, when Leroux uses the term "duty", he refers to a duty inscribed in human nature, because, according to him, man is by nature a social being, in a perpetual attraction towards his fellows, and denying this "duty" of *philia* means denying human nature. The capacity of authentic reflection is not possible in the absence of the awareness of the common belonging to humanity. For Leroux, an authentic human society is "*une fraternité où chacun soit libre*"[80], each recognizing the other's right to manifest himself and making of this recognition the condition for the exercise of his own right. The "trinity", freedom, brotherhood, equality, corresponds, thus, to the three aspects of the human being, sensation, or the right to act upon the world, sentiment, or charity, and understanding or reflection upon the world. An accomplished man is the one in a perpetual endeavor to find the equilibrium between the three aspects, an equilibrium that we should also find in society, because society is the lawful reflection of people's actions. The equilibrium can be translated

[79] Ibidem, p.7.
[80] Ibidem, p.3.

in the observation of Vincent Peillon, that, for Leroux, the only way in which each man can live his individuality is by opening himself towards the universal humanity present in him and in others.[81] This opening is made possible by the perpetual pursuit of the equilibrium in the relation *moi/autrui*. It is only in the recognition of the other – as an individuality who, like everyone else, has the right to act upon the world, and who is affected by the others' actions – that humanity, as the equilibrium between sensation, sentiment and reflection, can be accomplished.

Freedom, according to Leroux, corresponds to Antiquity. The Ancients loved freedom as an active manifestation. The main objective, continues Leroux, quoting Aristotle, was to make possible the participation of all citizens in the life of the city. But only a few were recognized this right of manifestation in the ancient city-state and the caste regime allowed a superior caste to act mercilessly towards an inferior one.[82]

As already mentioned, Christianity corresponds to brotherhood. It was the task of the French Revolution, Leroux believes, to unite Antiquity and Christianity in a new synthesis, expressed by the words *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. According to Leroux, the French Revolution was characterized by a profound ambiguity. On the one hand, it was or rather was meant to be the concrete recognition of man by man, or the affirmation of a "respectable humanity" present in any individual, as a consequence of the destruction of castes. If in the past, says Leroux before Marx, individuals were defined by their belonging to a certain caste, a certain social category or position, the French Revolution should have inaugurated a democratic society, in the sense that individuals defined themselves, and everyone else, as human beings. It was, thus, the profound new feeling of belonging to humanity which

[81] Vincent Peillon, *Pierre Leroux et le socialisme républicain*, p.133.
[82] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Égalité*, p.70.

inspired the individuals to respect and to love one another, a feeling equally recognized – though with significant differences – by socialists, neo-Catholics and moderate liberals:

> *Avec l'ancien ordre des choses*, argues Victor Cousin, *s'affaiblissent et déclinent les vieilles mœurs [...]. Les vieilles vertus s'en vont. À la place des anciennes vertus, grâce à Dieu, en viennent de nouvelles, par exemple l'humanité, mot presque nouveau [...]. L'humanité moderne a sa racine dans la charité chrétienne; je le reconnais bien volontiers, mais c'est la gloire du XVIIIe siècle de l'en avoir tiré. L'humanité, dans les actes, c'est la bienfaisance; dans les sentiments, c'est la bienveillance.*[83]

On the other hand, believes Leroux, the French Revolution was a sudden breach with the past, and a desire to return to an abstract state of nature and to exercise an abstract, absolute, individual freedom. In this specific aspect, Leroux anticipates Hannah Arendt, considering that the French Revolution allowed the manifestation of the desire of the political body to be its own founder and legislator. Thus, as Arendt says, the "general will of Rousseau or Robespierre" attempted to imitate the "divine Will which needs only to will in order to produce a law".[84] But as sublime as it might have been, the desire of absolute freedom was doomed to failure merely because man could not be *causa sui*. Therefore, considers Leroux, the Revolution resulted in violence which eventually turned against and abolished freedom. Its mission was, thus, compromised, and instead of order, it engendered a new disorder, where the right of the strongest was affirmed. In this way, a new feudality, in the form of the bourgeoisie, even more drastic than the old landlords, emerged victorious in the aftermath of the Revolution.

[83] Victor Cousin, *Cours d'histoire de la philosophie*, 1829, I, 15-16, in Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.396.

[84] Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution*, Penguin Books, New York, 2006, p.175.

1.4. Division of society, division of the self and eclecticism

The Revolution had the effect of not only replacing one master with another, but, what is most important, of destroying the social ties. Despite its many sins, Leroux saw in the Medieval world the action of Christianity which, as already mentioned, establishing salvation as the highest ideal of man and of society, limited human passions. As a French historian writes about the gilds, "*tout ce petit monde antique était fortement imbu des idées chrétiennes sur le juste salaire et le juste prix; sans doute, il y avait alors, comme aujourd'hui, des cupidités et des convoitises; mais une règle puissante s'imposait à tous et d'une manière générale exigeait pour chacun le pain quotidien promis par l'Évangile.*"[85] Because, as Leroux argues, in the Middle Ages, the earth and the heavens were united by the Christian faith, on the one hand, the Church hadthe role, at least in theory, to mediate, in the words of Tawney, "between even the humblest activity and the divine purpose"[86], and, on the other hand, even the humblest servant of the Church could hope for justice. And, by virtue of the eternal Justice, "*le prêtre travaillait à conduire ses frères dans le ciel; le noble travaillait à protéger sur la terre ses frères pendant leur pénible acheminement vers le ciel*".[87] The Revolution, affirms Leroux, chastised the old social norms and virtues, together with the Christian feeling of charity – even though this had not been its initial purpose. As such, the earth was separated from the heavens, which remained a chimera, and society was reduced to an agglomeration of individuals "*destinés à être dévorés par la douleur et le*

[85]Martin Saint-Léon, *Histoire des Corporations de Métiers*, 3rd ed., 1922, p.187, in R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p.40.

[86]R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p.41.

[87] Pierre Leroux, *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, edited by Jean-Pierre Lacassagne, Éditions Payot et Rivages, Paris, 1994, p.91.

doute".[88] Such a society was, in fact, inexistent because, explains Leroux, "*on peut dire, comme Jésus, que Jérusalem périra jusque dans ses maisons, parce que Jérusalem a péri dans le cœur des hommes*".[89] The only law of the new society was the one proclaimed by Rochefoucauld: "*L'égoïsme est le mobile de tout*". By virtue of the new law, says Leroux, the words of saint Teresa of Avila, "*Ou souffrir, Seigneur, ou mourir!*" – translated by Leroux as "*Je veux souffrir, parce que souffrir en vue du ciel, c'est aimer et qu'aimer est ma loi*" – were substituted with "*jouir et ne jamais mourir*".[90]

But the French Revolution also declared the equal right of everyone to enjoy freedom. Therefore, according to Leroux, the two principles, freedom and equality, in the absence of a higher principle or a higher justification of society, can give birth to violence and despotism:

> *s'il y a dans la société un inférieur en puissance, en richesse, en quoi que ce soit, il a droit de réclamer. Et si vous ne pouvez pas lui donner la raison de son esclavage et de votre liberté, de son malheur et de votre prospérité, il a le droit de se mettre à votre place et de vous mettre à la sienne. [...] C'est ainsi que tout principe d'ordre et toute règle d'obéissance est détruite aujourd'hui.*[91]

This new organization of society, or what Leroux calls "disassociation", brought about a double division, one within the self and one within society, which takes the form of the estrangement between man and man, and of the division of labour, a malaise first identified by the romantics. According to Tieck, Novalis, Schelling, Schleiermacher or Friedrich Schlegel, the traditional community, represented by guilds, corporations and family, collapsed in favour of the social contract and of the market-place where individuals were joined together not by virtue of a common faith, but of self-interest. Each individual would become specialized in performing one specific task, without seeing or understanding, as

[88]Ibidem, p.90.
[89]Ibidem, p.87.
[90]Ibidem, pp.109-110.
[91]Ibidem, p.98.

Marx argued later, the final product. The advance of mechanical physics, which "made nature into a vast machine", and the estrangement between men resulted in perceiving both nature and human beings, not as sources of mystery and beauty, but as "objects of mere use". Because society was no longer an organic community, but was divided between parts and activities with no real connection between them, the interior life of the individual was, consequently, also divided between a place of work, his leisure activity and a spiritual life, if any.[92]

Leroux, like many philosophers and men of letters in the 19th century, was strongly influenced by romanticism and he, too, adopted this theory of division. According to him, France developed an official philosophy which justified this division, called eclectic philosophy, whose main representatives were Victor Cousin and Théodor Jouffroy, Cousin's student, and against which Leroux wrote a book called *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*. The eclectic philosophy, affirms Leroux, is grounded on the *esprit géométrique* of Descartes and on Scottish empiricism. According to Leroux, the eclectic philosophers enclose metaphysics within the boundaries of the self, making eclecticism a philosophy of egotism.[93] On the other hand, Cousin, a great admirer of Kant, adopts the theory of a noumenal world which operates a clear distinction between the earth and the heavens, between the soul and the body.[94] Leroux affirms that Cousin and Jouffroy separate this world from the other world, and sustain that, after having created this world, God, who is identified with impersonal reason and with a principle that accounts for the absolute ethical authority, left the world on its own and withdrew in his heaven. The two philosophers, Leroux continues, recognize

[92] Frederick Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p.33.
[93] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.348.
[94] Aurelian Craiutu, *Le Centre introuvable. La pensée politique des doctrinaires français sous la Restauration*, translated from English by Isabelle Hausser, Plon, Paris, 2006, p.100.

neither the unity of soul and body and he brings against them the argument of Bossuet: "*Le corps n'est pas [...] un vaisseau que l'âme gouverne à la manière d'un pilote. L'âme et le corps ne font ensemble qu'*un tout *naturel [...] l'âme n'agit pas sans le corps, ni la partie intellectuelle sans la partie sensitive.*"[95] In her analysis of Leroux, Armelle Le Bras-Chopard sustains that the eclectic philosophers championed, in philosophy, the duality between soul and body, in order to justify, in the social life, the distinction between two social categories, a social elite and the mass of people, and implicitly the superiority of the former – corresponding to the soul – over the latter – corresponding to the body.[96]

Leroux criticizes the individualist rationalism of the eclectics because it keeps alive the illusion of man as a self-sufficient whole, of the "all-powerful consciousness"[97], who owes nothing to society for what he is. Descartes, one of the pillars of eclecticism and the philosopher of the solitary logic, is the one "*qui est le plus sorti méthodiquement de la vie du moi et du nous*",[98] from the life of the human community. Grounded on individualist rationalism, the eclectic philosophy has a limited object of study: the individual reason, abstracted from the general conditions of time and space and from the common humanity. Therefore, philosophy is transformed into a science of pure observation.[99] According to Leroux, because the eclectics operate the separation between the two worlds and between body and soul, their philosophy analyzes the world in its parts, and is not capable to see the purpose of the world as a whole. Influenced by the Scottish empiricist philosophy, Jouffroy considers that philosophy should follow the example of sciences and should limit itself to a

[95] Pierre Leroux, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, Librairie de Charles Gosselin, Paris, 1839, p.295

[96] Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence. Le socialisme de Pierre Leroux*, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, 1986, p.44. Catholics and socialists equally reproached the eclectics that, under the cover of an intellectual elite or of the "*aristocratie de l'esprit*", there was hidden an oligarchy which engendered new and ever more pernicious forms of social exclusion.

[97] Miguel Abensour, *Le procès des maîtres rêveurs*, Les Éditions de la nuit, Arles, 2011, p.95.

[98] Ibidem, pp.95-96.

[99] Ibidem, p.99.

careful examination of facts. Leroux's critique concerning the eclectics is directed exactly against the application in philosophy of the method of natural sciences, dividing man and society in small parts, in order to analyze them, "*comme l'anatomie*".[100] As Bénichou says, Leroux criticizes eclecticism on the grounds of his belief that society, and humanity as a whole, needs not only analysis, which is divisive, but also an organic synthesis of sciences, of arts and of philosophy, which would allow humanity to understand "*le progrès divin du monde*".[101]

In Leroux's opinion, the fact that the French people has interpreted the slogan of the doctrinaires, "*Éclairez-vous, enrichissez-vous, améliorez la condition morale et matérielle de notre France*", as culminating in the second part, "*enrichissez-vous*", is only the logical conclusion of a philosophy whose object is individual reason, a philosophy which does not recognize the existence of a "meta-paradigm" that would unite all sciences and arts of the society (as Christianity was in the Middle Ages) within a unique purpose and would organize "*la raison collective de l'humanité vivante*". The principal criticism of Leroux is that eclecticism takes small parts from all over history in order to justify the *de facto* individualist bourgeois order, lacking a vision of a common humanity – past and future – in a perpetual aspiration towards a future wherefrom injustice would no longer be a reality.[102]

[100] "*Le philosophe de M. Cousin*", writes Leroux,"*est un être égoïste qui regarde le monde moral comme un géomètre considère des lignes et un physicien des corps. Mais un tel être, hors de la géométrie et hors de la physique, est […] aveugle. Car nous ne regardons dans nos semblables qu'avec le cœur, et nous ne regardons également en Dieu […] qu'avec le cœur.*" (Pierre Leroux, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, p.266.)

[101] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.348.

[102] "*Le gouvernement qui dit […]: 'Formez-moi des hommes qui sachent de la logique, de l'analyse, et qui, fidèles sujets de l'empereur, ne s'occupent de politique et de religion que pour respecter et maintenir ce qui est', ce gouvernement a engendré l'éclectisme. Formé d'après cette règle, on était logicien, abstracteur, psychologue; on n'était d'aucun siècle et d'aucun temps, on n'appartenait à aucune tradition […]: premier caractère de l'éclectisme.*" (Pierre Leroux, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, p.65.)

1.5. Freedom according to Leroux

According to Leroux, there are two types of freedom: natural freedom and moral freedom. Natural freedom is the freedom of passions and instincts. Moral freedom is the freedom capable to distinguish between good and evil and to guide human passions. But moral freedom, in order to exist, to exercise its function, needs something on which it could lean, in other words, it needs an ideal, with the help of which man could identify virtue and truth and could call vices by their names. From Leroux's viewpoint, the fact that eclecticism lacks a meta-paradigm or an ideal signifies the denial of moral freedom. In the absence of a common ideal, and, hence, of moral freedom, what remains is natural freedom and the arbitrary calculation between passions, or the slogan *Enrichissez-vous*, which equals with moral slavery.[103] Natural freedom means what was defined, in the foregoing pages, as the unlimited right to act upon the world (born from the natural desire and power to act), the definition of absolute freedom, separated from brotherhood and equality. But rights enter into conflict and the right of the strongest – be it another individual or the state – will prevail. Therefore, in the absence of moral freedom, argues Leroux, natural freedom cannot be exercised either.[104]

Leroux puts into question the liberal separation between private and public spheres. From a liberal point of view, society is not interested in the private life of the individual, but, at the same time, requires from him to manifest moral freedom in the public sphere. Leroux anticipates Charles Péguy who will affirm later that, in the liberal bourgeois society, the individual is taught to operate the separation between the private sphere, where "*il [peut*

[103] Pierre Leroux, *Aux philosophes, aux artistes aux politiques*, p.121.
[104] Ibidem, p.122.

avoir] tous les vices" and the public sphere, where the same man is required to be "*honnête, sobre comme un chameau, rangé comme un employé de chemin de fer*".[105] Péguy asserts that the two spheres appear as incommunicable, but they, nevertheless, have one point in common: the separation between public and private makes people slaves, slaves of other people in the first case and slaves of their own passions in the second.

In Leroux's opinion, the capacity to exercise moral freedom can be formed within a system of public education, by which Leroux understands not just everyone's right to acquire knowledge, but especially everyone's right to receive a common education in morality and virtue. According to Leroux, bourgeois society, on the one hand, banishes religion from the public sphere, and, on the other hand, produces pauperization. Proletarians, he says, are born in a condition of material misery, are confronted with poverty, alcoholism and are marginalized and despised by the bourgeois society. At the same time, they see that the bourgeois elites have the possibility to enjoy every luxury or to free their unlimited desires to act upon the world. Having lost faith in a promised paradise, "*les misérables*", for whom "*vivre c'est ne pas mourir*", "*ont perdu leur compensation*", and their material misery came together with its counterpart, moral misery.[106] Adopting, under the pressure of social conditions, a criminal behavior, and not identifying around them moral points of reference, some proletarians are reduced, according to Leroux, to a subhuman condition, where they see themselves as determined by the environment and lacking responsibility. On the other hand, the bourgeois elites define the criminal behavior of proletarians in terms of free choice, rejecting their own responsibility for the condition of the proletariat. Prostitution and

[105] Charles Péguy, "Compte rendu de mandat" 25 avril 1901, *Œuvres Complètes*, tome I, p.354 et 355, in *La République… Notre royaume de France*, Textes politiques choisis par Denise Mayer, Gallimard, Paris, 1946, p.33.

[106] Pierre Leroux, *De la Ploutocratie*, Librairie de Gustave Sandré, Paris, 1848, pp.240-241, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k2053695.r=pierre+leroux.langEN

criminality, reached extremely high levels in the first half of the 19th century, among proletarians who were offered a salary as high as to assure their subsistence.[107] Leroux writes in *Malthus et les économistes* that the official statistics were showing that, in 1840s France, there was one pauper to seven or eight habitants, while, according to him, the real percentage was of one pauper to four or five habitants (the number of paupers was greater in villages than in the countryside).[108]

Leroux even goes so far as to revisit his youth idea that free competition would prove slavery inefficient. In a speech before the National Assembly in 1848,[109] he argues that free competition excluded, in reality, masses of people from a decent life, transforming them into slaves, while nurturing in them the illusion that by being industrious, and not idle, and working as many hours as possible – generally, between twelve and fourteen hours, seven days per week, as Pierre Leroux mentions, like many other authors – the labourers would offer themselves the possibility to be part of the decent world of human beings. But, Leroux

[107] Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.174.

[108] Pierre Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes, ou y aura-t-il toujours des pauvres?* (first published as a series of articles called "De la Recherche des Biens matérielles, ou de l'Individualisme et du Socialisme", in *Revue Sociale*, January 1846), Boussac, Imprimerie de Pierre Leroux, 1849,p.131. http://books.google.fr/books?id=_CAAAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=pierre+leroux+malthus+et+les+economistes&hl=fr&ei=iiYXTrytEZHE8QOJ_Igt&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CDAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false

[109] Pierre Leroux participated to the French Revolution of February 1848. According to Maurice Agulhon, he, among others, prepared the Revolution through his writings in which he put forward "*le credo humanitaire*" (Maurice Agulhon, "Préface", in Bruno Viard (ed.), *À la source perdue du socialisme français*, p.15). On February 27, 1848, right after the proclamation of the Second Republic, he was elected mayor of Boussac, where he had lived since 1844 and had founded a printing house, which was meant to be a cooperative association, all its employers receiving an equal salary. Here were published the first numbers of the *Revue sociale*. On June 4, 1848, he was elected in the National Assembly as representative of the Seine, together with left extremists like Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. He championed the legislation for the limitation of the working hours and proposed a legislative project on the extension of political rights to women, which attracted the attention and admiration of John Stuart Mill (David Griffith, "Pierre Leroux, plus loin que la pure liberté", http://www.amisdepierreleroux.org/correlats20/Griffiths.htm). He was reelected in the National Assembly as representative of Paris in 1849, on the lists of the political group of democratic socialists, also known as "*démocsoc*" or *La Montagne*, which came with a utopian Christian socialist message. The main figures of *La Montagne* were Alexandre Ledru-Rollin and Victor Hugo. After the *coup d'État* of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, in December 1851, Leroux and his socialist colleagues were condemned to exile. He and his large family fled to Jersey, in England, together with Victor Hugo, and here he wrote *La Grève de Samarez*. He was allowed to return to France in 1860.

argues, anticipating Marx, this illusion gives birth, among labourers, to an unceasing and unlimited competition and "*travaillant le dimanche et se faisant ainsi une nouvelle concurrence entre eux, ils feraient infailliblement baisser le salaire*".[110]According to Leroux, a society which values freedom, separated from the other two principles of human nature, equality and brotherhood, and which maintains vices, is a society which maintains "*le Despotisme sous tous les rapports*".[111] A society which values riches together with the individual unlimited right to act upon the world, more than anything else, defines poverty as the greatest vice in order to justify the transformation of the world into an absolute hell for certain categories of people.

From Leroux's viewpoint, true freedom implies responsibility both from the part of the individual and of the society, and society cannot require from its members responsibility for their actions if it does not offer them first an education unto virtue and minimal decent conditions under which they can exercise virtue.[112] Even though bourgeois society declared the freedom of conscience, of publishing one's opinions, or religious freedom, as some of its major principles, the vast majority of people could not participate to the intellectual life. According to Leroux, it is not only a dictatorship that can limit the exercise of these freedoms, but also the lack of material possibility. "*L'immense majorité du peuple*", says Leroux about his contemporary society, "*vit au hasard de la vie des brutes; car elle n'a,*

[110] "Discours du citoyen Pierre Leroux prononcé à l'Assemblée Nationale dans la séance du 30 août 1848 sur la fixation des heures du travail", in *Moniteur universel*, no. 244 du 31 août 1848, p.2234. http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/1848_pierre_leroux.asp

[111] Ibidem, p.167.

[112] Pierre Leroux, *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, pp.120-121; *De l'Égalité*, pp.18-20. Leroux writes in "De la Philosophie et du Christianisme" (*Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.197) that "*il a été démontré que l'instruction sans morale est plus nuisible qu'utile au peuple, et voilà même la statistique qui vous prouve que cette chétive instruction qui se borne à apprendre à lire au peuple, loin de tarir les délits et les crimes, semble, au contraire, les multiplier. […] [S]ur quoi pouvez-vous fonder une éducation, une morale, sinon sur un système de croyances embrassant le passé, le présent et l'avenir de l'humanité, les rapports des hommes entre eux, et les rapports de l'humanité et de chaque homme avec Dieu?*"

pour se gouverner, que ses sensations, ses besoins, et la menace d'une pénalité brutale".[113] In this sense it could be said that there were in the nineteenth-century France two peoples, according to the expression used by Guizot and Michelet, a victorious people represented by the bourgeoisie and one represented by labourers and peasants. The bourgeois, separated from the people through his education and way of living, was no longer capable to recognize himself in the people, neither to recognize the image of the people in him. Michelet writes that "*le bourgeois ne le [le peuple] connaît plus que par la* Gazette des tribunaux. *Il le voit dans son domestique qui le vole et se moque de lui. Il le voit à travers les vitres, dans l'homme ivre qui passe là-bas, qui crie, tombe, roule dans la boue.*"[114]

In this context, art, like philosophy and religion, was transformed into "*une activité séparée […] reçue par une petite 'élite' cultivée, qui enferme l'art dans les musées, […] la pratique dans des chapelles, ou ne lui confère qu'une fonction ornementale*".[115] For Pierre Leroux, art is the expression of society; if one wants to "take the pulse" of a society, he should look or read or listen to a piece of art. The function of art, according to Leroux, should be to understand and express the anxiety of the present and to propose a theme of future collective, organic, renaissance. Leroux believes that art is an effort to "eternalize" the expression of the individual internal life, as well as of the common life of humanity, in other words, the expression of universal feelings. The symbol, as Bénichou writes, has always preoccupied Leroux because man expresses his life, his feelings, through symbols, and by the action of art, the whole world becomes symbolic.[116] Leroux reproaches his

[113] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Égalité*, p.26.

[114] Jules Michelet, *Le Peuple* (page not given), in Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.378.

[115] Miguel Abensour, *Les formes de l'utopie socialiste-communiste*, Thèse de doctorat, premier tome, p.309.

[116] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.340. Art, says Leroux, "*sous tous ses formes, poésie, peinture, sculpture, architecture, musique etc., en y comprenant le langage, est essentiellement fondé sur cet*

contemporaries that they practice Art for Art, that they develop "*le culte de l'art*".[117] What Leroux criticizes is the fact that art has been, too, disembedded from society and has assumed an absolute freedom in the choice of its subjects and the means to represent them. Having been disembedded from social relations, art is no longer capable to express the living harmonious unity of social relations. Leroux does not condemn the spleen and the despair expressed by the artists, because he believes that these are realities of his time, but the fact that artists limit their art to these, without sketching a glimpse of a future renaissance. Therefore, Leroux says, art, like everything else which "*était fonction de vie […], devient fonction de décomposition et de mort*".[118]

George Steiner says that this disassociation between the artist and society has been promoted by bourgeois society itself. According to him, much of the nineteenth-century art, such as Dickens' *Bleak House*, for instance, expressed its indignation and scorn for the bourgeois "hypocrisies of language" which "concealed the ruthlessness" of nineteenth-century capitalism. But, argues Steiner, "the bourgeois took delight in their [the artists'] genius and shielded itself behind the theory that literature didn't really pertain to practical life and could be allowed its liberties".[119]

Just as art has been disembedded from society, industry has been, too. When he uses the concept of "industry", Leroux refers to every act by which people transform the surrounding world. If God is the creator of the world, man is, if it could be said so, the "transformer" of the world. In Leroux's words, industry "*ce n'est plus la nature abandonnée à elle-même,*

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emploi métaphorique d'une chose au lieu d'une autre, dans le but de représenter l'invisible par le visible", Pierre Leroux, "Allégorie", *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, in Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.340.

[117] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.341.

[118] Pierre Leroux, *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.133.

[119] George Steiner, *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky*, Faber and Faber, London, 1959, pp.25-26.

[…] c'est la nature continuée par l'homme sous un de ses aspects".[120] Man can transform the world in order to prepare it to become a harmonious piece of art; he can transform and relate to the objective reality as a source of mystery and beauty; or he can transform and relate to it merely as an object of use. Leroux emphasizes, like Dostoevsky, that even though the bourgeois likes to show his taste for beauty and goodness, the essence of his actions is the useful, or the thing from which a profit can be achieved. When man transforms a thing which belongs to him, which is in his power, he inevitably affects, influences, his fellows because, according to Leroux, there takes place an act of communication or an exchange, both material and spiritual. Thus, according to him, "*le travail même le plus dénué d'intelligence, par cela seul qu'il modifie la nature extérieure pour en préparer l'assimilation à notre propre vie, devient une source de vie spirituelle*".[121] In the same way, the artist or the philosopher performs a concrete social action. According to Leroux, the material and spiritual exchange is the essence of society. But bourgeois society, by disembedding economy, limited this complex exchange to an economic exchange.

Industry was, thus, reduced to a new science called political economy, invented by the Englishmen, a science grounded on freedom and competition, which called itself liberal, but was "*meurtrière en réalité*".[122] Leroux is by no means an adversary of economy; on the contrary, he recognizes its utility, but is revolted at the fact that, as Tawney puts it, "if economy knew how to be a good servant, it was a bad master". Already in an article of 1832,

[120] Pierre Leroux, *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.138.
[121] Ibidem, p.188; *Le carrosse de M. Aguado*, Imprimerie de Pierre Leroux, Boussac, 1848, p.82. http://books.google.fr/books?id=nKRMAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA1&dq=pierre+leroux+le+carrosse+de+m.+aguado&hl=fr&ei=ausVTp14ypfxA4TWvRY&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CC8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false
[122] Pierre Leroux, *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.183.

"De la Philosophie et du Chistianisme",[123] Leroux detached himself from his earlier views on English political economy, which he had expressed in *Le Globe*. He was disappointed by the concept of free competition because it was grounded on universal egoism which, as Hobbes had discovered, could bring only the war of all, not cooperation. In the context in which the liberals tried to present the society grounded on the individual right as the just society, Pierre Leroux contends that free competition, celebrated by liberals "*comme la loi même de la justice*", could not be just simply because people did not share an equal starting point. Free competition implies the concept of negotiation. But so that negotiation could exist, the partners have to be equal, otherwise, negotiation becomes dependency of one on the other. In the context in which the 19th century witnessed, as Leroux argues in *De la Ploutocratie* and in "De la Philosophie et du Christianisme", massive displacements of population to artificial factory-villages – where people's communion with nature, with their fellows and with divinity, was brutally interrupted – negotiation could not exist between one who possessed property and the means of production, and one who had only his brute force. Those who did not possess the means of production were in a state of dependency in relation to those that possessed them, a fact which was a continuation of ancient slavery, according to Leroux.[124]

In Leroux's opinion, bourgeois society saw in the misfortunes of the poor, like the friends of Job, the wages for sin, therefore, it was refractory to social reforms that could do nothing, in its opinion, but encourage idleness. As Leroy notes, the early nineteenth-century

[123] The article "De la Philosophie et du Christianisme" was first published in *Revue encyclopédique* in August 1832, and was republished later by Leroux in *Revue indépendante*, with the title "Aux politiques". In1994, it was reedited by Jean-Pierre Lacassagne as the third discourse in *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*. The quotations I will give from this article are taken from the book edited by Jean-Pierre Lacassagne.

[124] Pierre Leroux, *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.186.

socialists reacted against the new indecent vision society had towards poverty. The reaction came against the fact that the poor were no longer perceived as contributing to the salvation of the rich, that poverty was no longer regarded as virtuous, as it was still the case in the time of Pascal, but the poor were condemned by society and reduced to instruments for the well-being of the rich.[125] As Leroux noted, this fact was packed in a sophisticated theory which explained that poverty was, in fact, to the benefit of the poor. This argument, as Tawney says, started to gain popularity in the England of 1700s, when a noticeable characteristic of economic writings was their harsh attitude towards the new industrial proletariat, which, affirms Tawney, was paralleled only by "the less reputable [behavior] of white colonists towards colored labour".[126] The general argument, as Leroux also mentions, was that long hours of work were needful for the poor because, idle and licentious as they were, they would spend their leisure on nothing but drinking, that low wages and high prices were "not a misfortune, but a blessing, since they compel[led] the wage-earner to be more industrious; and that high wages [were] not a blessing, but a misfortune, since they merely conduce[d] to 'weekly debauches'."[127] The argument was taken over – of course, in some parts, in a softer form, but preserving its essence – wherever capitalism was introduced. In 1837, says Leroy, Guizot was arguing that labour was "*un frein dont on ne doit pas affaiblir la puissance en accordant à l'ouvrier des loisirs, en le laissant acquérir des idées*".[128] In August 1848, after a number of liberal economists asked that the decree, adopted in March, by which the number of working hours had been reduced to ten hours per day, be abolished, Leroux was asking Catholics and Protestants to champion the decree which, in his view, was a major

[125]Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.64.
[126]R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p.267.
[127]Ibidem.
[128] Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.65.

social achievement, recognizing that Catholics, champions of the monarchy, could and would protect society much better than the eclectic philosophers.[129]

Leroux believes that a certain passage from Malthus' first edition of *Essay on the Principle of Population*, which many of nineteenth-century liberals did not recognize as part of the liberal logic and which Malthus himself took out from the later editions of the book, expresses the liberal logic, taken to its ultimate form. The passage is quoted in Leroux's book, *De la Ploutacratie*, as follows:

> *Un homme qui naît dans un monde déjà occupé, si sa famille n'a pas les moyens de le nourrir, ou si les riches n'ont pas besoin de son travail, cet homme, dis-je, n'a pas le moindre droit à réclamer une portion quelconque de nourriture, et il est réellement de trop sur la terre. Au grand banquet de la nature, il n'y a point de couvert mis pour lui. La nature lui commande de s'en aller, et elle ne tardera pas à mettre elle-même cet ordre à exécution.*[130]

Leroux affirms that, despite the liberal pretended respect for human freedom and dignity, as long as society is understood in terms of a contract between individuals – grounded on the individual right to self-preservation – and as long as the individuals' purpose is to ensure for themselves the means allowing them to enjoy every luxury, there is no coherent counter-argument against Malthus.

According to Leroux, as well as according to a number of early nineteenth-century socialists and Catholics, such as Alban Villeneuve-Bargemont, the argument that, in a system which is preoccupied only with ensuring free competition, anyone who works and is not idle, but industrious, has the chance to become a proprietor, is false. According to statistics Leroux presents in *De la Ploutocratie* – and which, as stated, a number of other authors present – if, before the Revolution, a peasant or a manufacturer gained enough for a living from his six-day work, after the Revolution, a labourer could hardly provide the bare

[129] Jacques Viard, *Pierre Leroux, Charles Péguy, Charles de Gaulle et l'Europe*, p.254.
[130] Malthus quoted by Pierre Leroux in *De la Ploutocratie*, p.239 (reference not given).

necessities for himself and his family out of his seven-day work.[131] Leroux notes, just like Villermé, that, although there was no legitimate monopoly of grand capitalists, the *de facto* situation did not encourage small property, but, on the contrary, wealth was gathered in a few hands.[132]

Leroux defines as proletarian anyone who, without any other source of income, is forced to live on his salary, which covers the bare necessities for him and his family. Property, for Leroux, is represented by the things in one's power which ensure one's living, or more simply put, the possession of the means of production. Therefore, those who possess a house, for instance, cannot be called proprietors, because lodging cannot be a source of income. Thus, a great part of the French population, according to him, was proletarian.

This is not to say that Leroux was an adversary of property or a champion of a state-planned economy. According to him, the principal right of any human being is "*la personnalité humaine, […] la respectabilité de l'être humain*",[133] and property, according to him, is attached to human personality. Let us remember the definition Leroux gave of freedom. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, freedom was defined as the right to act upon the world, the right to transform the things of the world which were in one's possession. Property, thus, allows one to manifest his freedom, by transforming, as already said, materially and spiritually, the world and, in this sense, property is not only necessary to man, but also a natural fact of human nature. What is seen as debatable by Leroux is the way in

[131] Pierre Leroux, *De la Ploutocratie*, p.181.

[132] According to the statistics presented by Leroux (*De la Ploutocratie*, p.100), there were, in the France of the 1830s, 46 thousand families of grand proprietors, 150 thousand families of middles proprietors, 830 thousand families of small proprietors, 3,600,000 families with housing, 800 thousand families having only the salary as a source of living and 800 thousand poor families, having a salary from time to time.

[133] Pierre Leroux, "De la Philosophie et du Christianisme" (*Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*), p.186.

which this natural right to property is used.[134]

1.6. Property according to Leroux

Before exploring in more depth the meaning of the right to property, a short explanation is needed. Pierre Leroux distinguishes three types of division among men: in time, in space, and a division by which men are attached to things. The first type of division means that society does not recognize the long ancestry of individuals (a spiritual ancestry that goes way back in time), but recognizes as one's ancestors only the members of his family and gives to the father of the family the right of life and death over his children. This division is also at the grounds of social hierarchy or of what Leroux calls the society of castes, some families being recognized as superior to others. The second type of division is that among nations, a division which has engendered wars of conquest, by which a group of individuals came to dominate another group. This is the way in which empires and dynasties gained power over large parts of the world. The third type of division means that a few possess the means of production and make those who possess nothing but their force dependent on them.[135] Family, nation and property can be, thus, sources of domination of the human being. Nevertheless, they are not despotic in themselves, but become despotic when man, negating his human nature, recognizes the war of all, and not *philia* or the attraction towards his fellows, as the law of all social relations. Pierre Leroux argues against socialists contemporary to him – who militated for the destruction of family, nation and property, perceived as means of domination by their nature – and draws the attention that the

[134] Pierre Leroux, *Le carrosse de M. Aguado*, pp.34-35.
[135] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, tome premier, pp.140-141.

individual uprooted from his family and longer ancestry, from his nation, and without property, is an abstraction because he has no connection with the past, and, consequently, can be at any moment crushed by any force which considers him futile: "*l'homme individuel, […] n'a plus de nom. Il ne peut ni se nommer lui-même, ni être nommé […] par d'autres […]. Il ne reste de lui qu'une virtualité, […] dont les manifestations antérieures n'ont laissé aucune trace.*"[136]

On this background, Leroux distinguishes between false and authentic property. False property, according to Leroux, has its origins in the ancient and medieval conquest. Capitalism or industry was said to have put an end to the feudal spirit of conquest and to have brought peace in its place. But, argues Leroux, capitalism, which has chastised charity because it "*excite à l'imprévoyance et encourage la population*", has only changed the name of conquest with that of competition.[137]Leroux asks, referring to England: "*Est-elle en paix avec ses millions d'ouvriers toujours décimés par des crises industrielles et toujours renaissantes, toujours affamés?*"[138] The axiom of the Middle Ages, says Leroux, "*Nulle terre sans seigneur*", was replaced in 1789 with the axiom, "*Nulle terre n'a de seigneur*". But since the legal proprietor, until 1789, had been the landlord, the axiom of 1789 is translated as the abolition not of feudal rights, but of property. Thus, what force had previously established, force was now destroying, and out of this destruction, the former vassal, concessionaire of the land, made himself master in the place of the former landlord

[136]Ibidem, p.136. Leroux's analysis anticipates the famous thesis of Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, which revealed that one of the necessary conditions of totalitarianism had been isolation, which was strongly related to uprooting and superfluousness. "To be uprooted", Arendt said, "means to have no longer a place in the world, recognized and guaranteed by others; to be superfluous means not to belong to the world at all" (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 5th edition, 1973, p.475).

[137] Pierre Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes*, pp.87-88.

[138] Pierre Leroux, "Discours aux politiques", *Œuvres*, t.II, p.182, in Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.179.

and the new axiom became: "*Toute terre, c'est-à-dire tout instrument de travail, a un propriétaire*".[139] The new proprietors, possessors of the means of production, affirms Leroux, use the labour-force of those who do not have possessions, and gain a profit. Leroux argues before Marx that the possessors of the means of production are also possessors of human beings, because whoever sells his labour, as his only property, sells his person.[140] The employer has, just like the landlord, rights over the person of the labourer, but unlike the landlord, his rights do not go hand in hand with obligations towards the labourer.[141]

In *Malthus et les économistes*, Leroux defines capital as the right to derive profit out of another's labour and to acquire wealth. As Le Bras-Chopard writes, Leroux identifies three arguments which justify the right to property: the right of the first occupant, the natural right grounded on the need of property, and labour. According to Leroux, all three arguments can be combined in order to champion what he defines as "*capital individualisé*", or property concentrated "*dans les mains de quelques deux cent mille propriétaires*".[142] False property represents any property understood as the things in one's possession which bring the proprietor profit without his labour, like the land income, for instance. Together with the rise of capitalism, false property has become synonymous with "*capital individualisé*" which means the right to draw profit out of another's labour and to concentrate this profit in a few hands. On the contrary, authentic property, which Leroux sometimes calls authentic capital, means the taking into possession of the means of production by humanity – in the form of villages, unions of labourers, artists or intellectuals.

False property or "*capital individualisé*" is grounded on the right of the first occupant.

[139] Pierre Leroux, *Le Carrosse de M. Aguado*, pp.40-41.
[140] Ibidem, pp.165-166.
[141] Ibidem, p.234, *Malthus et les économistes*, pp.203-204.
[142] Pierre Leroux, *De la Ploutocratie*, p.107, inArmelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.182.

The first occupant has the right over the things of the world because there is a previous recognition of his need to possess. But, says Leroux, everybody has the need to possess, therefore, the right of the first occupant is, in fact, the right of the strongest. And this is why property is identified with theft (like Proudhon will say later) – but Leroux insists that property is not by nature theft. In this logic, labour, continues Leroux, strengthens the right of the first occupant to unlimited acquisition because what harder labour can there be imagined than that of the conqueror?[143] But can the right of the first occupant be proven legitimate?

According to Leroux, no piece of art, no labour, no scientific discovery can be called individual; they are the outcome of the common labour of the entire humanity. As Vincent Peillon notes, Leroux preserves the classical-Christian conception of man, as a social being by nature, which does not reduce man to a particle from a whole that swallows him. According to Leroux, each individual is a reflection, a manifestation, "*de son siècle, de son peuple, de sa génération, de l'Humanité*".[144]Property is grounded, thus, on the collective effort of production and on the need of property, common to all.[145] From the viewpoint of the sociability of man, which Leroux considers the only true expression of human nature, the right of the first occupant is illegitimate because it is grounded on sheer force and Leroux draws the attention that history has always proven the truth of Rousseau's argument, that "*le plus fort n'est jamais assez fort pour être toujours le maître. Sitôt que c'est la force qui fait le droit, l'effet change avec la cause; toute force qui surmonte la première succède à son*

[143] Ibidem, pp.184-185.
[144] Vincent Peillon, *Pierre Leroux et le socialisme républicain*, p.135.
[145] Leroux writes in *Le carrosse de M. Aguado* (p.103): "*Dans toute œuvre humaine il y a un droit individuel de propriété, puisque pour produire cette œuvre, il a fallu le besoin et le travail d'un ou de plusieurs individus à un moment donné. Mais il avait fallu aussi et il faut éternellement le travail collectif de l'espèce tout entière, de toute l'Humanité. Le droit individuel est, donc, en essence, indivisiblement mêlé avec le besoin et le droit de tous à la propriété.*"

droit".[146] Leroux reaches the conclusion that "*le vrai fondement de la propriété, c'est-à-dire le vrai principe de la propriété, c'est l'Association. Donc l'Association a droit sur la propriété*".[147] What does this mean?

By Association, Leroux does not understand the state, as an institution, which should redistribute wealth; on the contrary, Leroux has always remained distrustful of the concentration of the means of production in the hands of the State because he saw in this fact the real possibility of despotism. But Leroux is not an anarchist either. He believes in the necessity of the State, as the organism which votes and puts into application laws, by which it takes the necessary means for the protection of the freedom and justice of contracts and transactions between individuals, or for the protection of the society against the creation of large corporations which, under pretext of freedom, destroy freedom. But Leroux has preserved his youth preference for decentralization which, in his view, allows society to organize itself spontaneously. As such, he sustains that people organized in small groups or communities – in their quality of labourers, artists, intellectuals – should become masters of the means of production. In this way, small producers – who would be true bargainers, because only those who have a possession which, as a consequence of their work, is a source of income, can be called bargainers – would replace the capitalist mode of production, which inevitably leads to the concentration of wealth in a few hands. This is the reason for which Leroux was attacked in *Revue des deux Mondes*, as Jacques Viard mentions, for presumably having "*renouvelé le Moyen Age au dix-neuvième siècle et remis au monde les corporations et les jurandes que le grand cri de '89 avait si glorieusement chassées*".[148]

[146] Pierre Leroux, *Le carrosse de M. Aguado*, p.35-36.
[147] Pierre Leroux, *Le carrosse de M. Aguado*, p.267, in Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.303.
[148] Jacques Viard, *Pierre Leroux, Charles Péguy, Charles de Gaulle et l'Europe*, pp.48-49.

Since every individual needs property, society has the responsibility to ensure the conditions under which everyone can work. As already mentioned, property, for him, signifies the personal action over, the transformation of the world. This is why it is always related to labour. At the same time, labour has to be exercised over the things in one's *own possession*, because the salary received from an employer – even if the salary could ensure more than mere subsistence – means dependency. In "Discours aux politiques," Leroux writes: "*Le but de la politique est de faire jouir tous les membres de la société, chacun suivant sa capacité et ses œuvres, du résultat du travail commun, que ce travail soit une idée, une œuvre d'art, ou une production matérielle.*"[149] If, as Le Bras-Chopard rightly notes, in the beginning of the article "Discours aux politiques", Leroux adopts the principle "*À chacun selon sa capacité, à chaque capacité selon ses œuvres*", he later reaches the conclusion that "*la supériorité de l'intelligence et des forces physiques créerait un devoir plutôt qu'un droit, et [...] les vrais besoins, et non la capacité et les œuvres, seraient la règle de distribution des richesses*".[150]

Leroux abhorred the principle of impersonal reason taken from philosophy and put into practice in the form of the State or of bureaucracy, because an impersonal force would inevitably commit abuses in the redistribution of wealth. In the limits of the law, made by the State, through representatives elected by the people, the community – in the form of a village or a province, for example – where people developed personal relations, could know the needs of everybody and, following the debate among people, the community or association could distribute wealth. While private property would exist, the association would make sure that the Aristotelian principle, according to which no one should be too

[149] Pierre Leroux, "Aux politiques", in *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.187.
[150] Pierre Leroux, "Discours aux politiques", p.211, in Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.305.

rich or too poor, should be preserved. For Leroux, if a middle way between the highest and the lowest levels were to be put into practice somewhere, that place should be the field of incomes.

There would always exist in society less attractive labours, argued Leroux and, in this sense, he hoped that the technical development would come to people's help. Nevertheless, he did not have in view a future society in which machines would totally replace man's labour; "*les machines supposent toujours l'intervention antérieure et même l'intervention concomitante de l'homme*".[151] Labour, for Leroux, both physical and intellectual, was perceived as the means of accomplishment of one's talents, by which one could become man. What Leroux means by an accomplished man and an accomplished humanity, I will discuss in the third chapter. For now, I will limit to saying that, in his view, labour done for the sole purpose of survival, or labour which, even though assuring more than subsistence, was meant solely to improve one's material condition, without developing one's talents and moral condition, resulted in man's brutalization. Moreover, since labour, as defined above, "*une idée, une œuvre d'art, ou une production matérielle*", was understood as the transformation of the world or as the continuation of nature by man, it was endowed with a symbolic socio-political dimension.

As already argued, Leroux distinguished between "*capital individualisé*" or false property and authentic property or authentic capital. Starting with the 17th century, when, as mentioned, economy began to be disembedded from society, the "*capital individualisé*" was gradually accompanied by the division of labour which produced a phenomenon that Marx later called reification, by which people became commodities, while the products became

[151] Pierre Leroux, *Revue sociale*, in Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.310.

"endowed with lives of their own, able to enter into relations with men and women".[152] According to Leroux, the fact that the division of labour produced individuals specialized, for example, only in "*percer un trou d'aiguille*", meant that proletarians did no longer recognize themselves in the final product or in the final act of transformation of the world, which lost the human touch. The world became a world without humanity, because proprietors recognized the value of objects rather than of human beings. According to Leroux, labour understood as dependency on the proprietor led to the uprooting from humanity of both the exploited and the exploiter. The fact that an individual was forced by objective conditions to work twelve to fourteen hours per day led to his physical and moral deterioration and, thus, hid under the name of freedom of contracts homicide. This act, according to Leroux, was a perpetual symbolic repetition of the first murder of Abel by Cain. But, by this act, the proprietor, the perpetual Cain, hurt not only his exploited fellow, but also himself because, by murdering Abel, Cain uprooted himself from the humanity common to both – humanity which, as mentioned in the beginning, Leroux equated with the equilibrium between freedom or sensation, brotherhood or sentiment, and equality or reflection – and, by affirming his freedom or unlimited right to act upon the world, became a wanderer, with no place recognized and guaranteed by others. The tragedy, in France in particular, and in Europe in general, as Leroux argues in *De la Ploutocratie*, consisted in the fact that not only the bourgeois, but also proletarians, paupers and peasants equally dreamed of acquiring what he calls false property – property from which they could draw a profit – and not authentic property – the taking into possession of the means of production. In this sense, the victory of the bourgeoisie could be understood as the victory of a specific attitude

[152]Karl Marx, *Capital*, translated from German by Eden and Cedar Paul, Everyman's Library, Dent, London, 1967, pp.45-46.

and outlook, as a mode of being in the world.

Labour, understood as a means of taking into possession the world, represented, for Leroux, a means by which man was rooted in the world of common humanity. Man's personality was recognized in his action upon the things in his possession and, thus, nature, transformed by human labour, was humanized or appeared as an extension of human life. As such, labour represented the taking into possession of human life, in order to enrich human life, in an act of solidarity. This makes Leroux affirm that true wealth is human life and that the authentic capital of humanity is a common morality.

While emphasizing labour, as the means of action upon the things in one's possession, Leroux was careful to draw the attention that the principle which coagulated people should not be labour, but *philia*. Leroux argued that his contemporary society was hierarchically organized, composed of castes or classes[153], but mentioned that, while this was the reality, the ideal towards which people should tend was solidarity of all, and taking as a guiding and gathering force a principle other than solidarity, such as labour or property, would signify, indeed, to think of the world only in terms of antagonistic groups. As Bruno Viard notes, Leroux understood that the antagonism between classes or groups, followed by the liquidation of certain categories of people, as it had happened during the French Revolution,

[153] In his earlier articles, written in the 1830s, such as "Castes" and "Égalité", Leroux defines castes as hierarchical groups that society institutionalizes and justifies as natural, giving as an argument the natural inequality among people. While the French Revolution had as a task to destroy castes and to declare the solidarity of all humanity, its actual outcome was the continuation of castes, through the caste of proprietors, which proved to be even more violent than the previous ones. The term class is synonymous to the term caste of proprietors which divides society in two categories, proprietors and non-proprietors. A class can be said to exist, as Armelle Le Bras-Chopard argues, when it takes consciousness of itself. In *De l'Humanité*, written in 1840, Leroux defines the concept of caste in more abstract, ontological terms. The concept expresses the division among people, a division within the being of humanity, by which one of the three aspects of man, sentiment, reflection, sensation, develops hyperbolic dimensions, to the detriment of the others, giving birth to the social predominance of the corresponding caste, of family, country or property. Leroux does not reduce class or caste of proprietors to its economic function because he believes that the economic exploitation of the poor by the rich is only one aspect or the symptom of the more profound problem which is the division of humanity, due to self-love. Thinking of the caste of proprietors only in economic terms means, for Leroux, to remain in the capitalist paradigm.

was only the most visible sign of a profound symptom which would surely explode again later with a greater power.[154] In order to escape this division, Leroux proposes a doctrine of Humanity articulated, as Vincent Peillon says, around the notions of "*unité, innéité et trinité*".[155]

Leroux insisted that both property and labour were social functions, not ends in themselves. He considered that property or capital – understood as the exploitation of others' labour and the concentration of wealth in a few hands – represented the practical expression of self-love which was the principal source of evil, in contemporary society, because it was grounded on the recognition of one's own right to act upon the world and the simultaneous denial of the other's right. Jacques Viard is right to affirm that Leroux never proposed the abolition of property and free competition, but,instead, the creation of a Republic, "*où les lois permettront de dire au Capital: 'Tu iras jusqu'ici, tu n'iras pas plus loin'.*"[156] If the Association, in the form of society, succeeds in limiting both the despotic tendencies of the State and the all-powerful market, then, in Leroux's opinion, as Bruno Viard notes, it has accomplished its purpose of working together with a protective State and a free market.[157] Leroux wrote, as I mentioned earlier, that the wealth should be distributed according to the needs of each. But he was not more specific than that. He generally avoided organizing theoretically a community in detail, because he believed that a community was a living body, not an abstraction, which, in the limits of the law, should organize its own life. As Le Bras-Chopard notes, society, in Leroux's vision, imposes to the individual its constraints and

[154] Bruno Viard, "Introduction", in *À la source perdue du socialisme français*, p.38.
[155] Vincent Peillon, *Pierre Leroux et le socialisme républicain*, p.183.
[156] Fragment from Leroux's polemic with Proudhon, from *La République*, November 5, 1849, quoted by Jacques Viard, *Pierre Leroux, Charles Péguy, Charles de Gaulle et l'Europe*, p.137.
[157] Bruno Viard, *Les Trois Neveux ou l'altruisme et l'égoïsme réconciliés, Pierre Leroux, Marcel Mauss, Paul Diel*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 2002, p.51.

pressures (both through the social customs and through the action of the State), but it cannot force the individual (if the humanity of its members is to be preserved) to love his neighbor and to want a just society instead of a society grounded on the individual right.[158] If Leroux does not offer an objective solution and if, at the same time, he seems to have too great expectations from a political regime, it is because he believes that any political regime is made by men. Therefore, the organization of institutions – whose importance Leroux does not deny – comes in the second place, after the change in man's heart, because, ultimately, it is the quality of human interaction which accounts for the most valuable socio-political change.

1.7. Dostoevsky as political thinker

We know that the novelist whom we begin reading eagerly in our adolescence wrote about God, suffering, freedom or about the imminent advent of communism, but what does he have to do with capitalism? In his novels and articles, Dostoevsky touched on "possessive individualism", which represents the basis for capitalism, not only in social terms, but also or primarily in ontological terms: capitalism, whose essence is individualism, represents an ontological illness of human nature and the social problems which it engenders and which we can clearly identify are only the top of the iceberg. For Dostoevsky, just like for Leroux, capitalism and communism are not two contradictory ideologies, the latter being the logical consequence of the former, even though the forefathers of liberalism and of capitalism would have never dreamed of it. But, as Tawney puts it, the children of the mind are like children

[158] Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.74.

of the body: sometimes it breaks one's heart to see them grown up. Although lacking any serious academic philosophic and political formation, Dostoevsky cannot be easily dismissed as a philosopher and political thinker because he was passionately engaged in the philosophical-political debates of his time and his genius, which many times exceeds the judgments pronounced on the grounds of academic knowledge alone, was capable to discern not only the voices of the past and of the present, but also of the future, by going straight to the root wherefrom the meaning of our contemporary history has taken shape.

It is important to clarify from the beginning how we recognize Dostoevsky's voice. In this sense, Mikhail Bakhtin's book, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, is very relevant. According to Bakhtin, Dostoevsky's literary world "is profoundly pluralistic", a characteristic strengthened by the fact that his novels are never monological, but always dialogical.[159] Dostoevsky could depict an idea, in its full strength, but also keep his distance from it because "the image of the idea is inseparable from the image of the person".[160]According to Bakhtin, the idea is inseparable not only from Dostoevsky's fictive

[159]Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, translated by R.W. Rotsel, Ann Arbor, Ardis, 1973, p.22. In my interpretation, Bakhtin's dialogism – used by Bakhtin as a method in his analysis of Dostoevsky's work – is defined by the plurality of voices that are in the quest for the truth. Dialogism means first of all that the voice of the author is not that of the Creator who knows about his characters what they do not and cannot know about themselves. On the contrary, in Dostoevsky's novels, the voice of the author appears on equal footing with that of his characters and all the author does is to put forward ideas that challenge his characters. This method has a double meaning. On the one hand, it reflects Dostoevsky's conception of God, as a personal Creator who fully respects the freedom of his creatures and engages with them in a dialogue, through which human beings discover or not the truth, according to their disposition and will. On the other hand, it reveals Dostoevsky's understanding of man as a dialogical being, that is, a being who cannot live or cannot remain human in solitude, but who discovers the truth only in dialogue with other people with different or even opposed ideas. While the dialogue, in Dostoevsky's novels, does not always reflect or is not crowned by harmony, it converges, as Bakhtin emphasizes, towards one image: the Church. This appears as the incarnate ideal of dialogical harmony with which society could and should become one. This interpretation excludes, then, the one which defines dialogism in terms of relations of power. I believe that Bakhtin's idea of dialogism and polyphony sheds light on Leroux's thought, as well. Miguel Abensour takes over Bakhtin's dialogism and reveals Leroux as a philosopher who defines the accomplished human being as part of a dialogical community in the quest for the truth.

[160]Ibidem, p.69.

characters, but also from real characters, as he always takes the ideas from real life.[161] In this way, says Bakhtin, it is possible to identify the prototypes of the characters' ideas in Dostoevsky's novels. But, he continues, Dostoevsky also held his clear cut opinions which he expressed as a "publicist-thinker" in the journals of his time and in the *Diary of a Writer*, ideas which he associated, in his novels, with certain characters and which were "freed" there "from their monological isolation and finalization, entering into the great dialog of the novel on completely equal terms with other idea-images".[162] As such, according to Bakhtin, we are able to distinguish between ideas with which "Dostoevsky the thinker was totally at variance", like Napoleon III's ideas, as prototypes for the ideas of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*; ideas with which "Dostoevsky the thinker was in partial agreement", for instance Herzen's ideas, as prototypes for the ideas of Versilov in *A Raw Youth*; and "the ideas of Dostoevsky the thinker as idea-prototypes for certain idea-images in his novels", the ideas of his radiant characters, such as Sonya, Myshkin, Alyosha Karamazov, Zosima.[163]

1.8. The poor and the ontological meaning of capitalism

The originality of Dostoevsky, the thinker, consists in leaving the logic of power, which seems all-inclusive, and in judging it from the outside, by pointing to the violence it does. Self-love, according to Dostoevsky, is the corner-stone of the logic of power and, henceforth, the root of all evils.

Everything began in 1846 with *Poor Folk*, where Dostoevsky depicts the self-degrading mentality caused by the logic of power in the representatives of oppressed humanity. In

[161]Ibidem, p.73.
[162]Ibidem, p.75.
[163]Ibidem.

describing the degradation which he feels in front of his superiors, Devushkin, the poor clerk, makes efforts to justify his humaneness in front of his own conscience. After having been told by one of his superiors that "the most important civic virtue is to make a lot of money", he justifies to himself: "It was a moral lesson that one shouldn't be a burden to anyone else, but I'm not a burden to anyone! [...] so what if I just copy! I realize now that I am needed, I am indispensable... Well, so I'm a rat... But that rat is necessary [...], they're all supported by the rat".[164] As a consequence, Devushkin is able to find the common humanity only among working men with their "faces bathed in sooty grease" and among "women selling soggy cakes and rotten apples".[165] Besides striving with poverty, the characters have to bear also the disdainful pity of those situated on a superior level of society, due to their wealth. All the characters in the book – Devushkin, the delicate Varvara, who desperately looks for work every day in order to survive, the student Pokrovski who lives almost on charity and who, when eventually found in Varvara a soul who could understand and love him, died, or Gorskov, who died because of too much joy immediately after being rehabilitated from an unjust accusation which attracted the contempt of his colleagues[166] – bring proof that the bourgeois social order justifies the human degradation of the poor by depicting wealth as a virtue and poverty as a vice. And if the characters still preserve some human dignity it is because of their faith in an afterlife where they will be justified for eternity. The tragedy which confronts Dostoevsky's characters, and which amplifies the burden of poverty, is that men live isolated, for themselves, and seem incapable to recognize as human those that are not akin to them. Poverty has, indeed, always been a faithful

[164] Feodor Dostoevsky, *Poor Folk* (*P.F.*), translated by Robert Dessaix, Ann Arbor, Ardis, 1982, p.125. From now on, I will use the abbreviation *P.F.* for *Poor Folk*.

[165] Ibidem, p.111.

[166] Jean Drouilly, *La pensée politique et religieuse de F.M. Dostoïevski*, Librairie des Cinq Continents, Paris, 1971, p.43.

companion of humanity, but its burden has become heavier in bourgeois society where, as the old social norms, which had made sure that the humblest servant of the Church would receive the "bread promised by the Scriptures", were destroyed, the poor became an undifferentiated mass of defenseless and ridiculous beings, their only threat against their exploiters being the judgment in heavens.[167]

Dostoevsky declares, like Leroux, that humanity is to be looked for especially in "brothels, taverns, market-places, prisons", because there, suffering people, who have maybe nothing more to lose, are more prone to recognize one another as human, and also to recognize their own villainy, contrariwise to the bourgeois who displays a feeling of self-fulfillment. Such humanity is maybe best sketched by Dostoevsky in Marmeladov's image of the Last Judgment, in *Crime and Punishment*, where Christ "will judge and will forgive all, the good and the evil, the wise and the meek" and will open his kingdom even to drunkards and will tell them " 'ye are swine, made in the image of the Beast and with his mark; but come ye also! And the wise ones and those of understanding will say, 'Oh, Lord, why dost Thou receive these men?' And He will say, 'This is why I receive them […], that not one of them believed himself to be worthy of this'."[168]

In a way which resonates with both Dostoevsky and Leroux, the twentieth-century Quebecois philosopher Pierre Vadeboncœur argues that the drama of the bourgeois individual who leaves the common humanity is that he is not able to recognize either himself in the people or the reflection of the people in himself. And the potential danger is that, in

[167] It would be interesting to compare Dostoevsky's novel with Knut Hamsun's novel, *Hunger*, which shows that, as the old social norms have been dissolved and as people, poor and rich, have lost even the hope in a final judgment, poverty could easily be transformed, in the alienating city, into hunger, both for food and for humanity. The only reality of the hungry one, as Knut Hamsun shows, is animalistic hunger, in a society which is indifferent to him, and, henceforth, he begins living outside of the world of human beings, almost losing the concepts of human dignity and human degradation.

[168] Feodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (*C.P.*), translated by Constance Garnett, Grolier, New York, 1973, p.33. From now on, I will use the abbreviation *C.P.* for *Crime and Punishment*.

alienation from the people, in incapacity of putting himself in another's position, the individual might regress to the subhuman by degrading and trampling down the dignity of another human being, hence by mutilating the humanity common to him and to his victim.[169] This, in turn, generates, in the representatives of the oppressed humanity the fear of the other, as a representative of those that have possessions, and who appears as the stranger: "You probably don't know what a real stranger is [...]. I've been in the position of having to eat his bread. [...] [Y]our faint heart will not be able to withstand the rebukes and reproaches he inflicts on it and the malevolent glances he casts at you..."[170] says Devushkin to Varvara. The central point the book hints at is not the capitalist order in itself, but the deeper metaphysical meaning behind the capitalist order: "the affirmation of the self" which generates the fear of others, and eventually, "the war of all against all". It is also the rich that experience an unexplainable fear of others, rich or poor. The fear of otherness is only intensified by the capitalist order, it is not its outcome, but, as the theologian John Zizioulas argues, it is "pathologically inherent in our existence", more specifically in our fallen condition, and when we accept others we do this from the perspective of our *self*: we accept them because they are akin to ourselves and because the greatest value is the "arrangement for peaceful co-existence" that can guarantee the security of our *self*.[171] But, as Dostoevsky proves throughout his entire work, the right to self-preservation and the affirmation of the self eventually sabotage our efforts for peaceful co-existence simply because each self wants to affirm its will over the other.

Real peaceful co-existence, argues Dostoevsky, is not a matter of civilization and formal

[169] Pierre Vadeboncœur, *L'autorité du peuple*, Éditions de l'arc, Québec, 1965, p.34.
[170] Feodor Dostoevsky, *P. F.*, p.75.
[171] John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, edited by Paul McPartlan, T.&T. Clark, New York, 2006, p.2.

institutions, but can only be accomplished when each person recognizes all others as human. If it were a matter of civilization, why, then, Dostoevsky asks, the Europeans – who pretend to have "become cultured" and "ceased to regard the peasant as a dog and a rascal" – regard "every proletarian, every penniless worker […] as a dog and a rascal?"[172] This is the overall impression Dostoevsky had after his visit in Europe, in 1862, which he published in a small book called *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*. Here, as well as in his *Diary*, Dostoevsky puts the diagnostic to the Western European world: it suffers from the disease of the "gold bag". Dostoevsky, like Leroux, does not deny that egotism and the desire for the "gold bag" have always existed. Although neither of them formulates it specifically, their argument is similar, to a certain extent, to the one of Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Egotism and the desire for the "gold bag" had been present also in the pre-revolutionary order, only that they had been hidden under the veil of virtue and nobility. The Revolution tore the veil and the two universal human passions were unleashed and came to rule the Western European world. But both Dostoevsky and Leroux go further than Burke and anticipate the central thesis of Karl Polanyi's monumental work, *The Great Transformation*: the desire for material individual wealth has been an element of all societies, but no other society in the history of mankind has made this aspect of human existence its central principle of organization, except for the modern Western one. The Ancients had virtue as a social aim, the medieval society had salvation, but only modern society organized itself on the grounds of economic profit.

In his sojourn in Europe, monuments attracted very little Dostoevsky's attention; it was people he was interested in. He was terrified, in London, by the huge gulf between the rich

[172]Feodor Dostoevsky, *Diary of a Writer (D.W.)*, translated by Boris Brasol, vol.I, Octagon Books, New York, 1973, p.291. From now on, I will use the abbreviation *D.W.* for *The Diary of a Writer*.

and the poor and by the utilitarian construction of the factories and of the city itself, where, in the words of Dostoevsky, "the very image of man" seemed to be repudiated. Dostoevsky was as impressed as Leroux by the industrial achievement of the capitalist city, *par excellence*, London, and he used his literary talent to depict with great force to what extent factory labour could "eradicate individual traits or the play of intelligence in a man's face".[173] If Paris, as many other visitors noted, posed as a city of order and of bourgeois small proprietors, hiding the misery and the disorder, London appeared as *the* image of disorder, the image of Babylon: an immense town with "magnificent squares and parks", with immense factories and "coal-saturated air", with an undifferentiated mass of "savage and hungry population". This population appeared so different from other proletarian populations Dostoevsky saw in Europe because, as he noted in his book, it looked irremediably defeated by a mighty spirit which, Dostoevsky said, was the spirit of the towering reality, imposing itself as the final say in the history of mankind, in front of which any ideal of beauty and goodness faded. The defeat consisted in the fact that millions of people, reduced to a "savage and hungry" mass, "succumbed to a belief in the rightness of the existing order".[174] Dostoevsky noted, like Leroux, the total abandonment of the poor by society, as they were not welcome in Protestant churches "because they ha[d] no money to pay for a seat", and illegitimate unions, beatings of women and children, prostitution, even of children, were all perceived as natural among the industrial proletariat.[175] Dostoevsky was impressed by the absurdity and falsity of the separation between the private and public spheres, made relevant by the fact that "wealthy Englishmen […] [were] extremely religious,

[173]George Steiner, *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky*, p.226.

[174] Feodor Dostoevsky, *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions (W.N.)*, translated by Kyril FitzLyon, Quartet Books, London, 1985, p.46. From now on, I will use the abbreviation *W.N.* for *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*.

[175]Ibidem, p.51.

gloomily, sullenly and peculiarly so", while "the poverty, suffering, complaints and torpor of the masses [did] not worry [them] in the slightest".[176] This makes Dostoevsky conclude that "in London […]you see a loss of sensibility, systematic, resigned and encouraged. And you feel, as you look at all those social pariahs, that it will be a long time before the prophecy is fulfilled for them, a long time before they are given palm branches and white robes".[177]

Dostoevsky's description of both London and Paris is not unique. As Steiner says, his description is written in the light of Balzac's description of the "nocturnal Paris" or of "the Edinburgh of Mr. Hyde", from R.L. Stevenson's *Strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, which are also "images of the same night-shrouded Babylon".[178] What all these nineteenth-century novelists depict is the unseen proportion that contingency has taken during their time. Contingency is, indeed, a characteristic of humanity, in contrast with divinity, and could be defined as "the state of a finite being that might or might not exist, but is not necessary".[179] But Dostoevsky and many nineteenth-century novelists argue that never has this state of contingency seemed more desperate than during their time, when the social and economic engineering affirmed that millions of human beings were not necessary.

In contradistinction to London, Dostoevsky saw in Paris that, although the gulf between the rich and the poor was present, the bourgeois made efforts to "stick his poor out of the way and assure people that there aren't any", unlike the English. This, Dostoevsky says, comes from the fact that the bourgeois is "almost consciously well-satisfied and convinced that everything is as it should be".[180] This shows that the substance of bourgeois society does

[176]Ibidem, p.52.
[177]Ibidem, p.47.
[178]George Steiner, *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky*, p.196.
[179] Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, translated by P.S. Falla, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978, p.12.
[180]Feodor Dostoevsky, *W.N.*, p.44.

not consist first and foremost in the concentration of the means of production in a few hands, but in the fact that the bourgeois is well-satisfied with himself and with the *de facto* social order. The simple answer, according to Dostoevsky, for which the bourgeois tries to cover poverty, is that "otherwise people might perhaps think that an ideal state of things has not been reached yet".[181]As Drouilly notes, Dostoevsky saw in Europe, in general, and in Paris, in particular, "a sterile materialist individualism" and "a dry spiritual formalism".[182] As Dostoevsky puts it, virtue, for the bourgeois, is reduced to the "gold bag": "I'll do a bit of trade in my shop today and God-willing, I'll do a bit of trade tomorrow, too, […] if the Lord lets me, in His great mercy, […] and then, […] *après moi le déluge*", says the bourgeois, at least in the imagination of Dostoevsky.

Like Leroux, Dostoevsky notes the distinction the bourgeois (especially the French bourgeois) makes between what he calls virtue in practical life, which is basically reduced to the phrase in *Poor Folk*, "to make a lot of money", and virtue that he sees in literature which, idealist as it is, is allowed its liberties, as Steiner says. The bourgeois, says Dostoevsky, "likes to show esteem for virtue in the theatre", while, in practical life, it is unforgivable, from the bourgeois viewpoint, that one lacks the virtue of performing "the natural and human duty" of amassing possessions and arrives at the point of stealing because of starvation.[183] Dostoevsky's critique is not directed as much towards the grand capital which exploits proletarians, as towards the general spirit that he sees in Europe and especially in France, a spirit which, according to him, has spread over rich and poor alike, and which

[181] Ibidem, p.54.
[182] Jean Drouilly, *La pensée politique et religieuse de F.M. Dostoïevski*, p.206.
[183] Feodor Dostoevsky, *W.N.*, p.58.

makes him infer that the French peasants and labourers are "capitalists *par excellence*".[184] In Dostoevsky's view, the injustice that the French peasants and labourers denounce consists in the fact that it is *only* the rich bourgeois that "amass as many things as possible" and live well, on the account of others. If in England the brutal reality oppresses, the French, bourgeois and proletarians alike, do have an ideal, but one pernicious through its sterility, according to Dostoevsky: the peasants and workers are "capitalists too, in their heart of hearts; their one ideal is to become capitalists".[185]

Dostoevsky, unlike Leroux, does not have a concrete political project – and by no means a republican one – and it would be improper to say that his work describes the triumph of the economic over the political, understood as the active participation of all citizens in the "public square". He describes, rather, the triumph of the economic over an organic society which was, previously, naturally united by a common aim, salvation. If the economic has gradually become victorious and arrived to the point of mastering social relations, it is because Christians failed to live, inwardly and outwardly, according to the ideal Christ had left them. Having lost the sense of unity, the European society arrived to the point of being disputed between oligarchs, who thought only of the interests of the rich, and democrats who thought only of the interests of the poor. The solution to the economic problems cannot be economic, in Dostoevsky's opinion, but can spring only from the vivid interest of the members of society for "the commonwealth, the good of all people", as it will be analyzed in the third chapter.[186]

[184] This is a thing remarked also by Leroux, as seen in the foregoing pages, but Leroux concentrates less than Dostoevsky on this phenomenon. Unlike Dostoevsky, Leroux sees also the spirit of "resistance to oppression" among proletarians, a spirit which, according to him, could offer the grounds for a future organization of people, in general, with the purpose of taking into possession the means of production.

[185] Feodor Dostoevsky, *W.N.*, pp.58-59.

[186] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.I, p.252.

It is worth mentioning that it is an exaggeration to assert that Dostoevsky reduced the whole of France and even the whole of Europe to the bourgeois (he expressed repeatedly, in his articles and through his characters, how precious Europe was for him), just like it would be an exaggeration to say that he reduced the Catholic religion to the Grand Inquisitor (he contended himself that he would never affirm such "a stupid thing" – he never doubted that "faith and the image of Christ up the present continue to dwell in the hearts of many Catholics in all their original truth and purity"[187], independently of the perverted character of institutional Catholicism and of its hierarchy). Dostoevsky would often focus on a certain principle in order to show how this principle, if taken to its ultimate consequences, devastates the whole world. What Dostoevsky attacks in *Winter Notes* is the affirmation of the self, inseparable from the self-satisfaction and self-confidence, characteristic to the post-revolutionary liberal order, in both its political and economic aspects.

Dostoevsky reproaches the bourgeois post-revolutionary order that it proclaims, proud and well-satisfied with itself, that justice has been achieved and everything is as it should be. But, says Dostoevsky, claiming this is the greatest injustice, because not only poverty but every injustice, every trampling down of another human being are a constant reminder that everything is not as it should be. Dostoevsky always emphasizes that the perfect system built on the sacrifice of a single innocent victim is unacceptable and monstrous. Moreover, since the happiness of the majority is built on the suffering of another, even those apparently happy in the present will end up being unhappy, the whole utopia being transformed into a dystopia. Dostoevsky argues in *Winter Notes*, as well as in his *Diary*, that the indifference towards humanity and, therefore, the impossibility of justice, are proven by the concrete meaning of the proclamation *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*.

[187]Ibidem, p.256.

Dostoevsky had the same opinion as Leroux that the Industrial and the French Revolutions unleashed the force of the capital which was said to have put an end to wars, by replacing war with free competition, and, thus, to have brought peace. But Dostoevsky follows, too, Augustine's argumentation (which I briefly presented in the first pages about Leroux), sustaining that the peace brought by the capital is precarious. On the one hand – Dostoevsky explains, like Karl Polanyi later – as the Ottoman Empire was a market for England and France and, because the one thing capitalism could not stand was war, the latter two powers did not challenge in any way the Turkish domination over the Balkans.[188] In case of war, production would be "chased away", "the proletariat would be thrown out into the street", in England and France, and the most fearful enemy of bourgeois liberalism, socialism, would become a real danger. On the other hand, at home, England and France nurtured in their proletarian populations the hope that "enormous, uninterrupted and progressive production at lower prices" would offer "employment to the proletariat", as well as articles of consumption at reduced prices and that, as a consequence, a day would come when the proletariat itself would enjoy higher living standards. But until then, labour – to such an extent that the proletarian could not have time, as Guizot said, to acquire ideas – had to be used as "the best police force".[189]

According to Dostoevsky, it is in this context, of replacing the ideal of harmonious peace with the ideal of security, that freedom – in the formula *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* – has been taken to mean private enjoyment or "equal freedom to do anything one wants within the limits of the law". Dostoevsky, like Leroux, follows Augustine's argument that this

[188] It is true, on the other hand, that the Russian pretentions to free the Balkan peoples and to extend Russia's sphere of influence are debatable, too, and that this might also be counted as a reason for England and France to champion the Ottoman Empire. But this is another discussion.

[189] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, p.606.

understanding of freedom and peace hides, in fact, slavery, as it allows certain categories of society or certain nations "to do as they please" with other categories or nations. And, Dostoevsky continues, in reality, only the one who "has a million" can do as he pleases, whereas "the man without a million is not one who does anything he wants but a man with whom anything is done that anyone wants".[190]All Dostoevsky can say about "equality before the law" is that "the way in which it is now applied enables, indeed forces, every Frenchman to consider it as a personal insult"[191], because everyone sees that people are, in fact, not equal. The Russian novelist finds the last principle the most curious, asking ironically how brotherhood could be compatible with self-interest (*i.e.* the essence of the modern *liberté*). According to Dostoevsky, the social contract of the modern society takes as a starting point the self which measures and calculates the benefits it can draw from joining society and which "demands by force […] rights" for fear of not losing its individuality and of not being disadvantaged for the benefit of its neighbor.[192]

In Dostoevsky's opinion, brotherhood is a feeling that comes into existence *naturally* once there are brothers, but it is ridiculous to expect, argues Dostoevsky, that such an institution called "brotherhood" would suddenly create "brothers", where there are none.[193] Instead of brothers, Dostoevsky saw in his travel in Europe the crowning of the bourgeois principle "*Ôte-toi de là, que je m'y mette*", whose outcome was the substitution of the principle "Love thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself" with the principle "Love yourself before everyone else". The result of the first principle, Dostoevsky continues, was that "I tore my coat in half to share it with my neighbor and both of us were left half-

[190] Feodor Dostoevsky, *W.N.*, p.60.
[191]Ibidem.
[192]Ibidem.
[193]Ibidem., p.61.

naked", while the result of the second principle is that "you'll transact your business as it ought to be transacted and your coat will remain whole".[194] From Dostoevsky's viewpoint, the contractualist society would bear its own fruit, since not only the third estate, the bourgeoisie, but everyone wants the rapid satisfaction of desires. Thus, there would be only a matter of time until the fourth estate, the proletariat, would seize power and, degraded as they had been by the bourgeois, they would accept no longer any compromise, but would utter bitterly: "if your elder brothers refuse to accept you as brethren, arm yourselves with sticks and […] compel them to become your brethren by force. […] [S]hould your brother refuse to share with you his property, half and half, take it all away from him".[195] Thus, Dostoevsky underlines, the complete principle declared by the French Revolution was "*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, ou la mort*".[196]

1.9. "Possessive individualism" in Russia

Dostoevsky did not criticize only the European bourgeois society, but also its Russian counterpart, where, under the influence of the former, the new nobility, which lacked roots in the Russian tradition, acted, in fact, like the bourgeoisie, and was segregated from the Russian people whose oppressor it had become since Peter the Great. Briefly, Peter the Great transformed a medieval Russia into a competitor of Western Europe, after his voyage to London, Berlin and Paris between 1697 and 1698.[197] The West was seen by the Czar and the

[194]Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.I, p.253.
[195] Ibidem, p.257.
[196] Ibidem.
[197] Stéphane Vibert, "*Pravda*: Vérité et Justice. Essai sur le devenir théologico-politique de la Russie." *Société* 24-25, 2005, p.250.

nobility as "kingdom of Enlightenment", "spring of the light of reason",[198] so that Paris became the place for pilgrimage for the eighteenth-century Russian nobleman. As Stéphane Vibert argues, one of the most important social reconfigurations, that took place under Peter's reign, was "the conversion of the traditional military nobility into a state bureaucracy".[199] The new bureaucratized nobility struggled to ensure its socio-economic status, by making it guaranteed by the power. Under the influence of Voltaire and Diderot, the "enlightened despot" Catherine the Great (1762-1795) introduced more reforms, like religious tolerance or the right to private property. But as Stéphane Vibert mentions, Catherine's reforms were not meant to have as an outcome authentic political liberties, but only civil laws. And it is important to stress that all these reforms touched only on the nobility and were accomplished on the account of the peasantry, reduced to a condition of slavery, a condition drastically worsened due to the "emancipation" of the nobility.[200] Whether the result of these measures was a Westernized or an even more "Russian" Russia is another discussion. However, they generated in the 19th century a rich debate on what Russia's role should be, whether it should follow the West – or more specifically the Western ideals of social organization on rational and scientific grounds – or should come with a dialectic response to Western rationalism, namely with Christian faith. In this sense, Bruce Ward is right to argue that if the "grandfathers" – the eighteenth-century Russian nobility – detached themselves from the people on the grounds of socio-economic circumstances, the Westernizers from the 1840s – who championed following of the Western model – became even more separated from the people "by the force of ideas": "they were

[198] I. Lotman and B. Ouspenski, *Sémiotique de la culture russe*, Lausanne, L'Âge d'Homme, 1990, p.52, in Stéphane Vibert, "*Pravda*: Vérité et Justice", p.256.
[199] Stéphane Vibert, "*Pravda*: Vérité et Justice", p.251.
[200] Ibidem, p.261.

becoming an intelligentsia".[201]

A strange thing noted by Dostoevsky, as Bruce Ward writes, is that the war with Napoleon engendered the antipathy of Czar Alexander I for the liberal state, "which he identified with Napoleon", while "the gentry desired the idea of liberal state even more intensely after their victory".[202] This is how the revolt of the Decembrists (on December 26, 1825) was born. In Dostoevsky's opinion, the attempt of the Decembrists to "establish a liberal constitutional regime in Russia" was doomed to failure because the Decembrists – alienated from the people – saw no need to gain the support of "the Russian people as a whole".[203] As Dostoevsky writes in his *Diary*, the man of the best quality was no longer simply the noble, but "the enlightened man, a man of science, and one devoid of former prejudices".[204] But, as he shows in *The Possessed*, "an educated man is not always honest and […] science does not guarantee valor in man".[205]Without ignoring the barbarian aspects of the Russian people, which he powerfully exposed in his novels, Dostoevsky argued that one should ignore neither its beauty which, in Dostoevsky's view, was drawn from the centuries of Christianity and from the "innumerable and interminable sufferings which [the people] have endured in the course of their history".[206] According to Dostoevsky, the latter two phenomena have inscribed "the teachings of Christ" in the people's hearts, despite the fact that the people "could not pass an examination in catechism". Dostoevsky's answer to the intelligentsia – to which he himself belonged – was that it should live in a symbiotic relation with the people: without giving up its cultural achievements, it should nourish itself

[201] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West. The Quest for the Earthly Paradise*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Waterloo, 1986, p.15.
[202]Ibidem, p.14.
[203]Ibidem.
[204] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.I, p.483.
[205] Ibidem.
[206] Ibidem, vol.II, p.983.

from the centuries-old faith of the people whom it should enlighten with these cultural achievements.

The fruit of a long process, the generation of the 1840s, whose conceptions are embodied by Stepan Trofimovich, in *The Possessed*, came to reject everything that was Russian as backward and to embrace, in an idealist and uncritical manner, the West, arriving, as Drouilly notes, to "a superficial understanding of man and of God".[207] The character Stepan Trofimovich was modeled after the historian Timofei Granovsky, an "idealist of the forties", but Dostoevsky's critique in the portrayal of his character was not directed only or specifically towards Granovsky, but towards the whole generation of the 1840s. As Dostoevsky argues in his *Diary*, referring to this character and to the generation he represented, the intellectuals of the '40s operated a strange combination between a profound affection for the image of the Russian people – which, in their minds, had "a secluded idyllic mode of existence" – and the contempt for the real people – which in reality appeared to them as "a backward and mute mass".[208] The result was a strange combination of idealism and cynicism. On the one hand, Stepan Trofimovich believes, like the French liberals, that the perfectibility of humankind and the private enjoyment of liberties could engender a more humane regime and feels sometimes overwhelmed by the love for humanity and for the beautiful. But, on the other hand, secluded from the people, he is not capable to identify either humanity or the beautiful in a concrete reality, in a concrete world of human beings. As such, he becomes ashamed of his idealism and embraces the contempt for the concrete people. As Bruce Ward notes, the Westernizers of the 1840s denied their Russian roots out of principle, avowing their belonging to a homeland called humanity. As such, Stepan

[207] Jean Drouilly, *La pensée politique et religieuse de F.M. Dostoïevski*, pp.356-357.
[208] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.I, p.385.

Trofimovich refuses "to grant any respect to the particular Russian tradition which constitutes his identity" in the name of his moral superiority, claiming that "the nobleman is everything for the element of civilization and [that] leadership is concentrated in him".[209]

It is worth mentioning that, from Dosotyevsky's viewpoint, the idea of nation is inherently linked to that of religion: whenever a new religion came into being, there appeared "a new civic nationality". Such is the case of the Jewish nationality which was born after the Mosaic Law, or of the "Mohammedan nationalities" that "arose after the Koran".[210] According to Dostoevsky, a people can preserve its religious truth as long as men believe in their nation and in its role in history, because a religion is not an abstract truth, but a concrete manifestation of a people. Once people stop cherishing their native soil, they also lose their faith. This is what happened, according to Dostoevsky, to the Russian intelligentsia which scorned the Russian people and, consequently, lost their faith and embraced the rationalism and the individualism produced by the Enlightenment.[211] Bruce Ward explains that the meaning of the "uprooting from the soil" is given by "the attempt of the uprooted to live their lives outside the order once provided by their religious tradition", which the uprooted despise as "dead formalism and ritualism".[212]

The Russian generation of the 1840s engendered a generation which Dostoevsky defines as "accidental members of accidental families", in other words, youths without roots, who tried to take their destiny in their own hands, without the help of their fellows and especially of God, because, argues Dostoevsky, all that they encountered in their environment was

[209] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.43.
[210] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, pp.1000-1001.
[211] Stepan Trofimovich confesses his incapacity to understand the faith of the people: "I can't understand why they make me out an infidel here. I believe in God, *mais distinguons*, I believe in Him as a Being who is conscious of Himself in me only. I cannot believe as my Nastasya (the servant) or like some country gentleman who believes 'to be on the safe side' " (Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, translated by Constance Garnett, Heinemann, London, 1965, p.30).
[212] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.38.

"nothing but mere cynicism, haughty and indifferent negation".[213]Such is the case of the adolescent Arkady Makarovitch, in *A Raw Youth*, the child of a progressist nobleman with a peasant woman whom his father loves out of pity and who travels in Europe, leaving the child in the care of different schools and tutors who scorn and beat him because of his peasant origins. For Dostoevsky, just like for Leroux, social order is in place when man lives in an organic community and when everything around him bears witness of his ultimate end. When man is "uprooted from the soil", when he segregates himself from the community, division sneaks into his own soul, too. Losing his sense of community and his faith, man forgets his ultimate end and is torn between good and evil, between "the awareness of a better life and the impossibility of attaining it".[214] Brought up in alienation from the Russian tradition, Arkady angrily concludes that the relation between him and society is reduced to that between a tax-payer and a guarantor of security. Arkadi came to be possessed by *his* idea, "to become a Rothschild", because money, this "despotic power" and "the greatest leveler [...] of all inequality" offers isolation and power: "I only want what is obtained by power and cannot be obtained without it; that is, the calm and solitary consciousness of strength! That is the fullest definition of freedom for which the whole world is struggling".[215] If Arkady is an idealist youth, desiring money not for its sake, but for the consciousness of power (the consciousness that if he wanted he could destroy the world in a blow, while he was determined to show his mercy to the world and let it live), his colleague Lambert takes the bourgeois desire of betterment of one's own condition a step further and shows it off as his dream which the bourgeois would define as vulgar: "when he came into his fortune it would be his greatest satisfaction to feed on meat and bread while the children

[213]Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.I, p.153.
[214]Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.37.
[215]Feodor Dostoevsky, *A Raw Youth*, translated by Constance Garnett, Dell, New York, 1959, p.101.

of the poor were dying of hunger".[216]

This ideal takes the basest form in Prince Volkovsky, a character in *Humiliated and Insulted*, first published in 1861. The Prince shows that the ultimate reality of individualism is nihilism and that the "civic virtue" of amassing a fortune is the form individualism takes in mediocre human beings, while the "strong characters" not only are aware that their "virtue" is actually a vice, being built on the exploitation and domination of another, but take pleasure in their vice, take pleasure at the sight of the human degradation of the exploited ones. Prince Volkovsky – a Russian character, alien, to the highest degree, from his Russian land – embodies, up to a certain point, a combination of Sade and the ideas of Max Stirner in *The Ego and its Own*. His guiding philosophy consists in the fact that every human virtue hides, in fact, profound selfishness and that the only certain law is "Love thy own self".[217] The true philanthropist, according to the Prince, is he who "recommends to any sensible person" to follow the Prince's way of delectation, which consists in pursuing "influence, honours, good hotels, a huge stake at cards", and, "the most important thing", "secretative debauchery", "the more eccentric and depraved the better".[218]

The Prince loved to destroy financially respectable and good-willed people not only in order to become rich, but especially in order to watch the spectacle of their physical and mental degradation, while struggling to preserve the last straw of human dignity. Such victims were Nelly – a little girl, a character strongly inspired by Dickens – and her mother – whom the Prince had seduced and convinced to run abroad with him, and to take all her father's fortune. The mother and the daughter were left by the Prince, abroad, after he had

[216]Ibidem, p.78.
[217]Feodor Dostoevsky, *Humiliated and Insulted*, translated by Ignat Avsey, Oneworld Classics, London, 2008, p.254.
[218]Ibidem, p.255.

taken from them all their money – a situation which led to the mother's insanity and eventually to her death in extreme poverty. Volkovsky was taking delight in the thought that the proud mother would beg, but would not ask what she considered to be hers and had been taken by him. The only consolation that little Nelly – who begged on the streets – had, on her death bed, was her faith in the Last Judgment and the fact that the Prince, her legitimate father, would find out that "I'm dead and I haven't forgiven *him*".[219] As Bruce Ward rightly notes in his analysis of Dostoevsky, "bourgeois liberalism and radical individualism are united in raising the fundamental question: what real inducement is there for the stronger, wealthier or more intelligent individual to 'sacrifice' for a common good or 'brotherhood' which represents merely the aspirations of the weak and dispossessed among humanity?"[220]

Humiliated and Insulted shows that the social degradation of man is, ultimately, ontological degradation. According to Dostoevsky, the essence of modern *liberté* is the affirmation of the self or the desire of absolute freedom, which is an act of imitation of the divine will. This, considers Dostoevsky, is a Luciferic passion and, consequently, the desire for absolute freedom is accompanied by the delight to crush another under the affirmation of the self. It is also in this profound sense that Dostoevsky expresses in *Winter Notes* his awe in front of the triumphant spirit of English capitalism. For Dostoevsky, the indifference, towards human degradation and suffering, of people who enjoy a better living on the account of this suffering, unleashes, in some characters – who are not able to enjoy the affirmation of the self only in eating and drinking –, strong, demonic passions, like the cold pleasure derived from the sight of human poverty and degradation. It is true that most capitalists would hardly recognize themselves in the description of Prince Volkovsky, but

[219]Ibidem, p.355.
[220] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.96.

Dostoevsky's genius consists in taking a principle and showing it in its ultimate, logical form, a form which would rarely become reality. But, according to Dostoevsky, the ultimate form of a principle is the true measure of that principle, and not whether it is functional or not, but whether it accomplishes or destroys human dignity. Individualism, as Berdyaev argues, in his analysis of Dostoevsky, develops in man "an unhealthy self-love which moves him to explore the lower regions of his being".[221]

Dostoevsky took over the Slavophile conception, developed in the 1840s by Khomiakov and Kireevsky, among others, in reaction to the Westernizers (such as Herzen and Bielinsky), and grounded on the concepts of *tselnost* and *sobornost*. Stéphane Vibert argues that the former, difficult to grasp in another language, could be translated by integrality of the person and refers to the integral knowledge to which man is called by God from the beginning of the world. The concept is to be grasped in connection with Dostoevsky's (and the Slavophile) understanding of reason, and with his belief that our world does not have independent existence, its source of life being given by the other, invisible, world, with which man can always choose to co-work in order to attain his integrality. Reason, for Dostoevsky, is a tool, a "material capacity" which guides our intelligence or mind. But man is not only mind and body, but soul, mind and body, and the soul, says Dostoevsky, "lives on the thoughts which are whispered by the heart".[222] Reason allows man to know only the material world, the logic of cause and effect, but when man aims to understand love and nature, to know God, the tool called reason is insufficient, and man has to appeal "to a

[221] Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, translated by Donald Attwater, New American Library, New York, 1974, p.51.

[222] Feodor Dostoevsky, "Letter of 31 October, 1838", quoted by Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.137.

higher spiritual principle, which Dostoevsky calls heart".[223] However, Dostoevsky does not despise reason, nor does he separate it from the heart, but argues that, as a tool, reason guides man's mind to his heart and only then, when the mind has united with the heart, can man know the other world, as well as his visible, material world – because in the absence of the knowledge of the former, the knowledge of the material world is fragmented and incomplete.

But *tselnost* exists because *sobornost* is in place. *Sobornost* is a term of Russian ecclesiology, the equivalent of "catholicity", meaning universality, being together, a term that will be largely discussed in the third chapter. Briefly, *sobornost* means organic togetherness of the people which has preserved in its being the truth of Christianity, an organic togetherness which could and should eventually include the entire humanity. In this conception, living organic togetherness in the Church as well as in the people which has Christianity inscribed in its heart (because the Church irradiates a certain type of community) makes possible the integrality of the person because the living knowledge and morality to which a person aspires can be taken by the latter only from the middle of the community.

When one leaves the people, one is no longer capable to recognize *tselnost* as his aim, his soul is fragmented, and remains only with reason to which he does not ascribe the proper statute of a tool, but takes the tool for the end. In Cartesian spirit, reason is equivalent with method, or the "optimal combination of the means in order to achieve a purpose". And this dry logical reason ultimately stems from loneliness, that fundamental loneliness experienced by the inventor of modern rationalism, Descartes, while constructing his *Discours de la*

[223]Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.138.

Méthode.[224] As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, by merging individualism and materialism, Hobbes was able to make man the only sovereign of the world. Or, as Pierre Leroux would say, abstracted from the common humanity, man enjoys his right of taking into possession the world, which logically excludes the right of another. As John Milbank argues, when man "enjoys unrestricted […] property rights and […] exercises the rights of a sovereign that cannot bind itself", he comes "closest to the *imago dei*".[225] This is, clearly, a distorted image of God, whose omnipotence Hobbes broke from love. Being like God is the great temptation which has unceasingly haunted humanity since its beginnings and which hides behind each act (be it a mean or a sublime one) of affirmation of the self. Because, as a consequence of the Fall, man often perceives God as an all-powerful and vengeful deity inspiring only fear, man has always sought haven in the bosom of rationalism which banishes the mystery from the world and pretends to allow man to construct a better world. Ultimately, as Drouilly asserts in his analysis of Dostoevsky, individualism and rationalism have the same origin: they occur together in the individual who has abstracted himself from the common humanity, isolating himself in a world "from where the grand realities of love, of suffering and of faith, are absent".[226]

[224] "… the onslaught of winter stopped me in a district where, finding no conversation to divert me, and furthermore, by good fortune, having no cares or passions to trouble me, I remained all day alone in a heated room, where I had complete leisure to review my own ideas. One of the first of these ideas which I undertook to examine was that often there is not much perfection in works composed of many pieces, and made by many masters, as those one man alone has worked" (René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, translated by Paul Olscam, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1965, p.11).

[225] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p.16.

[226] Jean Drouilly, *La pensée politique et religieuse de F.M. Dostoïevski*, p.282.

1.10. From individualism to the revolutionary affirmation of the will-to-power

1.10.1. Raskolnikov

The consequences of rationalism and individualism appear most eloquently in the actions of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*. Berdyaev affirms that, in this character, Dostoevsky depicts "the progress of self-will".[227] Although not himself a bourgeois, Raskolnikov is important for this analysis because he is the "product" of the bourgeois world, the individual abstracted from the *sobornost* in order to follow reason which pretends to reveal to him "the knowledge of his true interests, so that he may act according to rational self-interest"[228], and because Raskolnikov reveals the final outcome of individualistic reason. Like Arkady, Raskolnikov is a "cast-off of society". The background of the action in *Crime and Punishment*, like in many other novels, is essential: it is Saint-Petersburg, the "open window" towards Europe, the city "with no past, no soul and no love, where each man lives for himself, where human beings are more isolated than in a desert, and where the rich crushes the poor", in the words of Drouilly.[229] Dostoevsky is not the only novelist that situates his plots in the city; he follows the same line like nineteenth-century novelists, such as Dickens, Balzac or Hugo, who describe the man – uprooted from the common humanity and from nature – who "falls into the detestable holes of the cities and is immersed in their beastliness".[230] Saint-Petersburg is *the* European city where "innocent young provincials"

[227] Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, p.100.
[228] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.53.
[229] Jean Drouilly, *La pensée politique et religieuse de F.M. Dostoïevski*, p.44.
[230] Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, p.40. It is interesting to note, together with George Steiner, that landscapes are very rare in Dostoevsky's fiction – it is usually in dreams about an ideal state of felicity of humanity that landscapes are present. "When he writes a formal piece of natural description, in *Poor Folk*", Steiner says, "the scene promptly turns into one of Gothic terror" (George Steiner, *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky*, p.199), which shows that, after having broken his community with his fellows and with nature, man is no

like Raskolnikov "come to seek their fortune" and often succumb to the reigning ideals of rationalism and individualism. Alienated from God and from people, the world appears to Raskolnikov as an absurd dream[231], which the individualistic reason of the "*intérêt bien compris*" is incapable to explain, just like it is incapable to explain why Raskolnikov finds intolerable the allegedly rational world of Saint-Petersburg where it seems to him that the common humanity is negated. *The* image of what Saint Petersburg does to humanity is embodied, for Raskolnikov in the pitiful appearance of the drunkard Marmeladov. In response to Lebeziatnikov who, keeping up "with modern ideas", "explained […] that compassion is forbidden nowadays by science itself, and that that's what is done now in England, where there is political economy", Marmeladov sustains that, in the eyes of the poor, "poverty is not a vice", because the poor can still preserve some dignity. But beggary is a vice, even for the poor, because "for beggary a man is not chased out of human society with a stick, he is swept out with a broom, so as to make it as humiliating as possible".[232]

If some "superior" minds declared, at a certain moment, like Sir James Stewart, the new morality, that "the regulation of need, and not charity, is a more reliable means of social control", why shouldn't Raskolnikov create, on the grounds of individualistic reason, new moral laws to which maybe tomorrow the world will submit?[233] After all, Napoleon, who fascinates Raskolnikov by his "majestic image", believes himself that "in the interests of a higher social good, […] he possesses a moral right to kill".[234]

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longer capable to recognize a friend in nature. But this, again, as Steiner says, is a characteristic of nineteenth-century prose, in general.

[231] Jean Drouilly, *La pensée politique et religieuse de F.M. Dostoïevski*, p.281.

[232] Feodor Dostoevsky, *C.P.*, p.19.

[233] Ibidem, p.279.

[234] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Miraculous Years. 1865-1871*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995, p.108. Raskolnikov tells Sonia how everything began: "I asked myself one day this question – what if Napoleon, for instance, had happened to be in my place, and if he had not had Toulon nor Egypt, nor the passage of Mont Blanc to begin his career with, but instead of all these picturesque and monumental things,

If man pretends to be the sovereign of a world from which Transcendence and mystery have been banished, and if reason rules human actions, Raskolnikov does not see any motive "not to kill a wretched, rapacious, and 'useless' old moneylender and employ the funds to alleviate the human misery so omnipresent in [the] world".[235] After the murder, Raskolnikov tries to remake in his mind the path through which he arrived to murder: the alienating city made him crave for more and more loneliness and, even though he could have earned enough for basic needs from private lessons, he isolated himself in his tiny room, which "cramp[ed] the soul and the mind", and where he had "strange dreams of all sorts".[236] It was there that he developed his theory that "men are *in general* divided by a law of nature into two categories, inferior (ordinary), that is, so to say, material that serves only to reproduce its kind, and men who have the gift or the talent to utter *a new word*."[237] If the only purpose in life of the first category is to abide by the law, the second category of people represents the followers of Romulus, in a generic sense, that is, the founder of the city, the lawgiver, or the scientist. These individuals are not "always bound to commit breaches of morals", but they are allowed to sacrifice a certain percentage of humanity if, by that sacrifice, new discoveries can be made known and used for the general benefit of the majority of humanity.[238]

Since people are thought of in terms of percentages, and not of humanity, it appears only too logical to Raskolnikov that "hundreds, thousands perhaps, might be set on the right path" if one were to "kill [the pawnbroker], take her money and with the help of it devote oneself

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there had simply been some ridiculous old hag, a pawnbroker who had to be murdered too to get money from her trunk (for his career…). […] Well, I must tell you that I worried myself fearfully over that 'question' so that I was awfully ashamed when I guessed at last […] that if he had no other way, he would have strangled her in a minute …" (*C.P.*, pp.569-570).

[235]Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Miraculous Years*, p.104.

[236] Feodor Dostoevsky, *C.P.*, p.572.

[237]Ibidem, p.360.

[238]Ibidem, p.359.

to the service of humanity and the good of all".[239] The apparent inoffensive will for material and moral betterment of the human condition turns in a moment into the will to power which reduces the whole universe to its own proportions, attempting to find the secret of the universe and to guide humanity towards purposes it is presumably incapable to identify by itself. But eventually Raskolnikov reveals to himself and to the world that he was possessed by sheer will to power: "I didn't murder either to gain wealth or to become a benefactor of mankind", but because he wanted to test "whether I am a trembling creature or whether I have the *right*".[240] As Sonya tells him, this is the direct result of simple arithmetic: "one death and a hundred lives in exchange", because arithmetic kills and only love is life-giving. If one thinks the world in terms of self-preservation and percentages, one cannot challenge the sound logic of Raskolnikov, that he only "killed a louse, a useless, loathsome, harmful creature".[241]

As Mikhail Bakhtin says, Dostoevsky has his clear-cut ideas, expressed in his articles. In the novels, his ideas are on equal footing with other ideas, or, in other words, his novels are the place where his own ideas and other people's ideas (with which, as already said, he partially agrees or is at complete variance) are tested, and the criterion of the test is: do they rescue the world from or do they immerse it in eternal death? *Crime and Punishment* shows that, however much a man denied the common humanity, the latter inevitably demands its right – of being recognized as the supreme criterion which is life-giving – and the criminal is continually divided, as Berdyaev sustains, between the tormenting need to join another creature and the inability to do so, a division which many times leads Dostoevsky's characters, who killed or offended a human being, to take their own lives. Berdyaev is right

[239]Ibidem, p.94.
[240]Ibidem, p.576.
[241]Ibidem, p.571.

to affirm that Dostoevsky's ethical teaching that results from *Crime and Punishment*, as well as from his other novels, is that "it is not only 'the higher idea', or unusual people, like Raskolnikov and Stavrogin and Ivan, that have intrinsic value, but also our ordinary neighbour, the Marmeladovs, the Lebiadkins, the horrible old usuress".[242]

Arrived to the point of irrationality and absurdity, where individualistic reason has taken him, Raskolnikov feels an "aching need" to make the way back, towards the common world of the people which bears "an instinctive, unquestioning attachment to life".[243] How he attempts to make the way back and whether he succeeds are the subject of the third chapter. Thinking in dialectic terms, Raskolnikov wants to make justice – which he understands as communism – where there is capitalism, but he does this starting from exactly the same premises as capitalism, that is, individualism and rationalism, not from love. As Sonya tells him, he judges society by simple arithmetic terms, a thing which reveals the essence of communism (as seen, the logical outcome of capitalism), that is, nihilism.

If political and economic liberalism starts from the premise that it is rational to "trample down many an innocent flower", in the words of Hegel,[244] for the progress and the material and moral betterment of the condition of the majority of mankind, then it cannot fight philosophically communism, just as the latter cannot fight the former, because it is founded on the same principles of rationalism and individualism. Philosophically, for Dostoevsky, the difference consisting in the fact that political and economic liberalism offers each individual the freedom to organize his life according to his own will, while communism pretends to organize the lives of all on the grounds of a superior knowledge, is of little

[242]Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, pp.106-107.
[243]Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Miraculous Years*, p.146.
[244] G.W. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, tr. by J. Sibree, New York, Dover Pubs, 1956, p.32, in*Bruce* Ward, "Dostoevsky and the Problem of Meaning in History", in *Dostoevsky and the Twentieth Century*, edited by Malcom Jones, Astra Press, Nottingham, 1993, p.54.

importance.

1.10.2. The case of "The possessed"

As Bedyaev argues, citing Augustine, human nature has "two sorts of freedom". The first is "freedom to choose the good, which supposes the possibility of sin". The second and "greater freedom" is "the freedom in God, in the bosom of the good" or the "free choice of Christ", as in the words of the Gospel, "you shall know the truth and the truth will make you free".[245] What Dostoevsky depicts in his whole work is the Christian principle that man is created in the image of God, therefore, "the human essence presupposes the divine essence" and once God has been banished from the world, man is banished together with him and, in the words of Berdyaev, "on the grave of these two supreme ideas of God and of man, there is set up a monstrous image – the image of man who wants to be God, of the superman in action".[246]The man-god preserves the human characteristic which is freedom but is unable to exercise his freedom otherwise than freedom of evil, like in the case of Raskolnikov.

By leaving the tradition of the people, the bearer of love and faith, man becomes possessed by ideas, because ideas are his only reality, as it follows from the novel *The Possessed*.Kirilov, Stavrogin or Pyotr Verkhovensky are the most compelling incarnation of the man-god who, in his determination to lead humanity (even by force) beyond good and evil, tramples down the dignity of human life and transforms the intention of absolute freedom into absolute tyranny. Kirilov, devoured by his idea of absolute freedom, is "a secular saint", in the words of Joseph Frank, and commits suicide with the hope that his

[245] Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, p.68.
[246]Ibidem, p.64.

sacrifice would allow humanity to live like children, without the awareness and fear of good and evil. The essence of modern *liberté*, the affirmation of the self, is taken to its ultimate significance also by Kirilov. From his point of view, either God exists and everything is his will, or God does not exist, which means that man has self-will and is bound to affirm it. Man is unhappy, according to Kirilov, because he is afraid to "assert his will in the highest point and has shown his self-will only in little things, like a schoolboy".[247] Kirilov hopes that his self-sacrifice – a reverted sacrifice of Christ – will make humanity realize that "everything is good" – "if one dies of hunger, and if anyone insults and outrages the little girl […] it's all good"[248] – and that there is "no difference between worshipping 'a spider crawling along a wall' and a sacred icon".[249] Only then, when they realize that everything is good, people will become good, believes Kirilov. But the self-sacrifice of Kirilov reveals not an age of innocence, but the disgusting reality displayed by the ludicrous character Pyotr Verkhovensky who, unlike Stavrogin or Kirilov, has absolutely nothing attractive and succumbs to a brutal materialism, willfully opening the way for "universal destruction and violent tyranny". But this is already the subject of the second chapter.

Humanity, beyond good and evil, regresses to the inhuman. The absolute affirmation of the self, trampling down all other selves: this is the final outcome of the bourgeois ideals of progress and betterment of one's material and moral condition, on the grounds of the right to self-preservation, although the bourgeois, in his mediocrity, is incapable to recognize in Pyotr Verkhovensky his offspring. The nihilist takes the bourgeois principle of self-satisfaction to abysmal heights and Dostoevsky emphasizes in his *Diary* that these nihilists are "ill because of their boundless confidence in their normalcy and *eo ipso* they are infected

[247]Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, p.563.
[248]Ibidem, p.214.
[249]Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Miraculous Years*, p.482.

with awful self-conceit, impossible narcissism, which often reaches the level of the conviction of one's infallibility".[250] The meaning of *The Possessed* lies in Zosima's words: "we are all responsible for all". We should not comfort ourselves with the thought that a repulsive idea occurs *ex nihilo*, in the insane mind of a cast-off of society because, just as Dostoevsky believes that brotherhood could not create brothers where there are none, he also expresses his belief that "nihilism has appeared among us because we are all nihilists".[251] This is Dostoevsky's version of "fathers and sons". The "sons", embodied by Raskolnikov, Kirilov, Stavrogin or Pyotr Verkhovensky, have taken the line of thought of the "fathers" to its ultimate consequences, a thing which the "fathers" have been incapable of. Besides self-satisfaction, the thing which defines the liberal bourgeois is his incapacity to draw the conclusions imposed by the philosophical premises of liberalism. The fact that individualism and rationalism were widespread throughout Europe and among the Russian elites led to the conclusion that "we are all nihilists", because some (especially the "sons") were nihilists openly, while others were nihilists without recognizing or without being aware of it.

The term "nihilism" was introduced in the Russian intellectual background by Ivan Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*, published in 1862. The novel expresses the relation between the Russian liberals of the 1840s and their intellectual offspring, the Russian intelligentsia of the 1860s. The nihilist student, and the main character of the novel, Evgenii Bazarov, accompanies during the summer vacation his friend, Arkadii Nikolaich, to the estate of the latter's father and uncle, Nikolai and respectively Pavel Petrovich Kirsanov. The latter two are the representatives of the liberal generation of the 1840s, to which Alexander Herzen and Visarion Bielinsky belonged. They are readers of Goethe and Schiller

[250]Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, p.932.
[251]Feodor Dostoevsky, in Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, p.17 (reference not given).

and people who try to keep up with the intellectual and social changes. Their intellectual offspring, represented by Bazarov, and his disciple, Arkadii, have grown up with Herzen and Bielinsky, and came to reject them, as well as any romantic worldview, in the name of more pragmatic principles, that is, in the name of scientism, materialism, utilitarianism, atheism. The new world informed by these modern doctrines – whose purpose was presumably to feed all – could be fashioned only on the ruins of the old "romantic" world. Thus, Bazarov defines the nihilist as "someone who doesn't bow down to any authority, who doesn't accept any principle of faith, no matter how revered that principle may be".[252] The novel presents, on the one hand, the gap between the two generations, and, on the other hand, the tension that the nihilist medicine student Bazarov experiences interiorly between his materialism[253] and his romantic feelings, which he cannot explain rationally and which he finds uncontrollable, for the fascinating and rich Mme. Odintsova. Bazarov is the expression of the incipient phase of Russian nihilism represented by the scientism and materialism of Nikolay Chernyshevsky, Nikolay Dobrolyubov and Dmitri Pisarev. They adopted Bentham's utilitarianism and Comte's positivism, rejecting the idea of man's freedom as well as any definition of good and evil in terms of Christian morality. Good and evil were, on the contrary, understood in terms of utility, an enlightened individual being capable to identify his self-interest with the interest of the majority. "Rational egoism" was, then, from their perspective, the highest form of enlightenment.[254] These nihilists were *raznochintsy*, that is, "sons of priests, petty officials, impoverished landowners, sometimes serfs enfranchised or

[252] Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, translation by Constance Garnett revised by Elizabeth Cheresh Allen, The Modern Library, New York, 2001, p.23.

[253] Bazarov's materialism is expressed in phrases like: "A good chemist is twenty times as useful as any poet" or "the art of making money or of curing hemorrhoids" is the only recognized "art" (Ibidem, p.27).

[254] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Stir of Liberation. 1860-1865*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1986, p.32.

not, all of whom had managed to acquire an education and to exist in the interstices of the Russian caste system".[255] In the '60s, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov founded and wrote for the journal *The Contemporary*, and Pisarev wrote for *The Russian Word*.[256] The difference between the ideas of the two journals was that, while *The Contemporary* started from "Herzen's belief in a populism on the already existing peasant commune in Russia as the basic unit of social reorganization for the future socialist state", *The Russian Word* emphasized "the emancipation of the individual through enlightenment as a prerequisite for social change" which would occur only in the future.[257] The nihilism of the 1860s had also a militant character, very well expressed by the leaflet entitled *Young Russia*, written by a twenty-year-old student, Zaichnesky, who was concerned with the "immediate task of preparing the revolution" on the background of "the peasantry's discontent with the terms of liberation". He rejected any compromise with the liberals of the '40s, stating that the Russian nihilists "will go further, not only than the poor revolutionaries of 1848, but also than the great terrorists of the 1790s [in France]".[258] Over the author of *Young Russia* hovers the suspicion concerning the mysterious fires that took over Saint Petersburg in May 1862, an episode which inspired the end of Dostoevsky's *Possessed*. Starting with the late '60s and continuing in the '70s and '80s, nihilism was no longer reduced to a doctrine, but was becoming the Nihilist Movement, whose best known representatives are Mikhail Bakunin, the prototype for Nikolay Stavrogin, and Sergey Nechayev, the prototype for Pyotr Verkhovensky, in *The Possessed*. Bakunin, a Russian nobleman, believed that Russia needed, more than any other country, "a strong dictatorial power [...] which will be

[255]Ibidem, p.162.
[256]Tanya Egle Mairs, *Nihilism as Crime and Punishment. A study of Dostoevsky's Antinihilism in the 1860s*, Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1982, pp.18-19.
[257]Ibidem, p.19.
[258] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Stir of Liberation*, p.147.

exclusively preoccupied with raising the education of the masses; a power free in its tendencies and its spirit, but without parliamentary forms; printing books of a free content, but without liberty of the press; a power surrounded by partisans, enlightened by their advice, strengthened by their free collaboration, but not limited by anything or anybody".[259] Nechayev belonged to the lower middle class and was one of the Russian terrorists of the '70s and '80s. He was the author of the secret document, *The Catechism of the Revolutionist*, where he defined the revolutionist as a "doomed man" who has renounced all family and social bonds, who "knows only one science, the science of destruction", who "despises public opinion" and "enters the world of the state and of the educated privileged classes […] only for the purpose of its fullest and quickest destruction".[260] Nechayev was the chief of a revolutionary nihilist group whose existence came to an end after the murder of a student. In *The Possessed*, Dostoevsky chose to focus on the latter nihilists. If Bazarov dies conquered by romantic feelings, albeit without giving up his former principles, and succeeds in the end to awake the sympathy of the reader, this is not the case with Dostoevsky's nihilists. Their purpose is the one proclaimed in Nechayev's *Catechism*: "the complete liberation and happiness of the masses" which is possible only through "ruthless destruction".[261] In *The Possessed*, Dostoevsky identifies the essence of the thought and attitude of the latter representatives of nihilism as will-to-power, even though he does not use this specific Nietzschean concept. In his opinion, the "all-destroying Revolution" is both the pretext and the final outcome of the allegedly superior individual will that "needs only to will" in order to exist, to suppress the existence of others or to create new life.

[259]Mikhail Bakunin, in Max Nomad, *Apostles of Revolution*, Martin Secker and Warburg LTD, London, 1939, p.161, reference not given.
[260]*The Catechism of a Revolutionist*, in Ibidem, pp.228-230.
[261]Ibidem, pp.232, 231.

The Possessed shows that the uprooting from the soil of the intellectual elite leads not only to a loss of faith, but also to indifference towards future generations, because – Dostoevsky would agree with Pierre Leroux – "*Jérusalem a péri dans le cœur des hommes*". Stepan Trofimovich's remorse, when he thinks of the fact that he indifferently sent his son, Pyotr Verkhovensky, to be raised by someone in some remote part of Russia, is symbolic in this sense: "when I left him in Petersburg, I […] looked on him as a nonentity […]. He was a very nervous boy […], emotional and very timid. […] [He had] no artistic feeling whatever, not a sign of anything higher, of anything fundamental, no embryo of a future ideal […] *c'était comme un petit idiot*".[262] As he writes in his *Diary*, Dostoevsky did not despise the idealism of Stepan Trofimovich, his exultation in front of beauty and his belief in the possibility of enlightenment of the people. As it will be seen in the third chapter, Dostoevsky shares, to a certain extent, this ideal of the generation of the '40s. But he believes that, alienated from the people, from the common humanity, this ideal becomes abstract and, consequently, is in danger not only of becoming ridiculous, but of being at peace with the thought that its accomplishment requires some sacrifices. As it will be seen in the second chapter, the sons will avoid the ridiculousness of the fathers' ideal by taking the "matters of business" into their own hands.

Accepting or being indifferent to the idea that progress justifies the trampling down of human lives means the worship of power which can be limited by the law – even by the best ever created law – only for a limited period of time because this notion of progress starts from the premise that there is not an absolute morality, therefore the law is always adjusted to progress. And power or the affirmation of the self – which is a perpetual repetition of the Luciferic desire to be like God – will not stop until it reaches self-negation, "casting other

[262]Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, p.81.

things down in an act of destruction", as "the possessed" prove. Shatov, in *The Possessed*, affirms that "reason has never had the power to define good and evil, or even to distinguish between good and evil, even approximately; on the contrary, it has always mixed them up, in a disgraceful and pitiful way; science has even given the solution by the fist."[263] This is why, as argued at the beginning of this chapter, capitalism and implicitly individualism, its essence, cannot be challenged but in ontological terms and – herein lies Dostoevsky's genius – not by *other* ideas but by a different *way of being*, which silently points to the violence done by individualistic reason abstracted from the common world. The Dostoevskyan characters depicted at the antipode of the characters possessed by ideas challenge them not by opposite ideas, but by their humility and love. Such are the simple soul Sonya Marmeladov, Alyosha Karamazov or the staretz Zosima.

1.11. Conclusion

The paramount issue held in common by Pierre Leroux and Feodor Dostoevsky is their insistence on the cornerstone of modern culture, that is, the right to self-preservationor the affirmation of the self or self-will, terms that I have used interchangeably in this chapter. Their insistence comes from their intuition that the social and economic human degradation, which they encountered around them and which horrified them, was the surface of a phenomenon which they considered necessary to approach in ontological terms, because the phenomenon defined itself in ontological terms.

In the beginning of the chapter I said that Leroux and Dostoevsky considered the idea of

[263]Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, p.226.

equal insecurity of all, the principle of individualism, and that of materialism, as the founding principles of their society, even though they did not formulate these tenets exactly in this form. These are three fundamental principles which Hobbes articulated clearly – although they were not invented by him – in his philosophy. I also said in the beginning of the chapter that Hobbes made political legitimacy dependent on individual will, which could not be contested by anyone. And the essence of individual will was self-preservation or the desire to avoid death. Hobbes compared the freedom of men with the freedom of atoms in a perpetual movement, which is translated, at human level, as "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death" (*Leviathan*, XI, 2). This generates a state that is, as we find out from the *Leviathan*, the state of war of all, a state, says Hobbes, in which "nothing can be unjust" (XIII, 13), since there is no right or wrong. As Louis Dumont argues, Hobbes made self-preservation of all individuals dependent on the Sovereign, who would bring forth and put into practice also a conception of justice. In this sense, Hobbes' individualism and absolutism go hand in hand, in a coherent manner. Leo Strauss asserts that "already in Hobbes […] the natural right to self-preservation includes the right to 'corporeal freedom' and to a condition in which man is not weary of life: it approaches the right to comfortable self-preservation which is the pivot of Locke's teaching. […] [T]he increased emphasis on economics is a consequence of this. Eventually we arrive at the view that universal affluence and peace is the one and sufficient condition of perfect justice."[264]

Even though, as Macpherson says, Locke makes Hobbes' theory less coherent, he builds a more feasible or a more comfortable theory. The change Locke operates in Hobbes' theory consists in that the artificial body politic is bound to protect the individual's person and property – as it had been acquired before the creation of the body politic – without falling

[264]Leo Strauss, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1989, p.89.

into absolutism. As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* ends by proclaiming the individual right to unlimited acquisition. Political economy has begun, thus, to manifest an increased interest in "prudent conservation" or, as Milbank says, in "how a non-ethical regulation of passion and desire might be possible".[265] This is how we arrive slowly at the substitution of "the Christian sphere of public charity" with the "regulation of need", a process accompanied, as John Milbank notes, by an essential "shift in the very economy of desire".[266] The shift is due to the fact that, given that society is a contract, there lacks a common conception of the common good – which was the standard by virtue of which some goods were desirable and others not – which is translated as the lack of "the proper object of desire" or the emergence of "abstract desire".[267] As Milbank stresses, "to abstract desire corresponds abstract wealth" or "the maximum diversification and increase of products and the maximum circulation of products", which "permitted a new code of social practice where people could start to see themselves as primarily 'producers' and 'consumers'."[268] It is not difficult to grasp why, despite the fact that liberal democracy can by no means be reduced to a "contract of proprietors", communism identified liberal democracy with and criticized it for being exclusively a "contract of proprietors" – a contract that equated the concept of proprietor with that of human being – and drew the conclusion – following Marx – that "life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation,

[265]John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p.26.
[266]Ibidem, pp.31, 33.
[267] The acquisition of wealth or the figure of the industrious bourgeois who gives up his little pleasure of today in order to acquire wealth for the future is only the form that "abstract desire" was taking in the 19th century. As authors, like Hannah Arendt, Christopher Lasch, John Milbank or Jean-Claude Michéa, among others, have stressed, "abstract desire" is an essence which has taken different forms throughout time. If we do not see any longer any trace of the nineteenth-century industrious bourgeois, this only means that "abstract desire" has taken a different form, but not that there was a change in its essence.
[268]John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p.33.

clothing and many other things".[269]

All this is to summarize the understanding, extremely similar, of Leroux and of Dostoevsky, concerning the evolution of materialism from Hobbes to communism, passing through Locke and the whole capitalist political economy. Their conceptions on this specific issue can be resumed in Leo Strauss' observation that both liberal democracy and communism "originate in the first and second waves of modernity".[270] As it has been shown throughout this chapter, Leroux and Dostoevsky share the belief that there is a logical development of the Hobbesean premise of the right to self-preservation which has the potential to eventually arrive at both nihilism and brutal materialism.

It would be wrong to argue that Leroux and Dostoevsky saw in their contemporary society only the development of the bourgeois desire for property; they did see in it also a profound potential for an authentic accomplishment of the human being. As it results from the foregoing analysis of the two authors, their critique goes against the fact that society has made the decision of prizing, in principle, individual will above its object. This means, as already argued, that society as a whole does not strive to recognize objective goods that are outside and above the self. Such a society, the two authors believe in unison, is one that allows and encourages the manifestation of the relation between master and slave, which is most visible in its economic and social organization. But the root, as well as the outcome, of this manifestation is ontological. From this perspective, when Hobbes defined the state of nature as the "war of every man against every man", he defined human nature as

[269]Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, translated by W. Lough, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968, p.39.

[270]Leo Strauss, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, p.98. Strauss argues in his well-known chapter, "The Three waves of modernity", from the book cited above, on which I will not insist now, that the first wave of modernity begins with Machiavelli and is continued by Hobbes and Locke, the second wave is represented by Rousseau, while the third wave is represented by Nietzsche and Marx, pp.81-98.

ontologically conflictual. When Malthus – the philosopher against whom Leroux vituperates and who represents an extreme form of political economy which both Leroux and Dostoevsky denounce as inhuman – attempts to justify philosophically, in *Essay on the Principle of Population*, "the God who has made increase of wealth incompatible with human survival", he follows Hobbes and affirms the ontologically conflictual human nature. He states that "to be merely sunk in matter is a literal hell, but only the constant though hopeless struggle against matter and finitude permits soul and spiritual resilience to arise", suggesting, as Milbank emphasizes, "that only the perpetual spur of fear for our survival" helps the formation of a "spiritual being".[271]

Leroux and Dostoevsky anticipate John Milbank, sustaining in their analyses, as shown throughout this chapter, that, by substituting an economy of the distribution of surplus as charity with an economy of the accumulation of surplus, political economy restores the ideal of the slave society of Sparta, where the society operated the division between a class of producers, "disciplined and fully controlled", and "a class of politician-warriors", only it replaces now the latter class with a mercantile class.[272] It is, thus, the principle of force, the French and the Russian authors emphasize, which keeps people together, within a society, as well as on the international level. Pierre Leroux dreamed of a European Union grounded on friendship and solidarity and he denounced the fact that the world was kept together by a tenet Dostoevsky also described in its complexity: the complicity to crime, by which, argues Leroux, the great powers became together proprietors of entire populations, alienated from their soil.[273]

[271] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p.45.
[272] Ibidem, p.35.
[273] Jacques Viard, *Pierre Leroux, Charles Péguy, Charles de Gaulle et l'Europe*, p.252.

Because rights have replaced the Good and the self-regulated market has been dictating, more and more, since the 19th century, as Jean-Claude Michéa affirms, the ideal of efficiency, the primacy of structures, the transformation of objective, transcendental goods into "values", all these, claim Leroux and Dostoevsky, spring from and continue to fashion, in their turn, individualist rationalism. The fundamental question which the two authors identify in the middle of this reflection is: since individual will is recognized as the supreme good, what safety do people have, which could help them to live for and to fulfill truth and justice? Capitalism reveals the practice of what Tawney calls a "philosophy of Indifferentism", which is actually a mode of life, rather than a theory, and starts from the generally accepted premise that religion has absolutely no object in the public sphere and in the social relations. In Tawney's words, this "philosophy" "is held in practice as a truism which it is irrational, if not actually immoral, to question, since it is in the heart of the individual that religion has its throne, and to externalize it in rules and institutions is to tarnish its purity and to degrade its appeal".[274] Leroux and Dostoevsky condemn together the indifference of capitalism towards "anything but abstract power" – which is synonymous to the exercise of abstract desire or to the individual will which is recognized as being above its object. The indifference towards "anything but abstract power" is translated in the fact that capitalism does not openly destroy objective goods, nor does it proclaim like communism that "past generations are always wrong", but keeps all the past attachments "in reserve, all the way back to oriental despotism or Pythagoras, so that it can potentially recruit them to the interests of domination".[275] As such, justice, too, is a value among many other values, and, in this perspective, the value of choosing to distribute surplus as charity is equal to the

[274] R.H. Tawney, *Op. cit.*, p.274.
[275] John Milbank, *Op. cit.*, pp.274-275.

value of choosing to accumulate surplus, for example. Since, in Hobbes, justice was not a transcendental good inscribed in human nature, but something decided by the Sovereign, for his followers, adepts of the "prudent conservation", justice is decided and is put into practice by the free market.

The fact that Hobbes[276] or philosophers such as Locke, James Stewart or Malthus take Christianity into consideration, in their writings, is not of much worth, in the eyes of both Leroux and Dostoevsky, since their premises are the ontologically conflictual human nature and the superiority of the individual will over its object. People have always set and, we tend to believe, will continue to set social and legal limitations to the exercise of free will, but Dostoevsky shows how frail these limitations can be and history has proven him right.[277] It is mere nostalgia, both Leroux and Dostoevsky insist, that people, living in a society whose premise is individual will, should ask themselves what virtues they could develop. If society starts from the premise of the individual will, Leroux concludes that Malthus is right. Malthus can be proven wrong, Leroux and Dostoevsky sustain, only when society shares a transcendental conception of Justice, but this means to have at least one objective good above the self.

What Leroux and Dostoevsky refute is the image of Hobbes' man, for, in their view, this image is false because man is the image of God (obviously, not of Malthus' God, but of God as he appears in the whole tradition of the Fathers of the Church).[278] If man is taken as

[276] Hobbes' reference to the Christian God especially in chapters XIV and XVI of the *Leviathan* would deserve special analysis which, unfortunately, exceeds the limits of this thesis.

[277] Dostoevsky never asserted that the advent of communism in Russia would be exclusively the outcome of individualist rationalism, invented by the West, and did not dismiss the fact that there were also other factors (especially Russian cultural peculiarities) involved, but argued that, in its fascination with the West, Russia made itself into the laboratory where Western ideas were put into practice.

[278] Leroux and Dostoevsky refute that fallen human nature is true human nature, as Hobbes believes. According to them, men are naturally inclined towards virtue, goodness and beauty, but this attraction coexists

Hobbes' man, then justice is another value decided by the Sovereign, whoever this might be. If man is taken as the image of God, then Justice is also God's Justice or a transcendental good which, far as it might be from earth, is *the* ideal of man.

It is for this reason that both Leroux and Dostoevsky insist so much on education, because education is the mirror of what society as a whole considers fulfilling and decides to pass on to the next generations. John Milbank summarizes perfectly the ideas of the French and the Russian authors on this issue: "if universal education is simply education into the possibility of free choice, then it's only an education in liberal capitalist values", which affirms self-fulfillment as the only good which, at its turn, equals with "saying that the only goal is power".[279] Leaving aside the differences between the republican and the Christian – it is education unto Justice, which is taken to mean the fulfillment of humanity in every man, which involves the solidarity of all men.

It is true that Hobbes offers the grounds not only for this extreme evolution of liberalism, but also, as I said in the beginning of the chapter, for a theory of the welfare state or a "moral theory of political obligation" of the individual "to a wider political authority", in the words of Macpherson. Yet, the welfare state today experiences also a crisis which shares the same essence as the crisis of this extreme form of liberalism – one of the forms the crisis takes is, for instance, the always weaker responsibility and solidarity between generations, which makes the welfare state face the dilemma of what to do with the growing old population, in the context in which the young population is significantly reduced. It seems to be the crisis of a system which has taken as its ethical ideal the individual comfort and social prosperity. Thus, Leroux's and Dostoevsky's critique of the unchallenged superiority of the individual

with an attraction to evil, and, to the extent to which society encourages certain features and norms on the account of others, a certain type of attraction is developed over the other.

[279]John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p.199.

will over its object, which appears, in their works, as the root of the crisis of modern democracy, cannot be dismissed. Especially Leroux's critique of both individualism and what he calls "absolute socialism"[280] makes us think of the argument which Leo Strauss will formulate in the end of his chapter, "The Three waves of modernity": "the theoretical crisis does not necessarily lead to a practical crisis, for the superiority of liberal democracy to communism" – not only the theoretical, but also the practical superiority – "is obvious enough."[281] The spring of the superiority of modern democracy, Leroux insists,[282] is to be found in the classical and Christian tradition, a tradition that emphasizes an essential feature of man, which Leroux summarizes as follows (meeting here again Dostoevsky's creed concerning the aspirations of human nature):

> *Malgré l'incohérence de tous nos désirs, malgré la profonde anarchie du genre humain, malgré les ténèbres où l'homme est tombé sur ses vrais besoins et sur ce qu'il appelle le Bonheur, malgré tous nos vices, tous nos crimes, et toutes nos misères, au fond le même type humain se reproduisant dans chaque homme, tous nos désirs ne sont que des manifestations [...] du Désir ou du Verbe que le Créateur a mis dans notre espèce.*[283]

The extremely interesting and rich analysis of Leroux on the modes of production, his theory about the appropriation by society of the means of production – which gets him close to philosophers such as John Ruskin or G.K. Chesterton – or his theory about labour which has a symbolic socio-political dimension, are challenged by the fact that the economic conditions, which could allow such a society with an economy of subsistence, seem to have disappeared. From a Lerouxian perspective, the disappearance of these conditions enters into direct conflict with and is an attack against the universal aspirations of human nature. Leroux

[280] The concept of "absolute socialism" will be explained in the next chapter where I will analyze Saint-Simonism and Leroux's critique to it.

[281] Leo Strauss, *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*, p.98.

[282] It is anachronistic to associate Leroux's philosophy with the term "liberal democracy". I believe that some features of liberal democracy can be recognized in Leroux's conception of modern democracy, but in this thesis, whenever I will refer to Leroux's conception of democracy, I will use the term "modern democracy".

[283] Pierre Leroux, *Malthus et les économistes*, p.279.

would say that the disappearance of these economic conditions is translated as the antagonism between history and nature – an antagonism that is not necessary, but which is caused by man's ignorance of his own nature – which reveals the history of capitalism as a history of dehumanization that increases progressively the deprivation of the conditions of human existence – with all that human existence presupposes.

The greater value of the theories of Leroux and Dostoevsky comes from the fact that they challenge us to question our mode of life, which is fundamentally the capitalist mode of life – whose cornerstone is, as argued, the individual will – in whichever part of the world we live, a mode that "only knows how to make life its own, how to appropriate and exploit it".[284]

[284] Christos Yannaras, *Variations on the Song of Songs*, translated from Greek by Norman Russell, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, Brookline, Massachusets, 2005, p.4.

Chapter Two

Varieties of Socialism and of Utopia

> Homo homini Deus est – *this is the great practical principle – this is the axis on which revolves the history of the world.*
>
> – Ludwig Feuerbach

2.1. Introduction

One of the dangers that menaces democracy, says José Ortega y Gasset, consists in the fact that people may arrive at the point of believing that they believe in it, or, in other words, democrats no longer put into question the truth of the democratic dogma, are no longer interested in the philosophical questions that democracy engenders. His observation could be very well expanded on the concept of society, understood as "the right ways to live together". According to Ortega y Gasset, it is not enough for mathematical reasoning to prove a political idea as true, in order to make us believe in that idea, just as a social morality proven to be perfect from a mathematical point of view, while remaining incapable of impressing us, can be, actually, immoral.[285]

The nineteenth century began, all over Europe, and especially in France, with a vivid debate on how society was to be understood, as a contract between individuals, or as some *thing* with a reality of its own. Both right-wing and left-wing French thinkers agreed that

[285] José Ortega y Gasset, *El tema de nuestro tiempo*, pp.103-104.

they faced an always weaker faith in society and that there was lacking an "overall social agreement as to the right ways to live together".[286] As mentioned in the first chapter, this observation made Pierre Leroux lament that "religious atheism has brought about social atheism".[287] At the same time, Leroux was convinced of what his fellows – liberals, neo-Catholics, republicans, socialists – were convinced too: the Catholic dogma and institutions were profoundly obsolete, and, consequently, the social body grounded on them was put into question as chimerical. The beginning of the nineteenth century inaugurated, in France, what Claude Lefort called "*un mystère de la société*", translated as a process of secularization by which society left the old religious paradigm, while, at the same time, attempted to embed the religious element within the network of social and human relations.[288] We have, says Lefort, "*à un pôle le légitimiste De Maistre, à l'autre le socialiste Leroux, et entre les deux des penseurs aussi singuliers que Ballanche, Chateaubriand, Michelet ou Quinet*" and they "*parlent une même langue: à la fois politique, philosophique et religieuse*".[289]

Many of these authors believe that the old Europe of feudal relations, which pretended to be Christian, had resisted, in fact, to Christianity. There is, in authors such as Ballanche, Michelet, Leroux, Saint-Simon, to mention only a few names, a strong emphasis on the "odyssey of humankind", the stages of which are closely surveyed by the Providence.[290] The odyssey is, of course, interpreted differently by each philosopher, but they all agree that humanity is in a continual process of perfection. Some, like Ballanche, argue that the 19th century, as the inheritor of Enlightenment, accomplishes Christianity which recognizes as its

[286] Michael Behrent, "The Mystical Body of Society: Religion and Association in Nineteenth-Century French Political Thought", in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol.69, No.2, April 2008, p.219.
[287] Pierre Leroux, *D'une religion nationale ou du culte,* Boussac: Imprimerie de Pierre Leroux, 1846, 90, in Ibidem, p.220.
[288] Claude Lefort, "Permanence du théologico-politique?", *Essai sur le politique XIX-XX siècles*, p.252, in Vincent Peillon, *Pierre Leroux et le socialisme républicain*, p.167.
[289] Ibidem.
[290] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.83.

own the best of Enlightenment, especially the ideal of compassion and the desire of equality, while others, like Saint-Simon, sustain that Christianity is outmoded, its failure having been demonstrated by the French Revolution, and that it is time for a new, more comprehensive, "religion of Humanity" to grow. The latter emphasize, as John Milbank notes, that, by overcoming Christianity, humankind overcomes the chimerical "promises of heavenly rewards" and only in this way could self-sacrifice, social sympathy and altruism "be realized as an ultimate human and social truth".[291]

They all sustain that humankind is in face of a new era – some, like Ballanche and the neo-Catholics, believe that the realization of Christianity excludes a new revelation, which would substitute that of Jesus,[292] others, like Saint-Simon, and his followers, believe that the new era does presuppose a new revelation and new prophets, while yet others, like Leroux, see revelation as a progressive process, by which Humanity accomplishes itself. All these French nineteenth-century philosophers are fascinated by the philosophy of history, and a characteristic of their writings is that they are preoccupied with long histories, beginning from antiquity, explaining the process of humankind's maturation from its childhood (antiquity) until their time and its continual maturation in the future, a process by which humanity is meant to come into its own. But how different the understanding of humanity's "coming into its own" can be will be seen throughout this chapter. With some exceptions, like de Maistre and conservative Catholics, Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians, French philosophers sustain that the authority of the Catholic Church has become superfluous in

[291] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p.62.
[292] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.98.

society and that no other Church could or should claim authority, because society is becoming capable of organizing itself.[293]

The main issue that separated philosophers was what kind of social organization should be adopted. The issue was by no means irrelevant and its relevance was political *par excellence*: could the anti-hierarchical social order in the aftermath of the French Revolution be sustained?[294] It needed an element of cohesion and a *raison d'être*. How were they to be defined, after Catholicism, which had offered a coherent *raison d'être* to the old social body, had been rejected? The first question in dealing with this issue was whether society was a contract or something more. If it was more, by what was defined this "more"? I find the translation, operated by Michael Behrent, of the medieval Quarrel of Universals on sociological terrain fortunate and helpful. In the Quarrel of Universals, realists, like Thomas Aquinas, took universals, such as humanity or animality, which included all the individuals in a species, to have a reality of their own, while nominalists, like William of Occam, contended that general ideas did not possess reality, and that only singular beings did. On sociological terrain, Behrent calls realists those who see societies "as actual beings, distinct from the people who form them", and nominalists the champions of the social contract.[295]

I already discussed the nominalist position and I analyzed its critique made by Leroux and Dostoevsky in the first chapter. Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians can be called realists. Individuals were seen by them as particles of the social body which "constitutes a true Being, the existence of which is more or less vigorous or unsteady depending on

[293]Ibidem, p.83.
[294]Michael Behrent, "The Mystical Body of Society", p.222.
[295] Ibidem, p.224.

whether its organs perform the functions entrusted to them".[296] Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians had a profound admiration for the Middle Ages in which they saw complete intellectual unity and homogeneity – which in fact had not characterized the Middle Ages – and sustained that the new organization of society should take as a model the medieval Catholic Church, whose main goal, according to them, was to establish a "temporal theocracy". As Michael Behrent writes, the Saint-Simonian doctrine was grounded on a series of contrasts: "order, religion, association, and self-sacrifice" versus "disorder, atheism, individualism, egoism".[297]

For some realists, like Saint-Simon, freedom and unity were antagonistic terms. This posed the question whether the bonds of society were voluntary or obligatory.[298] There was developed within nineteenth-century French socialism a tendency which had a completely materialist understanding of the realist conception of society. Such was the doctrine of Gracchus Babeuf, born in the same year as Saint-Simon, 1760. For him, "freedom meant not only the right of assembly and the abolition of legal differences between estates of the realm", but also or especially "inequality, exploitation, and misery".[299] As such, the just society could only be imposed from outside by "a virtuous legislator" whose first task was "to destroy inequality".[300] Babeuf understood equality only in materialist terms, which made him claim that the abolition of private property would be the first and most important step in the creation of the social body. The second step was to limit individual intellectual achievements to basic knowledge, because intellectual development was perilous for the

[296] Henri de Saint-Simon, "La physiologie sociale appliquée à l'amélioration des institutions sociales", *Œuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin*, Aalen: Otto Zeller, 1964, 39-40: 177, in Ibidem, p.227.
[297] Michael Behrent, "The Mystical Body of Society", p.227.
[298] Ibidem, p.224.
[299] Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, p.185.
[300] Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.66.

wellbeing of the social body. By these two measures, considered Babeuf, "*le gouvernement fera disparaître les bornes, les haies, les murs, les serrures aux portes, les disputes, les procès, les vols, les assassinats, tous les crimes; les tribunaux, les prisons, les gibets, les peines, le désespoir que causent toutes ces calamites; l'envie, la jalousie, l'insatiabilité, l'orgueil, la tromperie, la duplicité, enfin tous les vices*".[301]In order to arrive at the unitary social body, the individual right to fulfillment had to be transformed, according to Babeuf, in the right of life and death of the People over all tyrants and patricians, the People being identified, of course, with the poor, "*le vrai Peuple, le seul Peuple, digne de jouir des biens de ce monde*".[302] As Kolakowski writes, *le Babouvisme* reveals a tendency that would recur in communist movements, the tendency of making of "equality the supreme virtue", "in particular equality in the enjoyment of material goods". This tendency, according to Kolakowski, manifests itself in the following manner: "if there is a choice between improving the lot of the poor but allowing inequality to subsist, or leaving the poor as they are and depressing everyone to their level, it is the second alternative that must be chosen".[303]

The French socialist ideas of all types, from Leroux and George Sand, to Cabet and Babeuf, spread rapidly throughout the Russian young intelligentsia of the 1840s. "The France of Saint-Simon, Cabet, Fourier and Louis Blanc, and, in particular, George Sand" revealed to the Russian intelligentsia "a faith in mankind" and "the certainty that the Golden Age was to be found not in the past but in the future".[304] The spread of the socialist ideas among the Russian intelligentsia depended on the political context: on the one hand, the

[301] Extrait de la *Défense* (page not specified), in Ibidem, p.76.
[302] Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.70.
[303] Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, p.186.
[304] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Seeds of Revolt, 1821-1849*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976, p.129.

intelligentsia was oppressed by the political censure and, on the other hand, as the bearer of the Enlightenment ideals, it was disturbed by the enslavement of the peasantry. In May 1847, the Tsar Nicholas 1st asked the help of the nobility "to convert the status of peasants from serfs to that of tenants".[305] But the revolutions of 1848 in Europe aroused panic among the Russian elites and the intentions of the liberation of the peasants were left aside. The Russian intelligentsia, on the other hand, felt a "wild excitement" about the revolutions in Europe and was more and more disturbed, as Alexander Milyukov was writing, that in Russia "thought and the press were confined more and more [...]. Practically with every mail delivery from abroad, we heard about new rights granted to the people [...], while in Russian society we heard only rumors of more limitations and constraints".[306] There emerged, on this background, many literary and political circles – some having a more or less secret character – where forbidden socialist ideas were being discussed. From the beginning of the '40s, Dostoevsky, like many other intellectuals, frequented, too, such circles in Saint-Petersburg. The last circle where Dostoevsky participated was the one that brought about his arrest in 1849, the Petrashevsky circle, where Étienne Cabet and especially Charles Fourier were regularly read. Dostoevsky was by no means an important member of the circle which he joined in 1847 out of curiosity rather than out of conviction.[307] He did not appreciate "Petrashevsky's rampant Left Hegelian atheism", as Joseph Frank argues, and Petrashevsky, at his turn, "had little respect for literature, except as a means for propaganda".[308]

[305]Ibidem, p.247.
[306]Ibidem, p.248.
[307]According to Alexander Milyukov, "Dostoevsky said that life in an Icarian commune or phalanstery seemed to him more terrible and repugnant than any prison" (*F.M. Dostoevsky v Vospominaniakh Sovremmenikov*, ed. A. Dolinin, Moscow, 1964, I: 185, in Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Seeds of Revolt, 1821-1849*, p.254).
[308]Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Seeds of Revolt,* pp.246-247.

Mikhail Butashevich-Petrashevsky, a convinced Fourierist, was translator in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and had managed to obtain from abroad "forbidden" books, like those of Fourier, and to spread them among the Russian intelligentsia. According to Joseph Frank, Petrashevsky attempted to build a Fourierist phalanstery for his peasants, in 1847, on his estate, but the following day, "the ideal dwelling had been burned". As such, he became convinced that the Russian people needed first to be progressively enlightened in order to be able to live in a phalanstery.[309] As an atheist and follower of the encyclopedists, Petrashevski rejected Fourier's cosmogony, which seemed too fantastic and irrational to the rationalist. But the main thing he retained from Fourier was the idea of common living in a phalanstery which allowed all human passions to manifest freely. The phalanstery, he believed, would progressively and naturally lead to the stage which communism wanted to reach at once, by violence.[310] The circle attracted the attention of the government which put it under the observation of the secret police, and in 1849, on the background of the spread of the fiery European revolutionary ideas, all the members of the circle were arrested.

As Frank writes, "Dostoevsky was in accord with the moral impulse"[311] inspiring the socialism of George Sand, for example, which was seen by his generation as a "corrective to Christianity" and which was combined with "the metaphysical horizons of the German idealism of Hegel, Schelling and Schiller".[312] But he was disturbed by the atheism of the Russian interpretation of French socialist systems, like those of Cabet or Fourier. According to one witness of the time, "Dostoevsky was never and never could be a revolutionary; but, as a man of feeling, he could be carried away by a wave of indignation and even hatred at the

[309] Ibidem, p.246.
[310] Jean Drouilly, *La pensée politique et religieuse de F.M. Dostoïevski*, pp.70-71.
[311] Ibidem, p.252.
[312] Joseph Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet, 1871-1881*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2002, p.9.

sight of violence being perpetrated on the insulted and injured. [...] Only in such moments of outrage was he capable of rushing into the street with a red flag".[313] As Jean Drouilly shows in his study on Dostoevsky, it could hardly be argued that the intellectuals gathered in the Petrashevsky circle, as well as in most literary-political circles in Saint-Petersburg, were joined by a common creed. It was rather the general dissatisfaction with the *de facto* political situation in Russia that brought them together.

When he returned to Russia, in 1860, after the exile in Siberia and after serving in the Russian Army, Dostoevsky found a new generation of socialists, continuators of the generation of the 1840s, but who left aside the Christian ideals, as well as the German aesthetic idealism. The new generations of 1860s to 1880s, to which Chernyshevsky – whom Dostoevsky criticized in *Notes from Underground* – and Nechayev – the prototype for Pyotr Verkhovensky in *The Possessed* – belonged, was a generation of intellectuals "disillusioned by the church" and "converted to social-political radicalism", who sought solutions "in the atheism of Feuerbach, the materialism and rationalism of eighteenth-century French thought, and the English Utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham" and who formulated the "doctrine of rational egoism".[314]

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This is the general background of the second chapter of my thesis. I analyzed, in the first chapter, Leroux's and Dostoevsky's critiques of the capitalist order whose essence they considered to be individualism. In their view, there was a direct connection between

[313] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Seeds of Revolt*, p.256.
[314] Joseph Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p.9.

individualism and radical socialism or communism, which revealed that both ended in nihilism. But in the first chapter I concentrated on individualism and only touched on communism. The greatest part of this chapter will concentrate on the socialist utopias of Henri de Saint-Simon, the Saint-Simonians, and of the Grand Inquisitor, which Leroux and, respectively, Dostoevsky criticize. From their perspective, these socialist utopias, despite their critique of the bourgeois capitalist order, are the logical evolution of the self-sufficiency and the self-satisfaction characteristic for the latter. There is an abundance of nineteenth-century utopian thinkers, but I analyze here the utopias of Saint-Simon and of the Saint-Simonians because Leroux was part of the Saint-Simonian group for one year. In 1831, he left the group and became critical towards it; his mature thought includes revisited themes from both liberalism and Saint-Simonism. Thus, the comprehension of Saint-Simon's and the Saint-Simonian utopian socialism is essential in order to grasp Leroux's utopian thought. The case of Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians is important for another reason, as well. Utopia has its real beginnings in Thomas More and it is defined as the quest for the Good. It points to a profound ambiguity, as its name suggests: "no-place-land". Starting with the French Revolution, utopia came to be associated more with a political project. In the 19th century, with Saint-Simon, the ambiguity of utopia suffered a change. Saint-Simon's utopia oscillates between transcendence and immanence. For Saint-Simon, transcendence means the perfect model of society, in relation to which the existing society is in a continual aspiration; there is an "*écart absolu*" between the world-as-it-is and the model. Immanence means, on the contrary, the putting into practice of the ideal model here and now. Saint-Simon oscillates, thus, between utopia and realization of utopia. The greatest change occurs with the Saint-Simonians who give up the ambiguity, the oscillation between transcendence

and immanence, and affirm the latter. It is interesting to analyze the ways in which utopia is transformed into a political program, as well as the philosophical and practical implications of this transformation.

However, at the beginning of the chapter, I make references to other utopian socialists, too. I already referred to Babeuf, and I will also bring into our discussion Fourier. Although their utopias are quite different from those of Saint-Simon and of the Saint-Simonians, they all, nevertheless, share some general lines: such as the understanding of freedom as man's unlimited manifestation in the world, the interest for the fate of "*la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*", and the propaganda used in order to win over the people. These forms of utopia mentioned above are directly or indirectly criticized by Leroux and Dostoevsky. I will compare Saint-Simonian thought with that of the Grand Inquisitor because in this way I can also compare Leroux's and Dostoevsky's criticisms of the socialist utopia that the former share. It is worth noting that Ivan Karamazov, the author of the legend of "The Grand Inquisitor", starts from a profound dissatisfaction with the world-as-it-is and is aware of the duality between good and evil. Nevertheless, through the voice of his character, the Grand Inquisitor, he decides to end injustice and to reconcile the world with itself here and now, even though he is aware that the world-as-it-is is irreconcilable. There is, thus, a similarity of structure between the Saint-Simonian utopia and that of the Grand Inquisitor. The structure of their utopia could be characterized in a word by monologism, that is, the tendency to affirm the immobile One and to annul any divagation from it.

This chapter is divided into ten sections. In section 2.1., I present the general background of socialism. Section 2.2.will continue the analysis begun in the first chapter, on how bourgeois self-sufficiency and self-satisfaction turn into nihilism and communism. Nihilism,

for Dostoevsky, consists in the manifestation of the will-to-power which affirms itself over others and imposes on them a certain social order. I will analyze here the way Dostoevsky describes, in *The Possessed*, the process by which Russian bourgeois estheticism is transformed into a brutal materialism by the generation of the nihilists. The latter cannot find any coherent limitation of the bourgeois idea of freedom and exercise unlimited freedom. The apparent paradox is that, as one character from *The Possessed* notes, from unlimited freedom they arrive at unlimited tyranny. In this sense, the Russian nihilists put forward a political program by which they intend to divide society between a nihilist elite and the majority of people who will live the only life they are capable of, according to the nihilists: that of "primeval innocence". In section 2.3., I will bring into discussion Leroux's critique of Charles Fourier, in order to point out its similarity with Dostoevsky's critique presented in the previous section. I believe it is worth making such a comparison because the nihilists from *The Possessed* often refer to Fourier, admiring his fantastic solutions and, at the same time, arguing that their solutions are more realistic and daring than his. In the second place, it is worth making this comparison because Fourier starts, too, from unlimited freedom, but unlike the Russian nihilists, he does not draw the conclusion of its manifestation. It is Leroux, instead, who does this and sustains that Fourier arrives at unlimited tyranny. I believe that the understanding of Dostoevsky's and Leroux's criticism of the relation between unlimited freedom and unlimited tyranny is important for the comprehension of their own conceptions of freedom, equality and unity.

Because I analyze in this chapter the utopian socialism of Saint-Simon, of the Saint-Simonians, and of the Grand Inquisitor, sections 2.4. and 2.5. deal with utopia. Section 2.4.includes an introduction to utopia, while 2.5. analyzes how utopia is transformed into

political program in the 19th century. Here I concentrate on the fact that utopia enters the realm of immanence, through the attempt of the identification of society with itself. It is interesting to note that, once utopia – "no-place-land" – is put into practice, it loses its vitality and slowly disappears. Section 2.6.analyzes Saint-Simon's utopian socialism, and section 2.7., the Saint-Simonian utopia. One fundamental characteristic, among others, shared by Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians is their belief in the incompatibility between freedom, understood as anarchy, and unity, grounded on hierarchy and authority. This same characteristic is shared by Dostoevsky's character, the Grand Inquisitor, whose political project I will analyze in section 2.8. Although the Saint-Simonians and the Grand Inquisitor are critical of the bourgeois order, Leroux and Dostoevsky prove that the former are the product of this order, through their self-sufficiency. Because they believe themselves self-sufficient, they champion the division of society between an elite, that possesses the knowledge and the truth, and the rest of society that does not. It is self-sufficiency which gives birth to monologism and to pity which annul otherness, because self-sufficiency cannot be attentive to the desires and the feelings of the other.

At the end of this chapter, I will begin to discuss the utopias of Dostoevsky and of Leroux. I will continue this discussion in the third chapter, where I will analyze the central concepts of the two authors' utopias, that is, humanity, love (*agape*), and friendship (*philia*). Here I analyze the forms of their utopias in order to point out their criticisms of Saint-Simonism and of the Grand Inquisitor, on the one hand, and to underline the general differences between their utopias and those of the latter. Sections 2.9.and 2.10. present the general lines of Dostoevsky's and Leroux's utopias. Their fundamental common feature is dialogism, which affirms the fact that humanity is defined first and foremost by the desire to

look for the Good, but that the quest for the Good is authentic as long as it is the collective work of a community.

In what concerns Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians, I will concentrate on three works of Saint-Simon: *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporains*, *De la réorganisation de la société européenne*, and *Le Nouveau Christianisme*, because I believe these best represent his understanding of the human community. I will also refer to his *Catéchisme des industriels*. In the presentation of Saint-Simonian thought and utopia, I will use in particular George Weill's book, *L'école saint-simonienne. Son histoire, son influence jusqu'à nos jours*, published in 1896, and Georg Iggers' book, *The Cult of Authority. The Political Philosophy of the Saint-Simonians*, published in 1970. I will also make reference to the writings of Prosper Enfantin, *Religion saint-simonienne. Économie politique et politique. Articles extraits du Globe*, a series of articles written in the early 1830s, and *Œuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin* – only the second volume out of forty-seven – published between 1865 and 1878.

In what concerns Leroux, I will use, in this chapter, his article "De l'individualisme et du socialisme", published in *Revue sociale* in 1845, themes of which appear in Leroux's earlier article, "De la philosophie et du christianisme", of 1832. I will use this article in particular because here Leroux criticizes the Saint-Simonian School. I will also use his article "Bentham", published in 1836 in the second volume of *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, founded by Leroux in cooperation with his friend, Jean Reynaud, also a former Saint-Simonian. The article is relevant because here Leroux explains Saint-Simon's debt to Bentham and points to the contradictions in Saint-Simon's thought which, according to him, were deepened by the Saint-Simonians. In explaining Leroux's understanding of utopia, I will discuss fragments

from two of his works which I used in the first chapter, *De l'égalité* and "De la philosophie et du christianisme". I will bring into discussion *De la doctrine de la perfectibilité* and his most important work, *De l'Humanité*, but I intend to analyze the latter in greater detail in the next chapter, where, as mentioned, I will explain more comprehensively Leroux's utopia by analyzing the concepts of humanity, *agape*, and *philia*. Another work of Leroux to which I will make reference here is *Lettre au Docteur Deville*, of 1858, presented at the end of Miguel Abensour's book *Le procès des maîtres rêveurs*, where Leroux situates himself in relation to the first three utopians, Saint-Simon, Robert Owen and Fourier.

I will analyze here Dostoevsky's novels *The Possessed* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, relevant for this chapter. I will also make some references to the *Diary of a Writer*, especially to "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" present here, important for Dostoevsky's utopia.I will concentrate, in the following section, on a part of Dostoevsky's novel, *The Possessed*, and, later in this chapter, I will focus onthe legend of "The Grand Inquisitor" from *The Brothers Karamazov*. The legend shares similarities with what Dostoevsky calls Shigalovism, in *The Possessed*. Towards the end of the chapter, I will also analyze a fragment from *The Possessed*, which presents Stavrogin's dream, and which I believe is important for understanding Dostoevsky's overall vision of a particular kind of utopia. I will use parts of Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer* and of *The Brothers Karamazov* with the purpose of presenting Dostoevsky's answer to the Grand Inquisitor. I will end the part on Dostoevsky with the story called "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" that expresses part of Dostoevsky's own understanding of utopia.

2.2. Dostoevsky's critique of socialism: "Shigalovism"

I argued in the previous chapter that Dostoevsky's novel, *The Possessed*, shows the filiation between the liberal generation of Westernizers of the '40s, represented by Stepan Trofimovich, and the radical generation of the '60s, represented by Pyotr Verkhovensky, Stavrogin, Kirilov etc. Dostoevsky was well equipped to depict the two generations impartially because he shared (partially, of course) "both the antipathy of the 'sons' for the pampered, pretentious, self-indulgent Westerners of the 1840s and the aversion of the 'fathers' for the provocatively insulting vulgarity and materialistic coarseness of their Nihilist offspring of the 1860s".[315]The bourgeois principle of self-indulgent freedom has been taken by the generation of the '60s to mean absolute freedom, because the "sons" could not find in the theories of the "fathers" a coherent limitation to freedom and will-to-power. An exponent of freedom thus understood is Kirilov, still an attractive, Byronic figure. But Dostoevsky shows us that the most important offspring of the generation of the '40s is Pyotr Verkhovensky. Stepan Trofimovich is a Russian bourgeois thinker, who has adopted Romantic esthetic ideals. He is materially supported by the rich noblewoman, Varvara Petrovna, Stavrogin's mother, and spends most of his time in lofty discussions about estheticism and about Russia's material and cultural backwardness in relation to Europe. Varvara Petrovna is a woman with progressive ideas and a strong character. It is interesting to note how Dostoevsky shows the uprooting of these characters from the Russian people: they are both unable (Stepan in particular) to express themselves only in Russian, but always

[315] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Miraculous Years*,p.455.

mix it with French. On the other hand, the idealistic bourgeois, Stepan Trofimovich, lives a life of self-indulgency: he enjoys playing cards in high society and he even sold once his servant, Fedka, after such a game which he had lost. As a consequence, the servant eventually became "Fedka the convict" who lived on the streets and committed crimes in order to survive. I argued in the first chapter that Stepan had sent his son, Pyotr Verkhovensky, whom he looked upon as "*un petit idiot*", to be raised in some remote part of Russia, not wishing to take care of his upbringing. At the same time, Stepan inculcated Stavrogin and his mother, Varvara Petrovna, with Romantic estheticism and with Rousseauian ideals of compassion. But Stavrogin and Pyotr Verkhovensky, the Russian nihilists of the 1860s, noted the contradiction between the lofty ideals of Stepan Trofimovich, who represented the generation of the 1840s (the generation of the "fathers"), and his style of living. The generation of the 1860s (the generation of the "sons") deduced from the philosophical and moral incoherence of the bourgeois of the 1840s the unlimited right of self-affirmation, like Kirilov did. But self-sufficiency and the right of self-affirmation (which were originally bourgeois tenets) led the nihilists of the 1860s on the path towards death.

The beginning of *The Possessed* is noteworthy because of its symbolic meaning for the entire book. The novel begins with a "presumably inflammatory prose poem",[316] written by Stepan Trofimovich in the 1830s, "in the first flush of youth". It is worth quoting the last part of the poem:

> Then an indescribably handsome youth suddenly rides in on a black steed, followed by a huge number of all the peoples of the world. The youth represents death, and all the peoples are longing for it. And finally, in the very last scene, the Tower of Babel suddenly appears, and some athletes are busy bringing it to completion, with a song of fresh hope, and when they reach the very top, the lord of

[316]Ibidem, p.476.

> – let's say it's Olympus – runs off in comical fashion, and mankind, which has grasped the situation, occupies his place, and immediately begins a new life, with a new and deeper understanding of things.[317]

The poem's symbolism comes from the fact that it announces the major theme of the book and, as Joseph Frank says, "foreshadows the appearance of Stavrogin" who is, too, "an indescribably handsome youth" representing death and followed not by "the peoples of the world", but by a number of youth whom he inspires like a god. He, too, attempts to dethrone not the comic appearance of "the lord of Olympus" but the Christian God, "just as Death in the poem aspires to be the source of Life".[318] The poem is, thus, the symbol of falsity and announces Stavrogin, the one whom Pyotr Verkhovensky intends to present to the people as a new god, a fake god who – we should not forget – has his intellectual roots in the teachings of Stepan Trofimovich who had been Stavrogin's tutor. Having found no coherent limitation to morality, Stavrogin made his rule of life to live "beyond good and evil".

Being like God is the great temptation of mankind, which hides behind every act of affirmation of the self. Stavrogin, one of the most – maybe the most – strong-willed characters of Dostoevsky's literary world, is also haunted by this temptation and is eventually destroyed by his own power because, unlike God, he is incapable of emanating or receiving love. He confesses to Darya Pavlovna (a girl raised by his mother, and Shatov's sister) that he "tried [his] strength everywhere" and discovered himself "still capable […] of desiring to do something good", but also capable, at the same extent, to "desire evil and feel pleasure from that".[319] Stavrogin's mode of situating himself "beyond good and evil" makes Shatov wonder how he could have pronounced the discourse – in which Shatov fervently believed – about the Russian people as "the only 'god-bearing' people on earth, destined to

[317]Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, pp.3-4.
[318] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Miraculous Years*, p.476.
[319]Feodor Dostoesvky, *The Possessed*, p.614.

regenerate and save the world in the name of a new God".[320] Shatov also wonders how he could have uttered once that "if it were mathematically proved to [him] that the truth excludes Christ, [he]'d prefer to stick to Christ rather than to the truth",[321] while at the same time he was capable to join the terrorist group of Pyotr Verkhovensky, whose aim was to spread destruction and death. Stavrogin's falsity causes him both pleasure and pain because falsity comes from his inner division which, in its turn, is engendered by the attempt to live "beyond good and evil", that is, by "arbitrary freedom". And Dostoevsky shows, through the characters of Raskolnikov, Kirilov, Stavrogin, or Ivan Karamazov, that "this unlimited freedom" ruins man, but "its pain and disaster are dear to him".[322] Stavrogin tells Shatov: "I wasn't lying when I spoke *as though* I had faith"[323], and also that, although he does not believe in Pyotr Verkhovensky's group, he "happened to help them" to organize the society and draw the plan "simply by accident as a man of leisure".[324]

Stavrogin's dual inner life fascinates both Shatov and Pyotr Verkhovensky. The latter sees in Stavrogin an idol and exclaims frenetically: "Stavrogin, you are beautiful!", "I invented you abroad", "You are my idol".[325] Joseph Frank insists that Dostoevsky stresses the artificiality of Stavrogin which transpires even from his strange physical aspect and reveals the beauty of a mask: "… the red in his cheeks was too bright and clear, his teeth were like pearls and his lips like coral – one would have thought the very acme of beauty, yet at the same time somehow repellant. It was said that his face suggested a mask".[326]

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[320]Ibidem, p.223.
[321]Ibidem, p.225.
[322] Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, p.51.
[323] Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, p.225 (italics added).
[324]Ibidem, p.219.
[325]Ibidem, pp.380-381.
[326]Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, p.35.

Pyotr Verkhovensky intuited the artificiality of Stavrogin, which has inspired him to use his idol as "the false pretender to the throne", in order to stimulate the people's passions. What Verkhovensky wants to do is to use, in the person of Stavrogin, "the magic of that phrase 'he [Ivan the Tsarevitch] is in hiding' ": "There's going to be such an upset as the world has never seen before… Russia will be overwhelmed with darkness […] Well, then, we shall bring forward… whom? […] Ivan the Tsarevitch. You!"[327]

Historically, the idea of the true Tsar who "is in hiding" and who will appear to lift the burden and the injustice from the people was deeply rooted in the Russian people. The particular historical conditions of Russia, the long period of the peasantry's serfdom, its continual oppression by the nobility rising on its account, engendered in the peasantry hopes directed toward a legendary figure of a just Tsar situated "above the feudal pyramid".[328] On this background, there emerged among the Russian folk, the phenomenon of imposture. When the existing Tsar would not respond to the hopes of the people, the latter would succumb to the belief in the legend that a murdered Tsar or inheritor to the throne was the true Tsar, who had been supposed to liberate the people and to incarnate the people's hopes (this was, in the popular mentality, the reason for which the inheritor to the throne had been murdered, in the first place). The legend continued that the Tsar or inheritor had not, in reality, been murdered, but had managed to escape, and would return, when the moment was fit, to liberate his people. As Vibert says, citing Kirill Tchistov, according to the popular legend, those who would fight for him against the existing, false, Tsar, would be the first to

[327] Ibidem, pp.382-383.

[328] Kirill V. Tchistov, "L'utopie sociale en Russie (à travers les légendes populaires et l'expérience contemporaine", *Ethnologie française*, XXVI, no.4, 1996, 630, in Stéphane Vibert, "*Pravda* : Vérité et Justice", p.263.

be recompensed by the true Tsar.[329] As such, between the 17th and the 19th centuries, there emerged a great number of such false pretenders to the throne, who would legitimate themselves in front of the people as the "Tsar in hiding" – with whom the people identified itself ("*le tsar juste et la société ne font qu'un*"[330]) – and would incite the people to rebellion against the existing Tsar. One of the most known cases is that of "the renegade monk Gregory Otrepeyev, who led the uprising against Boris Godunov in the early seventeenth century", and who "claimed to be the 'true' Tsar and the murdered son of Ivan the Terrible".[331] In 1861, during the peasant unrest, following the publication of the "manifesto of liberation", Anton Petrov, the leader of the unrest spread the news among the peasants throughout the empire that this manifesto was false and that "the Tsar would ultimately send the 'true' manifesto, granting the peasants much more land, by means of 'a young boy of seventeen with a gold medal on his right shoulder and a silver medal on his left'."[332] The importance of this kind of legends comes from the fact that they reveal the Russian people between the 17th and the 19th centuries not as a submissive and passive people, but as a people with an extraordinary revolutionary potential, visible, as Tchistov writes, in "*une attitude parfaitement critique, la désillusion sur l'équité du tsar régnant, [le] rêve en un dirigeant tout à fait différent, qui libérerait les paysans*".[333]

The Russian nobles and bourgeois of the 1840s, or the generation of the "fathers" whom Stepan Trofimovich represented, were mocking the mythic hopes of justice which the people had put in the "tsar in hiding" as mere superstition and, consequently, perceived the people

[329]Ibidem, pp.263-264.
[330] Stéphane Vibert, "*Pravda*: Vérité et Justice", p.266.
[331] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Mircaulous Years*, p.451.
[332] Ibidem.
[333] K.V. Tchistov, "L'utopie sociale en Russie", 631-632, in Stéphane Vibert, "*Pravda*: Vérité et Justice", p.265.

as a mass incapable of emancipation, good only for being exploited. By contrast, the "sons", of the 1860s, saw in the people's mythic hopes and superstitious "faith in a just and merciful Tsar" a revolutionary potential which had to be exploited for the purposes of the communist revolution. In their eyes, it was not only the people, left by themselves, who were incapable of emancipation, but also the "fathers" who mocked the people, and who falsely believed themselves to be emancipated in relation to the people. The "fathers", in the eyes of the nihilist generation of the 1860s, failed to comprehend that the communist revolution was the only true means of society's emancipation. On the contrary, the "alliance" between the nihilists and the people could put into practice the revolution. Dostoevsky is careful to delineate Verkhovensky's cause from nineteenth-century socialism by making Pyotr Verkhovensky declare "I am a scoundrel, of course, and not a socialist. […] What can Socialism do? it's destroyed the old forces but hasn't brought in any new".[334] But Dostoevsky reveals that the ultimate reality of the socialism of a Fourier or a Babeuf is the nihilist who realizes that, in order to arrive, at some point in the future, to an egalitarian society, it is necessary first to "proclaim destruction". Pyotr Verkhovensky implies that the French socialists are utopian and will remain dreamers, while the country of true socialism or rather communism is Russia because the Russian nihilists, like him, understand that the essence of communism and the means of its accomplishment, altogether, consist in vileness.

Before being able to exploit this popular force, germinal in the legend of "the Tsar in hiding", in order to make the people itself put into practice destruction, in the name of the revolution, Verkhovensky believes that all the ideals of virtue have to be destroyed among the people, so that the fantastic legend could not be counterbalanced by any traditional

[334] Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, pp.381,383.

religious reality: "one or two generations of vice are essential now; monstrous, abject vice by which a man is transformed into a loathsome, cruel, egoistic reptile".[335]

But before exploiting the people's vices, Pyotr Verkhovensky believes that his group should first subvert the government so that it could be able to "organize destruction". Verkhovensky enters the world of Yulia Mikhailovna, the wife of von Lembke, the governor of the province where the action is taking place. Von Lembke is a weak man, with literary ambitions and esthetic ideals, who enjoys to be flattered. Yulia Mikhailovna is, too, part of the generation of the '40s. Like Varvara Petrovna, she is eager to keep pace with progressive ideas. As such, she organizes in her home literary circles where she invites both members of her own generation, like Stepan Trofimovich – whose literary talent has once been applauded by society, but whose ideas are now perceived as outmoded – and young and innovative people, like Pyotr Verkhovensky. She is confident in her intellectual capacities to keep the young generation of the '60s away from the practical revolutionary ideas. Pyotr Verkhovensky easily wins Yulia Mikhailovna's favors and uses her influence over her husband and in society in order to provoke agitation among the elite. Frank writes that Dostoevsky used historical evidence in this case. According to Nechayev's *Catechism of a Revolutionist*, "revolutionaries […] should conspire with liberals 'on the basis of their own program pretending to follow them blindly' but actually compromising them so that they can be 'used to provoke disturbances in the State'."[336] In the novel, Pyotr Verkhovensky visits Yulia Mikhailovna regularly, participates to her parties, giving her the impression that he admires her fantastic dreams "to enter on a brilliant career, to influence the young 'by kindness', and to restrain them from extremes". At the same time, he easily manages to

[335]Ibidem, 382.

[336] Michael Confino, *Daughter of a Revolutionary: Natalie Herzen and the Bakunin-Nechayev Circle*, 228, in Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Miraculous Years*, p.446.

substitute to the ideas of the generation of the '40s – which venerates Shakespeare and Raphael as "the real" and "the highest fruit of humanity" – the ideas that "boots" and "petroleum" are far more important.[337] At a party organized by Yulia Mikhailovna – supposed to be a party of the high society – Pyotr Verkhovensky intentionally brings mostly vulgar people, who are part of the secret communist organizations he founded, to listen to the talks about the esthetic romantic ideals of the men of letters of the '40s. In order to destroy the esthetical values of the '40s and to replace them with materialistic values, Pyotr Verkhovensky confronts Stepan Trofimovich, who makes an exalted speech about literature, with the reality of brutal exploitation which Stepan himself perpetrates. By this, Pyotr intends to disclose that the bourgeois esthetics is grounded on the oppression of other categories. He wants to reveal culture and bourgeois esthetics as barbarism and to prove that, by the relation between beauty and oppression which it presupposes, bourgeois esthetics ultimately justifies brutal materialism. After his exalted speech, Stepan Trofimovich is called by the "agitators" to account for having sold "Fedka the convict" after a gambling, and he finds no answer for his act: "if you had not sold him as a recruit fifteen years ago to pay a gambling debt, […], tell me, would he have got into prison? Would he have cut men's throats now, in his struggle for existence? What do you say, Mr. Aesthete?"[338] Pyotr Verkhovensky's role as "*agent provocateur*" bore fruit, for he succeeded to turn Yulia Mikhailovna's "innocent liberal *fête*" into "a riotous manifestation of protest against the authorities".[339]

Pyotr's ideas penetrate even the mind of Varvara Petrovna, Stavrogin's mother and Stepan Trofimovich's benefactress, who had been a fervent admirer of and has guided all her

[337]Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, p.439.
[338]Ibidem, pp.440-441.
[339] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Miraculous Years*, p.446.

life according to Stepan's ideas. She reproaches Stepan for having hidden from her the practical and "modern" ideas: "And what used you to say to me about charity? Yet the enjoyment derived from charity is a haughty and immoral enjoyment".[340] Through the mouth of Varvara Petrovna, the nihilists put to trial art and esthetical ideals which, according to them, are grounded on the exploitation of the poor. At the same time, they want to demystify also the virtues of the nobility and of the bourgeoisie of the '40s, such as charity or compassion. If love of beauty is immoral, compassion towards the lowly is, on the one hand, inefficient, and, on the other hand, and most importantly, reveals a pervert mechanism. Compassion for the lowly hides self-satisfaction; it aggrandizes the self and humiliates the receiver. Moreover, Verkhovensky believes that charity has been used by the exploiting classes as a substitute for social problems, in order to maintain the division between the rich and the poor. From his point of view, it is exactly inequality that makes charity possible. This is why, by establishing equality, the nihilists believe, charity will not find its place in society any longer. Varvara Petrovna tells Stepan Trofimovich: "Charity corrupts giver and taker alike; and, what's more, does not attain its object, as it only increases poverty. […] Charity ought to be forbidden by law, even in the present state of society. In the new regime, there will be no poor at all".[341]

In Pyotr Verkhovensky's mind, after his group will have overthrown the government, encouraged vice among the people and prepared them for the revolution by exploiting their myths, a new system will be established, which could be called Shigalovism. Dostoevsky maintains in his *Diary*, in *The Possessed*, and in *Brothers Karamazov*, that socialism raises the "religious question", and it is more peculiarly Russian socialism which does this, by

[340]Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, p.308.
[341]Ibidem, p.308.

accepting "no half-way compromise". When he describes Alyosha Karamazov, Dostoevsky points to the fact that his character could be "either/or": either a Christian or a socialist (which is in fact a characteristic of Dostoevsky himself). After some serious thought, Alyosha was "struck by the conviction that God and immortality existed" and decided to live for them. And, had he reached the opposite conclusion, that they did not exist, says the chronicler, "he would have immediately become an atheist and a socialist (for socialism is not only a problem of labour, […] but is in the first instance a problem […] of the contemporary embodiment of atheism, the problem of the Tower of Babel, constructed expressly without God, not for the attainment of heaven from earth, but for the abasement of heaven to earth)".[342] As Berdyaev argues, in Russia, revolutionary socialism has been regarded from the start as the "definitive and absolute" "solution of the destinies of mankind",[343] and Dostoevsky perfectly depicts this through Shigalovism.

Dostoevsky showed, through the characters Raskolnikov and Kirilov, that autonomous reason hid autonomous will or self-will. Thus, Raskolnikov, Kirilov, Stavrogin and Pyotr Verkhovensky, all utter "I will, therefore I am". If man cannot confirm his own existence by his faith in immortality and in God, and by his rootedness in *sobornost*, he feels the need to confirm his existence through an act of will, which is transformed into an unlimited act, like all these characters bring proof. Shigalov, an individual who takes most seriously Verkhovesnky's secret society and is concerned with the future "social organization", is puzzled by the seemingly incoherent conclusion of his system which appeared as perfectly logical: "Starting from unlimited freedom, I arrive at unlimited despotism".[344] Shigalov's

[342] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (*B.K.*), translated by David McDuff, Penguin Books, London, 2003, p.40. From now I will use, in the footnotes, the abbreviation *B.K.* for *The Brothers Karamazov*.
[343] Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, p.138.
[344] Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, p.365.

ideas are recurrent in Dostoevsky's works, and take different forms as they are embodied by different characters, who, like Shigalov, believe themselves to be lovers of mankind. Such are Raskolnikov and the Grand Inquisitor, and what unites them is the belief that the division of mankind into two categories, a limited number of men of genius and the great majority of people, will bring happiness to the latter. Shigalov's solution to the problems of humanity is then that "one-tenth enjoys absolute liberty and unbounded power over the other nine-tenths",[345] while the nine-tenths will "give up all individuality", only to gain it back in the form of a "primeval innocence", identified with a mythic, Eden-like unity, "everyone belonging to all and all to everyone".[346]

As in Babeuf's system, here unity presupposes material equality, which is understood also as a minimum, basic level of knowledge among the vast majority. Since Shigalov understands freedom, like Babeuf, as self-will, Pyotr Verkhovensky, who perfectly understands Shigalov, explains that "the thirst for culture" belongs to the great intellects who "are not wanted" because great capacity of reasoning involves great capacity of will, or, in other words, the affirmation of power.[347] Understood in this manner, as two opposite realities – affirmation of will/power and the giving up of all individuality – freedom and equality cannot coexist in the system of Shigalov and of Pyotr Verkhovensky. And moreover, as the latter emphasizes, neither of them could ever be possible "without despotism". In this understanding, as already mentioned in the first chapter, one's manifestation of freedom and desire often excludes another's. Desire involves for

[345]Ibidem, p.366.
[346]Ibidem, p.379.
[347] "The great intellects", reasons Verkhovensky, "have always seized power and been despots", doing "more harm than good". Therefore, "they will be banished or put to death. Cicero will have his tongue cut out, Copernicus will have his eyes put out, Shakespeare will be stoned – that's Shigalovism. Slaves are bound to be equal" (Ibidem).

Verkhovensky, like for Stavrogin, the manifestation of arbitrary freedom which, as mentioned, ruins not only others, but also oneself, while, at the same time, the man possessed by this desire takes pleasure in his disaster. Desire thus understood involves suffering and the great majority is incapable of suffering, argues Verkhovensky, because only the Overman is capable of standing and of taking pleasure in his own disaster. As such, complete equality is necessary and it means that the majority needs to arrive at the point of having no desires and, thus, no vices, he concludes. But Pyotr reasons that, in order to get the majority to this point, it is necessary first to stimulate its basest passions, draining, in this way, the majority of all desires, and making it desire the only thing it is capable of, that is, "primeval innocence". The paradox is that it is Stavrogin himself – as the most strong-willed character, he is the image of the Overman – who gets first to the state of "no desire", as he was writing to Darya Pavlovna in the paragraph that I quoted at the beginning of this section. This state, which was the manifestation of Stavrogin's absolute freedom or his desire to confirm and affirm his own existence, ended with the affirmation of Death, through Stavrogin's suicide. The common sense reaction of common people (like students, belonging neither to the peasantry nor to the gentry) – who are far below the level of education of Stavrogin and even of Pyotr Verkhovensky and who regularly participate at the meetings organized by Verkhovensky because they find the ideal of equality appealing – is defensive as it points out that common sense can easily identify in the Shigalovist "complete equality" a strongly hierarchical system that conceals the nihilist contempt for mankind and sheer will to power.[348] Yet, common people's ignorance leads to the point that, while they are shocked when faced with Shigalov's theory, they are at ease with belonging to secret societies which keep them united through a system of mutual spying.

[348]Ibidem, p.367.

Berdyaev summarizes perfectly the whole idea of *The Possessed*: "Revolution is not conditioned by outward causes and circumstances but is determined interiorly: it is an indication of a disastrous alteration of man's original relationship with God, with the world and with his fellows".[349] The alteration of man's relations with his fellows occurs, in Dostoevsky's opinion, when organic unity is substituted with the artificial unity of the sect, maintained by a charismatic and authoritarian character. The unity of the sect is grounded on suspicion; its members, transformed into a mass, are kept together by their complicity to and even their fascination with crime. The idea itself that freedom, understood as affirmation of the self, and equality, understood as giving up totally one's individuality, are incompatible presupposes a model of society that is the antipode of *sobornost*, which is grounded on love and, thus, reconciles freedom and equality. This is the founding idea of the revolutionary sect. Dostoevsky points out that the alteration of man's relation with his fellows has its roots in the alteration of his relation with God, that is, the former occurs when man makes himself the man-god. In this case, the world becomes, for man, the space for the exercise of his will-to-power which leads to the destruction of desire and to suicide, as in the case of Stavrogin or of Kirilov.[350] Man is no longer in a fraternal relation with his fellows whom he perceives as slaves and imposes himself on them – this is exactly the case of the Grand Inquisitor, as it will be seen. On the other hand, when the members of the sect – the slaves, from the perspective of the one who exercises the will-to-power – alter their relation with God, they become idolaters.[351]

[349] Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, p.136.

[350] If Stavrogin tries to reduce to silence his conscience and, consequently, reaches the point where he feels nothing, and commits suicide because life becomes arid, Kirilov tries to overcome his fear of death by committing suicide.

[351] Dostoevsky mentions that, at one meeting, organized by Verkhovensky, Stavrogin is looked upon as an idol. For instance, a girl-student continually "[stares] at Stavrogin with her eyes almost jumping out of her head", waiting for his approval (Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, p.359).

2.3. Leroux's critique of Fourier's socialism

I wish now to put forward the general lines of Leroux's critique of Fourier's socialism. With Fourier we enter the subject of utopia, for he belongs to what Leroux has defined as "utopian socialism". I will concentrate, in this chapter, on Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians, but I want to propose first a comparison between Leroux's refutation of Fourier and Dostoevsky's critique of the Russian nihilists because I believe that the similarity between their critiques is worth emphasizing. Both Leroux and Dostoevsky consider the conception of absolute freedom – sustained equally by Fourier and the Russian nihilists – as a logical development of the bourgeois understanding of freedom. It can be noted that the Russian nihilists from *The Possessed* make numerous references to Cabet and Fourier, claiming that the French socialists have opened the path towards communism, and admiring their despotic and fantastic solutions. But they nevertheless argue that their own projects overcome those of French socialists through their realism, which consists in the full awareness that communism can be realized only through revolution and that, by starting from absolute freedom, communism arrives at absolute tyranny.[352] If Fourier establishes the grounds for a tyranny on the small level of the phalanstery, Dostoevsky anticipates the laying of the foundations, in Russia, of a large tyrannical organization, on the national level. Dostoevsky's critique of Fourier is, thus, implicit in his critique of the Russian nihilists.

[352] After Shigalov's presentation of his system, one member of the organization founded by Verkhovensky, said: "Mr. Shigalov is somewhat fanatical in his love for humanity, but remember that Fourier, still more Cabet and even Proudhon himself, advocated a number of the most despotic and fantastic measures. Mr. Shigalov is perhaps more sober in his suggestions than they are. […] He is perhaps less far from realism than anyone and his earthly paradise is almost the real one …" (Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, pp.367-368). In a bizarre discussion with Stavrogin, Pyotr Verkhovensky exclaims that "Shigalov is a man of genius […] like Fourier, but bolder than Fourier, stronger. […] He's discovered 'equality'!" (Ibidem, p.378).

Leroux's reaction against Fourier bears similarities with Dostoevsky's critique of the nihilists: Fourier attempts to accomplish socialism through the absolute freedom of passions. Unlike the Russian nihilists, Fourier is not aware of the outcome of his project, but Leroux draws attention that the exercise of absolute freedom eventually ends in the exercise of absolute tyranny. As Le Bras-Chopard emphasizes, according to Leroux, despotism is undoubtedly grounded on vice.[353] The man who indulges in vice, believes Leroux, is possessed by it, and, consequently he relates to the world not with love but with the desire to take possession of it.

Fourier's work starts from a principle which will be important for a part of the nineteenth-century utopian thought, that is, attraction. Fourier names his principle "*attraction passionnée*", which he opposes to dry reason, and the starting point of his theory of attraction is Newton. He draws the conclusion that human beings are bound to obey in social relations the same law of gravitation as celestial bodies.[354] Of course, Fourier's system of thought is much broader; it includes a cosmogony, an analysis of the social organization and an eschatology;[355] but I will only briefly mention here some points of his theory of "*attraction passionnée*", which were criticized by Leroux and which I consider relevant for this comparison. Fourier argued that the "*attraction passionnée*" could be calculated with mathematical precision.[356] He was convinced that he was the receptacle of the final revelation of truth, like many other prophets of the nineteenth century, and believed that this final truth revealed on the social level "*le moyen d'une prochaine régénération de l'espèce*

[353] Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.58.
[354] Sarane Alexandrian, *Le Socialisme Romantique*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1979, p.81.
[355] Ibidem, p.88.
[356] Fourier explains: "*L'attraction passionnée est fixe comme la physique; s'il y a sept couleurs dans le rayon, il y a sept passions dans l'âme. S'il y a quatre courbes dans le cône, il y a quatre groupes d'attraction passionnée dont les propriétés sont les mêmes que celles des sections coniques. Rien ne peut varier dans ma théorie*" (Charles Fourier, in Ibidem, p.89, reference not given).

humaine".[357] In Fourier, writes Martin Buber, real human problems "become artificial problems in the life of instinctive robots – artificial problems which all allow of the same solution because they all process from the same mechanistic set-up".[358]

According to Fourier, evil is brought into society especially by the attempt of the moralist to suppress human passions and to impose instead his "*triste et aveugle vertu*".[359] It is worth noting that, when Fourier speaks of virtue, he refers especially to Republican virtue, as it was conceived by Louis-Antoine de Saint-Just, among others. The latter's aim was to impose virtue on people, asking of them to live a frugal life where egoism would not find its place, so that the French Republic would be formed of just citizens and would be grounded on the formal institution of brotherhood. During the Reign of Terror, the Republic was grounded on the principle – which made the object of Dostoevsky's fervent criticism – "*la fraternité ou la mort*". Fourier, like Saint-Simon, was traumatized by the memory of the Terror – this is why Saint-Simon insisted that his idea of society should follow a smooth path and should by no means be imposed through a violent revolution, while Fourier sought ways by which to fashion a harmonious unitary social body, grounded on a pleasant principle rather than on a principle of virtue violently imposed. Fourier does not make a clear distinction between Christian virtue and the French Republican virtue, and seems to sustain that the latter represents the peak of virtue in general. This is the main reason for which he insists on the substitution of virtue, "*triste et aveugle*", with the "*attraction passionnée*".

[357] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.243.
[358] Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, translated by R.F.C. Hull, Beacon Press, Boston, 1958, p.11.
[359] Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.259.

Fourier's alternative to virtue is, thus, the pleasant, the result of the manifestation of arbitrary freedom that, in his view, will transform vices into virtues, as long as passions are exercised freely, "*sans fausse honte*".[360] Fourier believes that his theory of "*attraction passionnée*" proves that society can become perfect not despite but because "*les individus sont orgueilleux, luxurieux, ambitieux, gourmands, envieux, coléreux, infidèles, cupides etc.*"[361] An "invisible hand" arranges things in such a way that passions enter the path of natural harmony with one another. Society is in a perpetual movement which is the outcome of the "*attraction passionnée*" and which manifests itself through the fact that people's own passions lead them towards certain pleasures and certain actions and towards other people who cherish pleasures that are in a natural harmony with the passions of the former. According to Fourier, as long as people are not aware that "*les passions sont les richesses naturelles de l'homme*"[362] and make efforts to suppress their passions, society will remain in the state of imperfection. Passions liberated naturally and harmoniously combined will have the following outcome: "*plus d'amant jaloux, la liberté de l'amour devant guérir les hommes des fureurs monogamiques; plus d'homme paresseux, puisque chacun trouvera à s'occuper ou à bricoler, en fonction de sa nonchalance et de son instabilité*".[363] Education of children is by no means compulsory in Fourier's society because it is adults, in fact, that have to learn from children how not to suppress their passions; therefore, children need to be allowed all caprices. In Fourier's society, "*est maître qui veut; qui veut, élève*".[364] It is interesting to note that not only Fourier's interest in politics is absent, but the political itself, as the mediator of social relations, does not find any place in his theory. Social relations are

[360]Ibidem.
[361]Sarane Alexandrian, *Le Socialisme Romantique*, p.97.
[362]Ibidem.
[363] Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.261.
[364]Ibidem, p.262.

governed by the "invisible hand" that regulates harmoniously all needs and desires. His society is defined as one of abundance and of luxury, having a triple goal: "*tirer le maximum de ressources du sol, tirer le maximum de rendement du travail, tirer le maximum de plaisirs de la vie*".[365]

But, as Jacques Viard sustains, Fourier shared Malthus' ideas concerning the regulation of population. The disappearance of family, the "*communauté des personnes et des biens*", the "*amour libre*" were meant to limit the number of newborns: "*peu d'enfants, donc luxe*".[366] Procreation, in the phalanstery, is entrusted to a "*comité de géniteurs et génitrices qui […] organis[ent] l'échange des partenaires sexuels quatre fois par mois*".[367] This social organization of Fourier makes Leroux exclaim that "*Fourier emploie en parlant de la nature humaine le langage usité pour les animaux et les plantes*" and that, in this way, "*Fourier ouvre la porte de l'enfer*".[368]

Leroux's most significant criticism of Fourier is that he reduces human nature to sensation – as mentioned in the first chapter, Leroux defines sensation as freedom – which he understands solely as pleasure, voluptuousness, as "*liberté amoureuse […] qui n'a pas de limite*".[369] Leroux criticizes Fourier from the point of view of Montesquieu, as Le Bras-Chopard interestingly notes, arguing that the other face of unlimited freedom is unlimited tyranny. Montesquieu was arguing that in despotism "*on voit se répéter infiniment les mêmes ressorts de tous les hommes qui composent l'Empire. Le dernier sujet est despote, au moins*

[365] Sarane Alexandrian, *Le Socialisme Romantique*, p.105.
[366] Jacques Viard, "Pierre Leroux contre les Utopistes", Association des amis de Pierre Leroux, 2003, http://www.amisdepierreleroux.org/correlats20/vjPLcontrelesutopistes.htm
[367] Ibidem.
[368] Pierre Leroux, *Revue sociale* (article and date not specified), in Ibidem.
[369] Pierre Leroux, *Lettres sur le fouriérisme*, tome I, pp.12-13, in Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.54.

de ses femmes".[370] Le Bras-Chopard argues that Leroux discovers in Fourier the same "*lien despotisme-polygamie que Montesquieu trouve dans la plupart des pays d'Asie*"[371] and, thus, says Leroux, despite his pretention to bring forth a new revelation, Fourier only brings back to life ancient despotisms.[372]

In Leroux's opinion, the starting point of despotism is the individual interest and the nominalist conception of society. He then sustains that Fourier's unlimited freedom is only the logical development of the bourgeois understanding of freedom, a development which the bourgeois cannot contest in a coherent manner. From Leroux's viewpoint, a despotic system, like that of Fourier, does not necessarily isolate sensation from sentiment and reflection – Fourier, according to Leroux, does recognize the role of sentiment, at least – but offers a preeminent role to sensation. Thus, such a social organization never develops the capacity of reflection, the only one capable to distinguish between vice and virtue; in such a social organization, man is never developed as a full human being, in Leroux's opinion. What it means, from Leroux's perspective, for man to become a full human being will be explained at length in the third chapter.

2.4. Introduction to utopia

We have become accustomed to confer to the concept of utopia the sole significance of an ideal and implicitly vain, or even perilous, project of society for the reason that it cannot pass the test of reality. In other words, as Michèle Riot-Sarcey argues, to say that an idea is

[370] Montesquieu, *L'Esprit des lois*, Paris, Garnier Frères, 1945, t.I, p.64, in Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.57.
[371] Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.57.
[372] Pierre Leroux, "Lettres sur le fouriérisme", in *Revue sociale*, deuxième année, no.7, avril 1847, p.110.

utopian means to disqualify it from the start. Utopia is associated with the human aspiration towards the absolute, the "moral absolute" and "absolute happiness".[373] Economic liberalism defines as utopian, in a pejorative sense, any worldview that challenges and reproaches the existing capitalist order that it acts against human nature. Economic liberalism or capitalism reproaches any such worldview with its unrealistic and naïve tenets which are incapable to come to terms with the reality that the existing order is the "natural social order" and that, consequently, common sense requires that society should give up "*la vaine ambition d'atteindre l'absolu*", since the human being is "*contingent et borné*". [374] In this understanding, the nineteenth-century utopia is viewed as a primitive prerequisite to Marxism-Leninism, which is considered its final development. This comes from the fact that Marx himself defined the nineteenth-century utopia as a primitive current of thought which he corrected and completed. And, if economic liberalism has always reproached utopian thought, in general, and nineteenth-century utopian thought, in particular, to be against common sense reality, Marxism reproaches it, too, with its unrealistic expectations which come from its naïve belief that the world could be changed progressively without revolution. Of course, both the capitalist and the Marxist critiques of utopia are more complex than that, but I do not intend to insist here on them. I believe that both perspectives do an injustice to utopian thought, first of all because they refer to the utopia in the singular, ascribing the same meaning to the utopia of Cabet and to that of Pierre Leroux, for instance. It is, thus, forgotten that there is a wide variety not only within utopian thought in general, but also within nineteenth-century utopian thought and that, while there are significant similarities

[373] Jean-Jacques Goblot, "L'utopie en débat", in Michèle Riot-Sarcey (editor), *L'utopie en questions*, Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, Paris, 2001, p.23.
[374] Ibidem.

between certain forms of utopia – even though the concept of revolution is missing from them – and Marxism, even Marxism-Leninism, there are also nineteenth-century forms of utopia that differ significantly from Marxism and hold a rich and profound vision of the world.

Utopian features are present in Plato and in Latin ancient writings, but the concept itself has its real beginnings in Thomas More. In his excellent analysis of More's *Utopia*, Miguel Abensour summarizes three main interpretations of the book and offers also his own, which I believe is worth mentioning and bearing in mind while exploring the history of utopia. The first interpretation Abensour presents is the historicist reading of Karl Kautsky, according to which Thomas More would be announcing modern communism. The second interpretation is that of the Catholic R.W. Chambers who argues that More portrays a pagan community which leads a more virtuous life than the society of his time, which pretends to rest on Christian values, in order to put to shame the latter. More is then depicted as a reactionary thinker who proposes the return to the Medieval idea of community.[375] The weakness of Chambers' reading, according to Abensour, is that he ignores the art of writing which More, like his contemporaries, Erasmus or Machiavelli, embraced. The third interpretation is that of André Prévost who favours an allegorical reading of *Utopia*. According to this interpretation, *Utopia* appears as a literary genre which emphasizes the individual spiritual quest and ignores the political issue of the best regime. According to Abensour, the strength of this reading comes from that it operates a literary and linguistic analysis of the text, scrutinizing "*les dispositifs textuels, les vocables utopiques, les jeux humoreux ou ironiques*

[375] Miguel Abensour, *L'Utopie, de Thomas More à Walter Benjamin*, Sens & Tonka, Paris, 2000, p.38.

de l'auteur".[376] Its weakness, believes Abensour, is that it ignores the political meaning of *Utopia*.

In Abensour's own interpretation, inspired freely by Leo Strauss, the art of writing cannot be separated from the content. In *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Leo Strauss argues that the ancient and medieval philosophers were aware of the dangers of philosophy. Classic philosophy aims at transforming opinions about things into knowledge about things. The city is the place of opinions, grounded upon ancestry, thus, upon the conviction that the old, the ancestral is good. By challenging generally held opinions, the philosopher puts in danger both himself – by incurring the hatred of the people – and the city – by engendering anarchy or tyranny.[377]"*Le propre d'une pensée libre*", says Abensour, interpreting Strauss, "*est de n'avoir d'exigence que par rapport à elle-même, elle ne saurait tolérer aucune limite externe*". Thus, the philosopher tries to find ways to preserve his freedom of thought, while at the same time to escape persecution. According to Strauss, the philosopher should reserve his deep, truly philosophical thoughts only for the young men with an authentic philosophical vocation. Starting from the medieval philosophical tradition, Strauss discovered an art of writing consisting in writing "between the lines", so that the philosopher, together with his disciples who understand his art of writing, could go on freely in the quest for the truth, without putting himself and the city in danger.[378] More's writing would belong, too, to this philosophical tradition.

According to Abensour, we are faced with several "enigmas" in More's text. The first one is related to the plurality of More's voices in *Utopia*: he appears "*à la fois écrivain-auteur de* L'Utopie – *'citoyen et shérif de l'illustre cité de Londres' –, page adolescent à la*

[376]Ibidem, pp.39-40.
[377] Daniel Tanguay, *Leo Strauss. Une biographie intellectuelle*, Bernard Grasset, Paris, 2003, pp.108-118.
[378] Miguel Abensour, *L'Utopie de Thomas More à Walter Benjamin*, pp.44-45.

cour du cardinal Morton, interlocuteur privilégié de Raphaël Hytlodée dans le jardin de Pierre Gilles".[379] The question, according to Abensour, is how to discern the author's voice and purpose. The signs of the art of writing "between the lines" are multiple in More's *Utopia*, believes Abensour. The title itself, he argues, expresses ambiguity. The name of the place described in the book is "Utopia*, lieu de nulle part, ou bien* Udetopia*, lieu d'aucun temps, ou bien* Eutopia*, lieu de félicité où tout est bien*",[380] a multiple name which, according to Abensour, is meant to draw attention to the plurality of senses and, implicitly, to offer to the reader the image of a place that is at the same time existent and non-existent, of a regime "*toujours attrayant et toujours impossible à réaliser concrètement*".[381] Raphael Hythloday, who returns from the ambiguous place of Utopia, has, too, an ambiguous and mixed identity: "*il tient à la fois de l'ange Raphaël qui guérit de la cécité, de Platon, le voyageur philosophe, l'homme du* logos*, et d'Ulysse, l'homme de la* métis *qui par des stratagèmes parvint à recouvrer son royaume*".[382] Abensour argues, citing André Prévost, that in the first edition of the book, the capital of Utopia appeared with "*le nom de* mentira-ae *et portait mention d'un sénat,* in senatu mentirano*, à partir du verbe* mentiri *(feindre)*".[383] The word, according to Prévost, is used with irony because to lie means, evidently, to commit a moral fault. *Utopia* abounds in such examples of words with Greek or Latin etymology and suggests through this literary device that the perfect regime is lacking, actually, perfection.[384]

According to Abensour, the political significance of More's *Utopia* depends on its literary form, meaning that, through this particular form, the author raises specific questions

[379]Ibidem, p.48.
[380]Ibidem, 54.
[381]Ibidem, p.56.
[382]Ibidem, p.57.
[383]Ibidem, p.56.
[384]The name of the prince of Utopia is Ademos, a name that signifies a prince *without demos*, the river that passes through the island is called Anyder, meaning a river *without* water etc., all suggesting that Raphael Hythloday is, at the same time, the one who heals blindness and "peddler of nonsense".

concerning the relation between society and philosophy.[385] Abensour argues that the literary form of More's *Utopia* is not only concerned about literary or political persecution, as it is concerned about a certain type of communication or, rather, about generating a certain type of communication between the author and the reader. The irony used through the rhetorical device mentioned above has as the purpose, according to Abensour, to encourage the reader not to believe blindly the text (in this sense Raphael Hythloday heals blindness) and to avoid its dogmatic understanding. Irony is meant to stimulate the reader to detach himself from the author and to preserve the philosophical suspicion that the author himself might succumb to dogmatic affirmations. In this way, the reader keeps himself at distance from what Abensour calls "tyrannical readings". Irony also reminds the reader that the quest for the Good is not the same as the Good, just as what appears to be the Good might not be, in fact, the Good. Whenever the reader is tempted to identify the account of Raphael Hythloday about the socio-political organization in Utopia with the good regime, the ironic construction of the names reminds him of the perpetual distance between what seems to be the ideal social order and its transformation into reality here and now. Irony, laughter and folly go hand in hand in *Utopia*, and "*le rire est la vérité de la folie*", as well as "*la vérité de l'utopie*".[386] Making subtle criticisms of the existing social order and puzzling the reader, the truth of utopia appears as chaotic, as a powerful "vector conducting a shift of perspective".[387]

I will not insist any further on More's *Utopia*. I brought it into discussion because it is a key-point in the understanding of future forms of utopia and I referred to Abensour's reading of More because I find here essential features for my conceptual background concerning the utopian thought of Pierre Leroux and Feodor Dostoevsky. Their forms of utopia, which are

[385] Miguel Abensour, *L'Utopie de Thomas More à Walter Benjamin*, p.52.
[386] Jean-Yves Lacroix, *L'Utopie de Thomas More et la tradition platonicienne*, Vrin, Paris, 2007, p.144.
[387] Ibidem.

shared by other authors, too, contain rhetorical devices similar to those used by More. We find in both Leroux and Dostoevsky a perpetual quest for the truth and for the good and just socio-political community, a quest that is dialogical (visible in the multiplicity of voices in Dostoevsky and in the form of Socratic dialogue that some of Leroux's texts have), we find irony (used by both authors towards capitalism as well as towards the forms of "absolute socialism") and its counterpart, folly (present in the dreams of Dostoevsky's characters, as well in some of Leroux's projects – he was often characterized by his contemporaries as a dreamer), devices meant to arise in the reader philosophical suspicion towards dogmatic affirmations and towards any dogmatic organization of community.

Utopia made, thus, its appearance, with More, as an elaborate literary genre, a form that gives expression to the (political) content of the text. The question whether the institutions described by Raphael, in *Utopia*, are possible, has been raised ever since, according to Riot-Sarcey. In her view, More's *Utopia* by no means excludes a theological comprehension of utopia, for it is imbued with Christian pessimism: given the fallen human nature, the realization of the just and fraternal society is unlikely. Nevertheless, she says, this awareness does not impede, but on the contrary, encourages society to follow its ideal, so that it could be closer rather than farther from it, and this can only be done through the education of people. And, in this sense, each utopia includes an "educational utopia".[388]

By its very name, or I should say multiple names, utopia appears, according to Abensour, as the expression of the unhappy conscience in history: "*dans un monde donné, elle [la conscience utopique] est déchirée entre un malheur vécu* hic et nunc *et le désir d'un au-delà*

[388] Jean-Jacques Goblot, "L'utopie en débat", in Michèle Riot-Sarcey (ed.), *L'utopie en questions*, pp.18-19.

qui ne se situe nulle part".[389] Utopia has thus some of its roots not only in Platonism, but also in Christianity, as Leroux always stresses:

> *Par le Christianisme, a été élaborée et prêchée à tous les hommes l'idée d'un monde meilleur que celui qui existait alors, d'un monde d'égalité et de fraternité […]. Le Christianisme a relevé l'humanité par l'espérance ; il a relié aux souvenirs de son berceau, à sa liberté primitive et naturelle, à ses traditions d'un âge d'or passé […], le sentiment ferme et assuré d'un âge d'or à venir […], où le bien régnerait après la défaite du mal, et où l'homme racheté par la divine parole, retrouverait le bonheur.*[390]

But utopia has also developed hedonist tendencies, best expressed by Julien de La Mettrie, who announces Fourier:

> *Nous serons des anti-stoïciens! Ces philosophes sont sévères, tristes, et durs ; nous serons tendres, joyeux et aimables. Ils sont tout âme et font abstraction de leur corps ; nous serons tout corps et ferons abstraction de notre âme. Ils se montrent inaccessibles au plaisir et à la douleur ; nous serons fiers de sentir l'un et l'autre.*[391]

There is, thus, a significant difference between utopia anchored in Christianity and utopia emancipated from Christianity, utopia as the outcome of a profane mode of thinking. Riot-Sarcey argues that this separation has strengthened, in the latter kind of utopia, the vision of the good natural man who does not live in the good society because he has been perverted by the existing one and by its institutions, in particular, by private property. As such, the good society begins with the transformation of institutions.

Karl Polanyi is not entirely wrong to affirm that utopia began to take a more and more concrete shape as a reaction to capitalism, as a cry of defense uttered by society. Nevertheless, to limit utopia to the capitalist society means to reduce the depths of utopia which is part of the human condition. Having some of its roots in both Platonism and Christianity, utopia has always defined itself, like in More's *Utopia*, as an awareness of the

[389] Miguel Abensour, *Les formes de l'utopie socialiste-communiste*, tome 1, p.1.
[390] Pierre Leroux, *Revue Sociale*, 1845, p.19, in Ibidem, p.10 (article not specified).
[391] La Mettrie, *Discours sur le Bonheur* (page not given), in Ibidem, p.4.

lack of the Good – or, I would say, an awareness of the presence-absence of the Good, in the sense that the Good exists, is present, but its realization always eludes human beings. Utopia is translated, thus, as an infinite quest of the human being and it is in this sense that Abensour says that utopia is "*condamnée par essence à ne jamais atteindre son objet, ou plutôt à atteindre un objet autre que celui qu'elle visait*".[392] From a Socratic perspective, it is difficult for human beings to identify the Good because the human being is in a perpetual quest for the Good. From a Christian perspective, fallen human nature faces serious difficulties (or is even incapable, in certain versions of Christianity) in identifying the Good in the absence of God's grace. However, from both perspectives, human beings always run the risk of taking the appearance of the Good for the Good. Presence-absence of the Good does not mean that the Good is inaccessible to human beings, but that there is a wide variety of realizations of the Good, in society, closer or farther from the Good. It is relevant, in this sense, to mention the image, proposed by Ballanche, of humanity "*toujours en marche*", like the Jewish people, through the desert, towards the Promised Land. Utopia defines itself, thus, not only as the awareness of an absence, but also as the aspiration, as the desire of the Good which is identified in unity, community, being-together. Capitalism has, indeed, made acute the feeling of dearth, understood from material scarcity to lack of unity, of solidarity, of community. It might be that the more capitalism advanced, the forms of utopia have evolved from reverie to political program, and utopia modified its initial purpose of perpetual quest for the Good.

[392] Miguel Abensour, *Les formes de l'utopie socialiste-communiste*, tome 1, p.11.

2.5. Transformation of utopia in the 19th century

Beginning with the eighteenth century, argues Riot-Sarcey, utopia is less understood as a literary genre and is more and more embedded in the political discourse. For instance, in 1794, Robespierre is accused by Camille Desmoulins for attempting to put into practice "*une constitution utopienne, une égalité impossible de biens*".[393] From now on, the author sustains, utopia will be understood as a project of political or social transformation and its *politisation* brings about its pejorative usage.[394] The eighteenth century witnessed a fundamental change in the understanding of utopia: the progress of science could beget the perfect society, an idea that culminated with the theme of perfectibility, approached by Leibniz and Condorcet. The promise of a society renewed by science turned the aim of utopia towards the transformation of this world, which involved the fact that utopia took a certain distance from the Christian ideals of virtue and asceticism which had once been the core of utopia, as a literary genre. According to Abensour, the nineteenth century, beginning with Saint-Simon, marked the rupture between utopia and the ideal of asceticism, and utopia – now defined as socialist utopia – developed a new relation with space and time. The nineteenth century took over Leibniz's phrase: "*Le Temps présent est gros de l'avenir*". From now on, argues Abensour, utopia becomes "*uchronie*".[395]This changes the "location" of utopia from an unknown place to an unknown time, in the future, a time in which, depending on the form of utopia, humanity might come to be identified with its ideal. It is also a time in which humanity gradually takes itself and the whole world into possession, and certain forms of utopia concentrate more on action rather than on reflection. Fourier

[393] Jean-Jacques Goblot, "L'utopie en débat", in Michèle Riot-Sarcey (ed.), *L'utopie en questions*, p.20.
[394] Ibidem.
[395] Miguel Abensour, *Les formes de l'utopie socialiste-communiste*, tome 1, p.23.

insists that "*le nouveau globe à créer est le nôtre*"[396] and the Saint-Simonian Émile Barrault utters: "*Assez d'utopies! [...] Consacrons-nous aux choses réelles. À l'œuvre, donc, à l'œuvre!*"[397]

In the 19th century, utopia – or I should rather say some forms of utopia – has reached the conclusion that humanity has been for too long in a state of aspiration towards the Good, that the time has come to identify the Good and to articulate it in society. Utopians come to deny, in the 19th century, that there is a perpetual distance between the ideal social order and its realization and call themselves no longer utopians, but socialists. Marginalized by a society which refused to define itself by an ultimate social aim, the nineteenth-century utopia contested that society and allied itself with "*tout ce qui était insatisfait dans cette société*" and, in this sense, says Bénichou, "*la lévée démocratique qui a mis en cause de façon plus ou moins radicale la domination bourgeoise sous la monarchie de Juillet a attiré l'Utopie à elle*".[398] Since utopia longed for the reconciliation of humanity with itself, hence, for the lost unity, it defined society in terms of ultimate social good. Thus, the lack, the absence by which the unsatisfied members of society identified themselves was not enough for the utopian thought. It needed to educate in people the desire for the Good and, in specific cases of utopia, the desire for the identification and social articulation of the Good.

Alexandrian calls these nineteenth-century utopians "*socialistes romantiques*" and argues that their thought is directly influenced by literary romanticism. Like the latter, romantic socialism, concentrates on the refusal of the bourgeois social order.[399] I already argued, in the first chapter, that the fundamental malady of modernity was identified by

[396] Ibidem, p.14.
[397] Émile Barrault in Jacques Rancière, "Sens et usage de l'utopie" (reference not given), in Michèle Riot-Sarcey (ed.), *L'utopie en questions*, p.66.
[398] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.329.
[399] Sarane Alexandrian, *Le Socialisme Romantique*, p.10.

German romantics, such as Tieck, Novalis, Schelling, Schleiermacher, with alienation, division, translated as the estrangement between man and man, the division of labour and the division within the self. Nevertheless, as Frederick Beiser sustains, there were aspects of modernity that appealed to the romantics. Although they criticized the Enlightenment, the romantics valued the right of the individual to exercise critical thinking in relation to "all beliefs", which allowed the individual "to develop all his powers to the fullest".[400] For the romantics, the unity of the past had been lost forever and, as such, "there could be no going back", but humanity had to discover "how to achieve the earlier harmony and unity on a higher level in the future".[401] The romantics questioned the premise of the *philosophes* that "the preaching of the principles of reason to the people" would educate and enlighten the people. According to the romantics, the French Revolution proved the failure of Enlightenment for, instead of "acting according to the principles of reason", the people "gave free reign to their interests and passions".[402] Schiller argued that this experience showed that the education of the intellect alone was insufficient and that it was "also necessary to cultivate feelings and desires, to touch people's hearts and stimulate their imagination, to get them to live by higher ideals".[403]

Alexandrian is right to argue that romantic socialism was inspired by these principles, although, with it, these tenets suffered some changes, as we shall see. Like German romanticism, it abhorred the alienation brought by modernity, while, at the same time, valued the right of the individual to criticize all beliefs; in its longing for lost unity, it looked for ways not of going back, but of conceiving such unity in the future; it believed that

[400] Frederick Beiser, *The Romantic Imperative*, p.33.
[401] Ibidem.
[402] Ibidem, p.94.
[403] Ibidem.

humanity could be reconciled with itself not merely by the power of reason, but also or especially by stimulating people's passions.

Romantic socialism made its appearance in France, with Saint-Simon and was continued by Fourier, the Saint-Simonians, the Fourierists, Pierre Leroux, Étienne Cabet, and others inspired by communist principles, such as "*l'ultra-communiste*" Constantin Pecqueur,[404] Auguste Blanqui and Armand Barbès, who participated in secret societies and insurrections, Auguste Comte, and a certain nineteenth-century French feminism, which had been inaugurated by the Saint-Simonians and the Fourierists, some of its main representatives being Flora Tristan and Pauline Roland. Romantic socialism contests the bourgeois social order and opposes to the bourgeois virtues of order, prudence, and *juste-milieu*, romantic spleen, despair, rebellion and adultery.[405] The romantic socialists believe that man needs both bread and poetry, the latter being able to shape in front of man's eyes his high ideals. Alexandrian writes that romantic socialists conceive the future as "*la page blanche où l'homme doit projeter tous ses rêves*", the world as "*un poème épique dont les mots sont des individus, les strophes des peuples*".[406] Despite their atheism and anti-clericalism, some of the romantic socialists, like Saint-Simon, Fourier and their disciples, could not conceive a society without religion and considered themselves as inspired and sent by God in the world in order to offer it a new unity and harmony. According to Alexandrian, the attribute of "utopian", by which romantic socialists have been characterized, is unfortunate because the term would disqualify their thought and projects which appeared as utopian, at the time, because of their audacious views of the future, which they intended to transform into

[404]Sarane Alexandrian, *Le Socialisme Romantique*, p.322.
[405]Ibidem, p.11.
[406]Ibidem.

reality.[407] A characteristic that unites romantic socialists is their refusal of the sudden transformation of society by the means of a violent revolution, as a regime established by force does not correspond, in their view, to the profound desires of people.[408]

I now wish to list a few principles by which Alexandrian characterizes Icarian (Cabet's) communism, which I believe portray (with slight differences) the type of romantic socialism embraced by Saint-Simonism, Fourierism or the followers of Cabet. First, the ideal of all these romantic socialists excludes violence and encourages the people to contest the capitalist regime through the "right to defend oneself". Second, the best means, according to them, to win over the population – labourers and capitalists alike[409] – is the indefatigable propaganda, mainly "*la propagande simplifiée et concentrée*".[410] The Saint-Simonians, for example, formed "apostles" whom they sent all over France and afterwards in the surrounding countries, in order to preach and to convert people to Saint-Simonism. Third, these romantic socialists believe that people's desires need to be educated and directed towards a model of community by creating and facing them with such a perfect model. In their opinion, "*le peuple ne saurait être suffisamment motivé par de sèches formules économiques et des slogans politiques; il faut l'émouvoir par une vision paradisiaque, sans se laisser arrêter par les pédants qui la taxeront d'utopie*".[411]

I believe, nevertheless, that taking romantic socialists as such and excluding the attribute of "utopian" does not reflect the complexity of nineteenth-century socialism. If we hold on to the features present in More's *Utopia*, we can notice that a part of utopian socialism, like

[407]Ibidem, pp.22-25.
[408]Ibidem, p.28.
[409] It is worth noting that a great part of the nineteenth-century socialists – but not Leroux, neither Marx – were addressing to capitalists.
[410] Sarane Alexandrian, *Le Socialisme Romantique*, p.307.
[411] Ibidem.

that of Pierre Leroux, maintained these features and worked further on them, while another part, like that of the Saint-Simonians, preserved the desire of humanity's reconciliation with itself, but rendered it immanent, as it will be seen. In order to have a better view of this, I propose the distinction Miguel Abensour operates within utopian thought. Abensour, inspired by Leroux's ideas expressed in *Lettre au Docteur Deville*, divides nineteenth-century utopia into three branches: utopian socialism, neo-utopianism, and "*le nouvel esprit utopique*". Utopian socialism is represented by Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen; neo-utopianism, by the Saint-Simonian Prosper Enfantin and his Saint-Simonian followers, as well as by Cabet and Edward Bellamy; and "*le nouvel esprit utopique*", by the nineteenth-century authors Leroux and William Morris, as well as by twentieth-century philosophers, like Emmanuel Levinas, Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin.

As Pierre Leroux notes, the first three nineteenth-century utopians, Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen, started from what he calls "*l'écart absolu*", a concept defined by Abensour as the presentation of some "*images utopiques d'un monde nouveau*" and as the communication of "*l'impulsion utopique à créer des relations sociales radicalement autres, destinées à ouvrir une nouvelle voie à l'espèce humaine*".[412]

There is a powerful connection between this conception of utopia and religion, a connection that is even more interesting when we think that atheist philosophers, such as Saint-Simon, were convinced of the necessity of religion in society. Saint-Simon affirmed that the end of Christianity had come and it was time for a new religion of Humanity to arise. The new religion has nothing to do with an after-life and excludes the understanding of earthly life as a testing place for the next world. This world becomes the place where man can achieve "*le plus haut degré de félicité que [l'espèce humaine] puisse atteindre pendant*

[412] Miguel Abensour, *Les Formes de L'Utopie Socialiste-Communiste*, tome I, p.139.

sa vie terrestre".[413] In this sense, utopian socialism emphasizes the desire of happiness, conceived not simply as a materialist desire, but as the desire of humanity to accomplish and to take itself into possession. Utopian socialism also stresses that humanity is in front of a new era and has the tendency to entertain the illusion of the "*page blanche*". Saint-Simon talks, in his first work, *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporains*, about the role of the Legislator – the concept being understood in terms of the one who gives a new law to humanity, a figure such as Lycurgus or Moses. In *Lettres*, Saint-Simon announces that God revealed to him, in a dream, that He would give a new law to humanity, *i.e.*, Newton's law of attraction that is to be applied to society. Newton, the scientist *par excellence*, then appears as a new Lycurgus or Moses, and Saint-Simon is the prophet announcing the new organization that will follow. Starting from the religion of Newton, Saint-Simon – presumably under divine inspiration – decides to establish what he calls the "Council of Newton", formed of twelve scientists and nine artists, who are called the "*Élus de l'humanité*" and have as a mission to enlighten humanity. Society – a portion of humanity – should be composed of industrialists, scientists and artists; but it is not always clear whether it is the artists or the scientists or both who should rule. But whichever category rules society is supposed to be not only the most competent, but also capable of the greatest love for the people. It has the role to assure the unity and the cohesion of the social order. Thus, society functions on the grounds of attraction or love,[414] transmitted from top to bottom, from the artists/scientists to the people, and returns from the latter to the former.

[413] *Œuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin*, xxiii, 148, in D.G. Charlton, *Secular Religions in France, 1815-1870*, Oxford University Press, London, 1963, p.69.

[414] In the case of Saint-Simon, the Saint-Simonians, and of the Grand Inquisitor, the term "love" has nothing to do with either *agape* or *philia*, but rather with *eros*, understood as taking possession of the world.

Saint-Simon preserves, from Rousseau, the ideal of the individual who becomes an organic part "*d'un tout plus grand dont cet individu reçoit en quelque sorte sa vie et son être*".[415] It is in this sense that humanity is like a body. As I was arguing at the beginning of this chapter, if we were to transpose the Quarrel of Universals on sociological terrain, the realists would be those who sustained the comparison of humanity with a body. The religiosity of Saint-Simon's politics is given, thus, not by the faith in an inaccessible transcendence, but by the desire of a concrete Law capable to establish "*un ordre social juste et parfait*", here and now.[416]

Utopia, here, takes the form of what Abensour calls an "ideal model" and has its roots in Platonism. Utopia appears as the copy of an Idea, as "*une copie du bon État qui a pour vertu de participer de la Justice*".[417] Utopia-model includes the idea of the good constitution, on the grounds of which is created the social organism, functioning in accordance with the norms of reason and in harmony with the norms of Justice.[418] From here is deduced, as Abensour explains, the vertical relation between the philosopher and the people, the former making known to the latter the Law by which each individual guides his life and performs his ascribed function so that the people could be identified as One organism.

In Saint-Simon, these ideas included in the utopia-model are present only in germinal form. Saint-Simon talks, indeed, about a society, like a body, structured in three classes, about the men of genius who stimulate people's passions etc. But there is also present, in him, what I referred to above as "*écart absolu*", *i.e.*, the idea that society is face to face with its ideal, which it sees as a model, and still remains in a relation of aspiration towards the

[415] Miguel Abensour, "L'utopie socialiste: une nouvelle alliance de la politique et de la religion", *Le Temps de la réflexion*, II, 1981, p.81.
[416] Ibidem, p.82.
[417] Miguel Abensour, *Les Formes de L'Utopie Socialiste-Communiste*, tome I, p.89.
[418] Ibidem, p.87.

model. The principles he depicts in *Le Nouveau Christianisme* about the new religion and the new society are not at all clear, not at all principles set once and for all. Things change with the Saint-Simonians who completed Saint-Simon's unfinished *Nouveau Christianisme* and affirmed it as a dogmatic model of society. While they are aware of the "*écart absolu*", they want to cast it away, so that society could be identified as soon as possible with its model or, in other words, so that society could be "*en harmonie avec ses fins, en coïncidence avec elle-même*".[419] This difference between Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians illustrates that utopian socialism is, in fact, characterized by ambiguity. It appears as a constant oscillation between utopia and the realization of the Law, or between transcendence and immanence. In Saint-Simon, transcendence appears as the Idea of the good and just society or as the Law, in relation to which the world-as-it-is or the existing society is in a perpetual state of aspiration. The former appears as inaccessible to man. Immanence, on the other hand, is translated as Saint-Simon's desire that the "*écart absolu*" between the Idea and the world-as-it-is would be made relative in the near future, that the Law would be realized here and now and that society would be identified with itself. This is the reason for which Saint-Simon insists on the theoretical structure of the future society which should be at hand when someone will decide the time has come to realize it. We can identify in Saint-Simon, I said, the oscillation between transcendence and immanence. He hopes, on the one hand, that the good society or the Law will be realized, but, on the other hand, he seems not to want the Law to be adjusted to the existing society, *i.e.*, seems not to want the Law to be mutilated in order to be realized here and now. The Saint-Simonians mark the end of the oscillation between transcendence and immanence. The Law has to be realized here and now, even if

[419] Claude Lefort et Marcel Gauchet, "Sur la démocratie: le politique et l'institution du social", *Textures*, 1971, 2-3, p.11, in Ibidem, p.85.

this requires that some parts from the ideal of Justice should be given up. The "*écart absolu*" plays no role in their ideas of society. They are characterized by an even greater optimism than Saint-Simon and believe that once the ideal of Justice is made to fit the world-as-it-is, the latter also adjusts to the ideal and accomplishes it here and now. The Saint-Simonians believe themselves to be the agents of the transformation of Saint-Simon's utopia from continual oscillation between transcendence and immanence into a political program. In this way can be explained their militant spirit, which makes their sect resemble the embryo of a revolutionary party. Thus, if Saint-Simon's philosophy marks the breach between utopia as perpetual quest for the Good and utopia as oscillation between transcendence and immanence, the Saint-Simonians mark the transformation of the nineteenth-century utopia from this oscillation to immanence.

This is what Abensour calls neo-utopianism: "*la formation sur la base d'une utopie-mère d'un corpus doctrinaire qui aboutit à une domestication du projet originel*".[420] Utopia continues to be understood as copy of the Idea, but what changes is the decision to annul the "*écart absolu*" and to put utopia into practice now. The Saint-Simonians took several measures, in this sense, which I will discuss in the next section. With them, the ideal loses any transcendent meaning because the Saint-Simonian church is meant to grow and to transform into a State, through "religious" propaganda. This "*diffusion de l'utopie-mère*" then brings forth "*des aménagements pour l'ordre existant*".[421]As Abensour says, with the Saint-Simonians, utopia is no longer "*vision*", but "*séduction*" through the mirage of the One, of the Identical, and, from here, argues Abensour, "*surgit toujours l'idée de l'État*".[422] Bakhtin is right to note that this kind of utopia "*n'admet qu'une seule forme d'interaction*

[420] Miguel Abensour, *Les Formes de L'Utopie Socialiste-Communiste*, tome I, p.156.
[421] Ibidem.
[422] Ibidem, p.93.

cognitive entre les consciences: ceux qui possèdent la vérité l'enseignent à ceux qui ne la possèdent pas et sont dans l'erreur".[423] There is a monological tendency in utopian socialism which becomes much more redolent in neo-utopianism. What attracts interest especially in the Saint-Simonians is that, while criticizing capitalism, they associate themselves with it in the realization of the good regime. Because, in their view, society could be renewed from top to bottom, they saw it as natural to associate themselves with capitalists, and, in general, with people of action, in the leading positions of the social order. It can be noticed that the moment utopia installs itself into reality, it has a short life; the more it incarnates, the more it grows weary and is drained; the more it instills itself into the world, the more it becomes depleted of its ideal.[424] Saint-Simonism is only an example of such a movement that inevitably died after a few years.

Reflecting on Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie*, Emil Cioran is impressed by the absence of any existential anguish which makes the characters that populate Cabet's literary Icarie to appear as false: "*les personages en sont des automates, des fictions ou des symboles*".[425] What began, thus, as desire has been transformed into a total absence of desire. Cioran is disturbed by the fact that such utopias (and this, in his opinion, is a feature of any utopia whatsoever) simply ban darkness: "*nulle trace de dualisme: l'utopie est d'essence antimanichéenne*".[426] Such utopia rejects from its bosom the abnormality and the irregular, and affirms the repetition and the homogeneity, while life, says Cioran is "*rupture, hérésie, dérogation aux normes de la matière*".[427]

[423] Mikhail Bakhtine, *La Poétique de Dostoïevski*, Paris, 1970, p.122, in Ibidem, p.154.
[424] E.M. Cioran, *Histoire et utopie*, Gallimard, Paris, 1960, pp.121-122.
[425]Ibidem, p.109.
[426]Ibidem, p.110.
[427]Ibidem.

"*Le nouvel esprit utopique*" re-opens the path of dialogue as a method in the quest for the truth, being convinced, as Bakhtin says, that "*la vérité ne peut jaillir et s'installer dans la tête d'un seul homme, elle naît entre les hommes qui la cherchent ensemble dans le processus de leur communication dialogique*".[428] Utopia is no longer understood in terms of an ideal-model, of a copy of the Idea, as *the* solution to the social issue, but has as a purpose to stimulate, in people, the desire of the Good. In Leroux's case, it translates as the desire of Humanity, as the desire that one's humanity be recognized by others and that one would recognize his own humanity in others. "*Le nouvel esprit utopique*" opens, thus, the gate to the unknown, "*à un avenir véritable, irréductible au présent ou aux images idéalisées du passé*".[429] Abensour writes that, in "*le nouvel esprit utopique*", "*tout se passe comme si le producteur de l'utopie, au moment où il écrit l'utopie, percevait la dérision et les limites de cette écriture*".[430] The first task that "*le nouvel esprit utopique*" takes upon itself is to "purge" utopia of its monologism which goes hand in hand with the "myth" of the "*législateurs-messies*" or "*prophètes-rédempteurs*".[431] "*Le nouvel esprit utopique*" is recognized by the fact that it has given up any will to reconcile society with itself; the identity of society with its ideal is impossible because the quest for the good, for truth and for justice "*ne peut valoir que comme œuvre collective*"[432] and has no end. Here, society or humanity has an active and dynamic role in the quest for the good regime and there is no question that it would befall on society from the outside. Pierre Leroux takes over the concept of "attraction" from Saint-Simon and transforms it from what Saint-Simon meant to

[428] Mikhail Bakhtine, *La Poétique de Dostoïevski*, p.155, in Miguel Abensour, *Les Formes de L'Utopie Socialiste-Communiste*, tome I, p.164.
[429] Miguel Abensour, *Les Formes de L'Utopie Socialiste-Communiste*, tome I, p.164.
[430] Ibidem.
[431] Miguel Abensour, "Utopie et démocratie", in Michèle Riot-Sarcey (ed.), *L'utopie en questions*, pp.248-249.
[432] Miguel Abensour, *Les Formes de L'Utopie Socialiste-Communiste*, tome I, p.163.

be a scientific tenet into "*une expérience d'humanité*' that rests on "*la reconnaissance du semblable par le semblable*".[433] Utopia appears here as a manifestation against the Identical One and as a dynamic reflection and a continual movement towards the ideal. One of its distinguishing features is, as Abensour writes, "*le recours à l'hérésie contre l'héritage et la formation d'une orthodoxie*".[434] "*Le nouvel esprit utopique*", and Pierre Leroux in particular, develops a new relation between religion and philosophy, as it will be seen in the third chapter. Like any other utopia, "*le nouvel esprit utopique*" sustains the need of religion, but instead of a religion considered as a foundation of a theocracy, as it was the case of the Saint-Simonians, we witness here a "horizontal" religion, grounded on and nurtured by friendship (*philia*). In this latter case we can identify the attachment of the utopian thinker to religion with the attachment of the philosopher to religion, as Claude Lefort describes it: "*la raison la plus secrète de l'attache du philosophe au religieux est bien l'idée qu'une société qui oublierait son fondement religieux vivrait dans l'illusion d'une pure immanence à elle-même et effacerait du même coup le lieu de la philosophie*".[435]

While Leroux belongs to "*le nouvel esprit utopique*", Dostoevsky does not. He completely identifies himself as part of the Christian tradition, without claiming to return to a specific time-period of this tradition. Pierre Leroux's relation to the Christian tradition (as a representative of "*le nouvel esprit utopique*") is one of absorption-negation, meaning that he founds his work on the Christian tradition, recognizing it an enormous merit in the development of humanity, while, at the same time, he denies a significant part of it, as it will be seen. However, Dostoevsky's work has a powerful utopian character, so I will call it

[433] Miguel Abensour, "Utopie et démocratie", in Michèle Riot-Sarcey (ed.), *L'utopie en questions*, p.249.
[434] Miguel Abensour, *Les Formes de L'Utopie Socialiste-Communiste*, tome I, p.161.

[435] Claude Lefort, "Permanence du théologico-politique?", *Essais sur le politique XIX-XX siècles*, pp.263-264, in Vincent Peillon, *Pierre Leroux et le socialisme républicain*, p.169.

utopian Christian socialism, which, for the moment, I will summarize as follows: while seeing in human nature a great potential for evil, and, consequently, rejecting any socialist pacifism and anarchism, Dostoevsky believes that nothing final can be uttered about a person and the world as a whole, as long as they are alive, because everything is in the future and because the Christian God is the God of the future, who transfigures the past and the present, and implicitly, human nature.

After having explained the different forms of utopia, I will concentrate in detail, in the following two sections, on Saint-Simon and on the Saint-Simonians.

2.6. Saint-Simon: oscillation between transcendence and immanence

Freedom, in Saint-Simon's opinion, begets anarchy. A society worthy to be called so, and not an agglomeration of individuals, needs a spiritual power, with which the concept of political freedom is hardly compatible. But we should not think, according to Saint-Simon, that society's faith in this power is oppressive, because it is purged of superstition and myths, and is grounded, instead, on demonstrated and demonstrable facts. These were some of the thoughts of Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon, the last gentleman and the first socialist of an old French family, as Leroy calls him. Saint-Simon abhorred revolutions and the French Revolution made no exception; he saw in them the rebellion of freedom and the germ of anarchy. Saint-Simon divided human history into organic periods – of social unity and harmony which begot peaceful social relations – and critical periods – periods of disunity, disharmony, in which the individual and his critical thinking were asserted above synthesis – which alternated throughout history. Saint-Simon retained from Rousseau the idea that love

for fellow human beings was the other facet of love for oneself; they had the same origin, only that they were channeled in different directions, meaning that egoism was "channeled in a socially unproductive direction".[436] In an organic period, all people worked together, in a unitary effort, for a single goal. Such a period was represented by the Middle Ages, in which Saint-Simon saw a complete harmony and unity, realized under the single authority of the Pope. A critical period was inaugurated by Luther and was continued later by the French Revolution. Saint-Simon reproached the revolutionaries, as well as Enlightenment philosophers, with having taught people about religious freedom – which was good – but having lacked any synthetic thought, any fecund tenet.

However, despite his animosity towards the French Revolution, Saint-Simon believed that it had revealed to humanity something essential: there could be no going back to the medieval unity simply because the whole metaphysics on which it rested was outmoded and had been overcome by the advance in science. But to see in the Middle Ages only superstition and ignorance, and to be oblivious of its harmonious unity, as the Enlightenment philosophers did, argues Saint-Simon, means to have a very biased view. True, the theological grounds of the medieval papal unity are outmoded, because humanity has become mature. If in its adolescence, the unity of society could not be maintained by other means but by superstition and myths, in its mature age, humanity has accumulated a large quantity of scientific knowledge and, henceforth, is capable to understand its unity. In *De la réorganisation de la société européenne*, published in 1814, Saint-Simon reverts to the idea of a secular clergy that should be similar in form to the medieval Catholic clergy. In his view, the whole Catholic Europe enjoyed, before the 15th century, a powerful unity given by

[436] Michael Behrent, "The Mystical Body of Society", p.228.

Catholicism. Unity can be offered now by industry; it only happens that capitalism is the form industry takes now, because there lacks an organized class of artists who could use the force of industry in order to give birth to unity.[437] Capitalism is grounded on individualism and on the desire of each to dominate the others. But industry refers to the capacity of people to transform the world they inhabit. Saint-Simon defines the term "*industriel*" as follows: "*un homme qui travaille à produire ou à mettre à la portée des différents membres de la société un ou plusieurs moyens matériels de satisfaire leurs besoins*".[438]As it will be seen, even though Leroux was inspired, in his own definition of industry, by Saint-Simon, he criticizes the master for having, in fact, confused industry and capitalism.

As Leroy argues, Saint-Simon considers the laboring class of his time incapable not only to govern, but also to express an original and animating idea. On the other hand, he believes that capitalists look only for their own profit. Hence, no one is interested or capable to come up with a synthetic thought for the society as a whole. As such, an authority is needed to teach people altruism instead of egoism, to teach them to channel their love towards productive purposes. But authority, good as it might be, could not be established by force because it needs to reflect the will of the people. So, Saint-Simon began the work of a life-time with *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporaines*, published in 1803, where

[437] As Alexandrian writes, the industrial system is, for Saint-Simon, the peak of progress, and he opposes the term "*industrialisme*" to capitalism (Sarane Alexandrian, *Le Socialisme Romantique*, p.52). Nevertheless, despite his criticism of the liberalism of his time, Saint-Simon invests England, the most industrialized country, with the leading role in the creation of the European Union (Henri de Saint-Simon, *De la réorganisation de la société européenne*, Adrien Égron, imprimeur, Paris, 1814, p.xvii, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k83331f.r=saint-simon+de+la+reorganisation.langEN).

[438] Henri de Saint-Simon, *Catéchisme des industriels*, 1e cahier, Imprimerie de Sétier, Paris, 1823, p.1. http://books.google.ca/books?id=IW3KAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

he calls upon proprietors[439] and labourers,[440] to unite for their own benefit, his call being, as he claims, divinely inspired.

According to Saint-Simon, since, in the absence of a synthetic knowledge of society, the love of self is directed in most people towards the love of power and domination, people should entrust power into the hands of twenty-one men of genius, the "*élus de l'humanité*", twelve scientists and nine artists. It is a proportion which shows, as Bénichou notes, the priority of scientific knowledge over imagination, following the tradition of the 18th century. This social organization has been dictated by God. But while the position is decided by God, the holder of the office is not invested by Him, but is democratically elected.[441] It is only in this way, believes Saint-Simon, that the progress of science could be assured, a progress necessary for the wellbeing of the great majority of people. Saint-Simon writes: "*il n'existe qu'un seul intérêt commun à tous les hommes, celui du progrès des sciences*".[442] He justifies his call to proprietors and labourers by the claim of the revelation received by him from God who told him the following:

> *Rome renoncera à la prétention d'être le chef de mon Église ; le Pape, les Cardinaux, les Evêques et les prêtres, cesseront de parler en mon nom. […] J'avais défendu à Adam de faire la distinction du bien et du mal, il m'a désobéi ; je l'ai chassé du paradis, mais j'ai laissé à sa postérité un moyen d'apaiser ma colère : qu'elle travaille à se perfectionner dans la connaissance du bien et du mal, et j'améliorerai son sort ; un jour viendra que je ferai de la terre un paradis. […] Apprends que j'ai placé Newton à mes côtés, que je lui ai confié la direction de la lumière et le commandement des habitations de toutes les planètes ; apprends aussi*

[439] By "proprietors", Saint-Simon means the possessors of capital.

[440] He advises labourers not to try to seize power – "*Regardez ce qui est arrivé en France pendant le temps que vos camarades y ont dominé, ils y ont fait naître la famine*" (*Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporaines*, 1803, p.59) – but to associate themselves with the proprietors who, given their social position, are more enlightened.

[441] "*Ouvrez une souscription devant le tombeau de Newton […]. Que chaque souscripteur nomme trois mathématiciens, trois physiciens, trois chimistes, trois physiologists, trois littérateurs, trois peintres, trois musiciens*", Henri de Saint-Simon, *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporaines*, 1803,p.4. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k833303/f4.image.r=saint-simon+lettres+d'un+habitant.langEN

[442] Ibidem, p.62.

que l'homme qui s'est montré le plus grand ennemi des Lumières (Robespierre) a été précipité dans les ténèbres …[443]

The Council of Newton will represent God on earth and will govern humanity divided into four parts, English, French, German and Italian, each living person having to identify herself with one of these parts and, adds Saint-Simon in God's name, "*tout homme qui n'obéira pas à ce commandement sera considéré et traité par les autres comme un quadrupède*".[444] Religion for Saint-Simon is, as Abensour affirms, a civilizing instance, in accordance with the Enlightenment idea of progress. Abensour is right to draw attention to the fact that, in order to be understood as such, religion needs to be secularized and transformed into science – the scientists taking the place of theologians – but, at the same time, so that this transformation could happen, "*cette science doit se transfigurer en religion, Bacon ou Newton doit être le Moïse des temps modernes*".[445] Since the scientists are superior to all other people, it only makes sense that Newton would be the Legislator whom "all power has been given". Newton is the Legislator also because he presides the beginning of a new organic period, grounded on the law of attraction, applied not only to unanimated bodies, but also to social relations. However, it is not enough to found; it is also necessary to stimulate attraction and herein resides the role of artists, which will become more and more redolent, especially in *Le Nouveau Christianisme*. Under divine inspiration, Saint-Simon builds theoretically a miniature city, with the temple, embellished with every luxury, in the centre, surrounded by laboratories, workshops, colleges, a library – which should never hold more than five hundred volumes –, a miniature city where people regard one another not as citizens but as fellow producers.

[443]Ibidem, pp.71-73, 75-76.
[444]Ibidem, p.77.
[445] Miguel Abensour, "L'utopie socialiste: une nouvelle alliance de la politique et de la religion", p.83.

Saint-Simon's model of society is not egalitarian, but what differs here from previous hierarchies, in Saint-Simon's opinion, is that hierarchy is grounded on merit. There will remain the distinction between those capable of physical labour and those capable of intellectual labour who need to be supported by the former, because they make humanity advance, and if one proves incapable to fulfill the intellectual labour, he will have to labour with his arms, because, says Saint-Simon, "*Newton ne laissera sûrement pas sur cette planète des ouvriers volontairement inutiles dans l'atelier*".[446] The purpose is to spread this model of civilization, which Saint-Simon defines as European, all over the world and to transform the European Union into a global union by the power of industry, making the globe "*voyageable et habitable comme l'Europe, voilà l'entreprise par laquelle le parlement européen devra continuellement exercer l'activité de l'Europe*".[447] In this sense, says Saint-Simon, the European deputies should be elected according to their capacity to have a global view of all national issues, a passionate love and, implicitly, the desire to work for the benefit of mankind. While economically England should take the first steps in the creation of the European Union, in terms of thought, the French synthesis should replace the English analysis, and, in this context, Saint-Simon conceives a spiritual power as the organ of synthesis.

Because it is the institutions that form individuals, Saint-Simon argues that issues of general interest, such as public education – capable to stimulate patriotic feelings for one's motherland which is humanity – should be entrusted to the European Parliament. Saint-Simon argues that the Parliament will allow freedom of consciousness and of religion, but adds that "*il réprimera celles [les religions] dont les principes seraient contraires au grand*

[446] Henri de Saint-Simon, *Lettres d'un habitant de Genève à ses contemporaines*, p.99.
[447] Henri de Saint-Simon, *De la réorganisation de la société européenne*, p.60.

code de morale qui aura été établi".[448] This obviously leaves place to great ambiguity because Saint-Simon never specifies what the code of morals would be and, thus, opens the path to tyranny. In the nineteenth-century Europe, scientists, artists, men of letters, were already feeling *European*, in the sense that they were aware of their common focuses and were interested in the exchange of ideas, but, as Leroy argues, this is not the system of Saint-Simon. He had in mind an international political system, "*un réseau d'institutions*", with a king at the top, enjoying an authority similar to that of the Pope, with the hope of eventually putting an end to "*le cycle de guerres révolutionnaires et napoléoniennes*".[449]

If in *Le Catéchisme des industriels*, Saint-Simon makes a clear distinction between the temporal and the spiritual powers,[450] in *Le Nouveau Christianisme*, his last work, the distinction between the temporal power (the industrialists) and the spiritual power (scientists and artists) is eliminated; the former are always under the inspiration of the latter.[451] The capacity of the industrialists as a general power is to be organized by scientists, while the passion, of both industrialists and scientists, for one another, for their labour and for humanity as a whole, is to be stimulated by the artists. This social organization of Saint-Simon is not supposed to be a distinct Church or a sect, but a planetary movement of association, where society is not self-determined or self-organized politically. Within this context is fashioned an impersonal bureaucratic Apparatus, which has the attributes of what could be called a central bank that administers and surveys "*les milles groupements*

[448] Ibidem, p.61.

[449] Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.227; Henri de Saint-Simon, *De la réorganisation de la société européenne*, pp.40-41.

[450] Here Saint-Simon argues that the temporal power is in the hands of the industrialists – "*la classe fondamentale, nourricière de toute société*" – whose role is to watch over public safety, while the spiritual power "*sera exercé par les savants, les littérateurs, les artistes à qui l'on réservera tous les rôles dévolus à la noblesse et au clergé*" (Henri de Saint-Simon, *Catéchisme des industriels*, 4^{e} cahier, in Sarane Alexandrian, *Le Socialisme Romantique*, pp.54, 56).

[451] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, 258.

industriels nés des besoins de la production". [452] Saint-Simon did not sustain the collectivization of private properties,[453] but championed the creation of a collective credit system, and transformed the credit into a common good that should be generously given to those who work for the benefit of humankind and its scientific progress. It is this system of collective credit that the State/central bank surveys.[454] The Saint-Simonians will continue the master's thought. Georg Iggers sustains that they "[recognize] the entire culture as subject to social planning and social organization and [accord]" this bureaucratic Apparatus "unlimited power over all phases of the culture and of individual life".[455]

All three categories – industrialists, scientists (the bankers being numbered, of course, here) and artists should work together in order to use the maximum of resources for the maximum satisfaction of the maximum of needs of the greatest number possible. Saint-Simon proposes that the new religion of humanity should take over the moral teaching of Christianity and leave aside its miraculous part, the promise of heavenly rewards, as well as a great part of its complicated dogmas and be limited to two tenets: "*Les hommes doivent se conduire en frères à l'égard les uns des autres*",[456] wherefrom is derived the second tenet, "*l'immense majorité de la population pourrait jouir d'une existence morale et physique beaucoup plus satisfaisante que celle dont elle a joui jusqu'à ce jour; et […] les riches, en*

[452] Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.209.

[453] Properties should be kept if they are labored or if the proprietor is the possessor of the means of production, and not simply a proprietor who draws benefits from others' labor. Such people, says Saint-Simon, should not be accepted in society.

[454] Henri de Saint-Simon, *Catéchisme des industriels*, pp.25-28. The fact that Saint-Simon offers bankers one of the most important roles in the new society should not be more surprising than is the generally held opinion on bankers in the 19th century. Michelet says that "*les banquiers de ce temps étaient hommes d'imagination*" (Jules Michelet, in Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.221), while Proudhon writes the curious phrase: "*comme rien de ce qui existe ne peut échapper à la fin pour laquelle il existe, le banquier, le Crésus moderne, doit être un jour l'instaurateur de l'égalité*" (Proudhon, in Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des idées sociales en France*, p.209).

[455] Georg G. Iggers, *The Cult of Authority. The Political Philosophy of the Saint-Simonians*, Second Edition, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1970, p.3.

[456] Henri de Saint-Simon, *Le Nouveau Christianisme*, 1825, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1969, p.149.

accroissant le bonheur des pauvres, amélioreraient leur propre existence".[457] The great mistake of the Catholic clergy was, in Saint-Simon's view, that it attempted to persuade people by fear of eternal punishment, with the purpose of making itself all-powerful, instead of working on and exciting people's passions – goodness, charity, loyalty. Instead of the spirit of Inquisition – "*despotisme et avidité*"[458] – Saint-Simon puts forward the spirit of persuasion and demonstration, and invests the new clergy with the mission "*d'exciter l'ardeur de tous les membres de la société vers les travaux d'une utilité générale*".[459] Saint-Simon reveals here the ideal of *homo ludens*, which is translated as the passion of humanity as a whole to transform the world into a work of art. The individual will has to be identified with the general will which creates, as Henri Desroches says, "*une esthétique générale*"[460] of the future:

> *Quand on commencera les travaux ayant directement pour but l'établissement du bien public, dans cette grande entreprise les artistes, les hommes à imagination, ouvriront la marche; ils proclameront l'avenir de l'espèce humaine… ils passionneront la société… en un mot, ils développeront la partie poétique du nouveau système*.[461]

We can then say that Saint-Simon goes in a direction completely opposite to that of Kierkegaard. If the latter moves from the esthetical to the ethical and finally makes the leap of faith, the former starts from the religious (and for Saint-Simon the term has exactly the literal sense, *religare*, to re-bind), passes through the ethical – he goes from heavenly commandments to earthly morality – and eventually arrives at the esthetical – the

[457] Ibidem, p.151. According to Saint-Simon the multiplicity of dogmas would have the effect to challenge the divine as well as the social unity: "*Dieu a nécessairement tout rapporté à un seul principe; sans quoi sa volonté à l'égard des hommes n'aurait point été systématique. Ce serait un blasphème de prétendre que le Tout-Puissant ait fondé sa religion sur plusieurs principes*" (Henri de Saint-Simon, *Le Nouveau Christianisme*, p.145).

[458] Ibidem, p.155.

[459] Ibidem, p.151.

[460] Henri Desroche, "Introduction", in Ibidem, p.39.

[461] Henri de Saint-Simon, *De l'organisation sociale* (document électronique), 1825, pp.138-139. http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Gallica&O=NUMM-89606

transformation of earthly life into paradise. The esthetical reveals the world's plenitude through the fact that man takes the world into possession. It reveals, in fact, a secular millenarianism, and the naïve faith in the eschatological capacity of the world.

2.7. The Saint-Simonian School: utopia transformed into political program

It is noteworthy that most of the people who formed the Saint-Simonian School had not known the master. Auguste Comte had worked with Saint-Simon, but he separated from the Saint-Simonians and continued his own project which bore significant similarities with, but also criticized the master's thought. According to George Weill, "*précurseur plutôt que chef d'école, Saint-Simon avait jeté les idées à pleines mains, laissant à ses continuateurs le soin de les coordonner et d'en tirer les conséquences*".[462] In 1825, after having buried the master, Olinde Rodrigue – whom Weill calls "*le* disciple *par excellence*" – and Prosper Enfantin – who had only been introduced to the master by Rodrigues – decided to found a journal, *Le Producteur*. The Saint-Simonians took over many of Saint-Simon's ideas, purged them of all ambiguity and transformed them in clear affirmations concerning society, so that, in the end, while recognizing in their doctrine Saint-Simon's ideas, it is nevertheless not without difficulty that we could say bluntly that these are the master's theories. A synthetic general doctrine of humanity, this appeared to be the fundamental purpose of the journal. Its necessity and its benefactions were proven by history itself, and history, for them, was a clear, scientific subject which showed the succession of three phases, theological,

[462] Georges Weill, *L'école saint-simonienne. Son histoire, son influence jusqu'à nos jours*, Felix Alcan, Éditeur, Paris, 1896, p.2.

metaphysical, and positivist – a succession mentioned by Saint-Simon, but developed by Comte. All three phases proved that humankind was in a continual movement from antagonism – defined exclusively as a negative force – to association. In the last phase of history – the positivist one – association was to be realized by the united efforts of the three categories, industrialists, artists and scientists, so that society and the entire world would "become a vast scientific, industrial and artistic workshop".[463]

That society was a living body was not questioned by the Saint-Simonians, and, as Behrent underlines, the concept of authority was inseparable from such a conception. If there was some ambiguity, in Saint-Simon, on whether authority belonged to the scientists or to the artists or to both, his disciples decided that authority should be taken into the hands of scientists. Genuine societies live in organic periods of unity because harmony and order naturally spring "from the textured social relations".[464] Nature is conceived here as an ideal model, as a norm, to which society is called to return. The Saint-Simonians believed they were living in a period of disunity – translated as freedom and agglomeration of individuals – and tried to act as "*nouveaux prophètes*", mobilizing people through religious esthetics, in order to convince them to return to the ideal model. Nature is, thus, the norm which needs to be reintegrated in history. This process can be accomplished, according to them, only through a religious revival, and, in this sense, the Saint-Simonians, on the footsteps of their master, claimed that a new papacy was necessary. However, as mentioned in the above section, such order could not be imposed by revolutionary means, but by persuasion. So that scientists could arrive at the top of the hierarchy, as it was natural in the positivist phase of humanity, the Saint-Simonian apostles had to convince first the leading figures of the

[463] Georg Iggers, *The Cult of Authority*, p.50.
[464] Michael Behrent, "The Mystical Body of Society", p.228.

existing order of the efficiency of their project, because, as argued, they believed that progress was established from top to bottom. There was strong emphasis in *Le Producteur* on the credit system – a principle clearly borrowed from Saint-Simon. The Saint-Simonians explained their preference for it by arguing that it could engender mutual trust between the members of society. As such, the credit would bring morality down in the field of socio-economic affairs by exchanging the exploitation of the labourer by the employer with the association between the two.[465] The Saint-Simonians then believed that one of the first things to be done was to convince bankers of the utility of the credit system. As Georg Iggers and many others argue, the Saint-Simonians had a faint or even no interest in the political as, in their view, it was the economic that represented the basis of the social order; this is why they believed the industrialists to be "the natural leaders of society".[466] For them, all power that contributed to the wellbeing of the poor and allowed industry to satisfy the material and spiritual desires of humanity was desirable.[467] The credit system would contribute to the foundation of "*une véritable association*" because, writes Enfantin in one of his articles, it would allow that "*chacun [soit] employé selon sa capacité et rétribué selon ses œuvres*".[468] Now, Enfantin argued, the bankers, the bourgeois, the philosophers, were alienated from the people who did not see in them their guiding figures. This situation, believed Enfantin, would eventually lead to a state of anarchy which the people could not bear. And he wrote:

> *... nous seuls pourrons, lorsque le peuple cherchera vraiment des chefs, et lorsque ses députés, électeurs, bourgeois, journalists, philosophes, propriétaires, se*

[465] Georges Weill, *L'école saint-simonienne*, p.6.
[466] Georg Iggers, *The Cult of Authority*, p.14.
[467] Sarane Alexandrian, *Le Socialisme Romantique*, p.184.
[468] Prosper Enfantin, *Religion saint-simonienne. Économie politique et politique. Articles extraits du Globe*, Bureau du Globe, Paris, IVème article, "Accroissement de la dette publique", 21 décembre 1830, p.39. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k122871g/f161.image.r=prosper+enfantin.langEN

tiendront tremblants à l'écart, nous seuls pourrons avoir la foi de l'autorité et commander l'obéissance [...] parce que l'avenir est à nous: nous seuls pourrons aussi éloigner tout ce qui sera usé, vieilli [...], prévenir et calmer les résistances rétrogrades; parce que nous savons le passé et ne craignons rien de lui.[469]

When, in 1826, *Le Producteur* disappeared, Olinde Rodrigues became the director of a credit house, and Enfantin was the secretary. Georges Weill is right to point to the strangeness of the fact that Rodrigues and Enfantin, who were so concentrated on financial matters, would decide to found a Church.

Their main sources of inspiration, beside Saint-Simon, were Joseph de Maistre – from whom they took over the idea of the danger of individualism, the necessity of a powerful authority and of human solidarity – and Madame de Staël – whose reflections on Germany, especially her analysis of Lessing's *Education of the Human Race*, left a strong impression on them.[470] What interested them mostly in Saint-Simon's thought was his unfinished *Nouveau Christianisme*. Olinde Rodrigues claimed that Saint-Simon had told him before dying: "*Toute la doctrine est là*".[471] The Saint-Simonians started the spiritual foundation of their Church, whose brain was Olinde's brother, Eugène Rodrigues. He conceptualized the hierarchy of the new religious community – which was to be a hierarchy of love, not of reason – by dividing it into a "*collège*" at the top, formed of the guiding personalities, and what was called the "*second degré*", under it, and, possibly a third, fourth etc. degrees. The members of the *collège* were called "fathers", while those of the *degrés* were their sons and brothers with one another. In 1829, the whole group decided that Prosper Enfantin and Saint-Amand Bazard would be Fathers ("*Pères suprêmes*") of the Saint-Simonian Church. But as

[469] *Œuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin*, Volume 2, précédés de deux notices historiques et publiées par les membres du Conseil institué par Enfantin pour l'exécution de ses dernières volontés, published by E. Dentu, Paris, 1865-1878, pp.209-210, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5460286t/f217.image.r=Oeuvres+de+Saint-Simon+et+d'Enfantin.langEN

[470] Georges Weill, *L'école saint-simonienne*, pp.14-15.

[471] Ibidem, p.15.

no such group, founded on a strong principle of hierarchy and authority, can stand two centers of authority, disputes were to appear soon within the Saint-Simonian Church, and the double authority was to be contested. Bazard then left the seat to Enfantin (who was convinced that his place was among the founders of religions, together with Moses and Mahomet), and shortly after departed for good from the Church.

The most important issue that led to Bazard's decision was a series of propositions made by Enfantin,[472] best summarized by Abensour as the will to destroy the existing forms of sociability and to create "*une nouvelle sociabilité voluptueuse: bref, le règne d'Eros*".[473] At first, Enfantin argued that, beside the founding Fathers, the Church needed "*un prêtre et une prêtresse*" who, "*par nécessité et par choix*", were celibates, emphasizing, thus, that they should look upon the entire humanity (or at least upon the sect, for the moment) as their family.[474] The priest and the priestess were invested with the duty to guide the inferiors on the way to progress, because there was no vice in human nature, but only people on a higher or a lesser level of progress.[475] Enfantin conceived of his sect, and of the whole humanity, as a body and believed that the superior should be able to act upon and influence the inferiors in all ways, just like the brain orders the body. He concluded, therefore, that "*la chair [est] sainte comme l'esprit: donc les supérieurs [peuvent] avoir des relations sexuelles avec les*

[472] It is noteworthy that there was a first wave of dissidents when Enfantin and Bazard were first declared *Pères suprêmes*, among which there were Auguste Comte – who afterwards created his own Church, not very different from the Saint-Simonian one –, the poet Léon Halévy, and Buchez – who eventually died as a Catholic.

[473] Miguel Abensour, *Les formes de l'utopie socialiste-communiste*, tome II, p.97.

[474] Shortly before dying, at the age of twenty-three years old, as Georges Weill writes, Eugène Rodrigues attempted to marry, but Enfantin forbade him, arguing that it was not fit for a founder of the new religion to have a classical family of his own. The young Rodrigues obeyed the Father's decision.

[475] George Weill, *L'école saint-simonienne*, p.107. Enfantin writes about the duty of the priests: "*ce seront des hommes dont la parole fera battre vos cœurs; […] ils vous donneront la Vie en vous montrant comment on Aime; ils vous dirigeront vers un avenir qui vous semblera beau, sublime, divin, et vous les glorifierez de l'avoir découvert avant vous, et vous les bénirez de vous l'avoir révélé*" (Prosper Enfantin, *Religion saint-simonienne. Économie politique et politique. Articles extraits du Globe*, XVe Article, "Organisation religieuse", 18 Juin 1831, p.170).

inférieurs pour les mieux diriger".[476] His argument was that the classical family was inherently linked to private property and, as such, one could not be abolished without the other; in their place, had to be enthroned collectivism in every detail of life. He even sustained that children should not know their biological fathers, but only *les Pères suprêmes*.

At the end of 1831, Bazard parted from the sect, leaving the title of *Père suprême* to Enfantin. However, Enfantin's initiatives were not successful because most members of the Church found them too repulsive. Shortly after Bazard's departure, Enfantin announced the new orientation of the sect: it would leave aside politics in order to focus on informing a morality in society and, in this sense, the Church developed also an exoteric teaching as well as a form of manifestation in the world. A financial organization had to be developed in the bosom of the Church, labouring to improve the life of the poor: "*il s'agit de fonder la puissance morale de l'argent, de créer une banque des travailleurs au moyen d'un emprunt; les fonds recueillis permettront d'installer des maisons d'éducation, des maisons d'associations industrielles et agricoles*".[477] On the spiritual level, Enfantin completed the practice of public confession – which already existed while Bazard shared in authority, although the latter was never enthusiastic about this idea – with a declaration of faith and love for the Father: "*Père, je vous aime*".[478] In November 1831, Leroux, who had joined the group in November 1830, left the Saint-Simonians, too. He writes in *Lettre au Docteur Deville* that the main two reasons for his departure were the hierarchical organization of the sect and the authoritarian figure of Père Enfantin, on the one hand, and the theories about

[476] Georges Weill, *L'école saint-simonienne*, p.96.
[477] Ibidem, p.106.
[478] Ibidem, p.108.

sexual relations, of the same *Père suprême*, on the other hand.[479]According to one witness, "*Leroux, tout en admettant le dogme en général, avait conservé son caractère républicain. Les formes trouvées par la hiérarchie le révoltaient*".[480] This proves the existence of a continual republican background in Leroux's thought.

During this period, the Saint-Simonians had two journals: *L'Organisateur*, a dogmatic journal, reproducing the teachings of the Saint-Simonian Church, and *Le Globe* (the former journal of the doctrinaires), a journal of debate, consecrated to daily affairs.[481] *Le Globe* published articles on industry – aiming at convincing the bourgeois to avoid an uprising of the proletariat and to associate with it. It published also articles on science, and on arts – most of the articles on arts calling the artists to come up with a synthetic, animating vision of the future. Artists should not see in the Notre-Dame Cathedral or in the *Divine Comedy* simply works of art worthy of contemplation, because they embodied the ideas of their epoch. As Abensour states, Saint-Simonism can be considered the first current of thought which operates the conjunction between the socio-political and the artistic avant-garde. Education, according to *Le Globe* articles, was reduced to instruction in the existing social order, which aimed at creating specialists for the State, while it should have a broader significance, consisting in the fact that the scientific body should grant to the other categories first and foremost a moral education.[482]

Enfantin's philosophy astonished through his desire of permanent reconciliation and complete identification of the world with its ideal. Enfantin could not accept any

[479] Pierre Leroux, *Lettre au Docteur Deville*, published by Miguel Abensour at the end of his book, *Le procès des maîtres rêveurs*, p.146.

[480] Charles Lambert, cited by J.-P. Lacassagne, *Un mage romantique, P. Leroux. Naissance d'un prophète, 1797-1832*, p.1221, in Bruno Viard, "introduction", *À la source perdue du socialisme français*, p.26.

[481] George Weill, *L'école saint-simonienne*, p.65.

[482] Prosper Enfantin, *Religion saint-simonienne. Économie politique et politique. Articles extraits du Globe*, XIIIème article. "Organisation scientifique", 1er Juin 1831, Bureau *du Globe*, Paris, pp.143-144, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k122871g/f161.image.r=prosper+enfantin.langEN

disharmony, any disobedience to the Identical One. The emphasis on unity and reconciliation seems to be a desperate attempt to set limits to a society whose galloping democratic tendencies make it appear as a society which refuses limits or, as Abensour says, it seems an attempt to reintroduce "*un principe d'unité et de stabilité contre une logique démocratique qui détruit tout en déplaçant tout*".[483] According to Enfantin, modern democracy dissolves unity which presupposes hierarchy and authority, and reveals instead egalitarian tendencies. For him, equality of all presupposes that each is his own master, and affirms the rights of critical reason over the principles of authority and unity. Enfantin and Saint-Simon, before him, were influenced by Joseph de Maistre's conception of authority and unity. According to Maistre, "*il ne peut y avoir de société humaine sans gouvernement, ni de gouvernement sans souveraineté, ni de souveraineté sans infaillibilité*".[484] The Saint-Simonians did not share, of course, Maistre's belief that infallibility should belong to the Catholic Pope, but they were convinced that a new scientific infallible papacy had to replace the latter. What is extraordinary in Saint-Simonism is that, while it argued against Catholic theology and adopted an anti-clerical discourse, it claimed that it rested on a fix point, seen as the last word of Providence in history and as a haven from the egalitarian, democratic tendencies which seemed to open the path to anarchy. The Saint-Simonians then arrived at a dogmatism which, in its simplicity and rigidity, had never been known even to Catholicism. The religious, in Saint-Simonian thought, was a purely immanent category and any transcendent reference seems to have vanished from History. According to the Saint-Simonians, equality, one of the central principles of modern democracy, strengthened the individualist tendency and affirmed the rights of critical reason over the principles of unity

[483] Miguel Abensour, "L'utopie socialiste", p.92.
[484] Joseph de Maistre, *Du Pape*, Desclée de Brouwer, Bruges, 1890, p.137.

and authority. In this sense, they believed that modern democracy supported and deepened the liberal atomisation. Thus, as it can be seen, the Saint-Simonians attacked the capitalist order in so far as its essence was individualism, which brought about atomisation. But they believed that the capitalist order could be integrated within a social order grounded on authority and hierarchy, in such a way that individualism would be turned into altruism and atomisation into unity. In order to do this, modern democracy needed to disappear.

We could see that, besides its authoritarian reveries, Saint-Simonism had also a very practical dimension. In January 1832, the sect faced government persecution which, like in the case of all religions, made it only more unyielding – Enfantin's "sons" claiming that they had received the revelation that the Father was the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The Saint-Simonian apostles, who, on the grounds of belonging to the clergy, refused to pay the military service to the State, were condemned to one day of prison, and at the end of January they were called into court for the spread of propaganda. In this context, Enfantin decided to concentrate, from now on, on the practical level, that is, to use the industrial "pacifist army" which would build railways and banks all over the world in order to make the world comfortable. In the middle of the year 1832, after the sect moved in Enfantin's house in Menilmontant, where it lived in a monastery-like rule, Enfantin concluded that the Saint-Simonians should have a uniform, which was blue, with buttons on the back, and which could not be closed without the help of another, in order to remember to the members of brotherhood. The propaganda continued; Enfantin sent "apostles" all over France and in other countries and, in some regions, the apostles had a sound success – after Jean Reynaud and Pierre Leroux brought "*la bonne nouvelle*" to Lyon in the middle of 1831, Saint-

Simonism was the main issue of discussions in the town for several weeks.[485] The Saint-Simonians were the first to use an immense number of copies of propagandistic articles – short, with clear and simple messages, with titles such as "*L'armée guerrière et l'armée pacifique*" or "*Comment le peuple peut s'élever*", and sometimes the number of such copies distributed in Paris arrived at 2,000 a day.[486]

One can think that there is an apparent contradiction between the fact that the group, on the one hand, seems to withdraw from the world (the monastery-like rule), and, on the other hand, the fact that it tries to "conquer" it through its apostolic dimension. The world, for them, was divided between those who possessed the dogmas and those who did not; at least for the moment, only the initiated members of the group fully comprehended and applied the dogmas, recognized Enfantin as their *Père suprême* and confessed to him. However, the aim was not simply to live a different life, but to transform the whole world, at least the whole France, into the Saint-Simonian Church. Yet the world was not prepared to hear the Saint-Simonian dogmas, so, it had to be "charmed". The industrial "pacifist army" and the "apostolic" missions were such means of "charm" that were supposed to convince the world of the beneficent and progressive character of Saint-Simonism. Once acquainted with the benefactions, the world would begin to adopt the Saint-Simonian manner of living, that is, would slowly join the sect. At the same time, not anyone was considered a trusted member of the sect. In order to be viewed as such, one needed two qualities, in particular: to fully recognize the authority of the *Père suprême* and not to question his judgments and decisions.[487] The sect used, thus, a double "charm", one for the world and one for the sect.

[485] Georges Weill, *L'école saint-simonienne*, p.58.
[486] Ibidem, p.128.
[487] Leroux writes in *Lettre au Docteur Deville*: "*Quand, après avoir cédé le* Globe *aux disciples de Saint-Simon […], je disais à Enfantin, qui avait pris le* tutoiement *comme le signe de sa supériorité sur ceux qu'il*

The "charm" within the sect was meant to strengthen in its members the feeling of belonging to its "body"; in this way, it was also meant to protect them from the "charm" of the world, and to light in them the desire to "charm" the world instead.

In July 1832, Enfantin decided to build a temple in his yard[488] and the Saint-Simonians began to organize religious celebrations, with music and a festive atmosphere. The purpose was, as Abensour writes, "*de passionner les masses, satisfaisant leurs aspirations à une nouvelle communauté, au-delà de l'égoïsme*".[489] Passers-by were invited to watch, a thing which was part of the same process of "charm". The festivities seem to have had an effect because the crowd coming to watch, at least out of curiosity, was bigger every week. On August 27, 1832, there took place the trial for the accusations of January, concerning the Saint-Simonian spread of propaganda. The Saint-Simonians defended themselves by emphasizing the vices and the immorality of the world which pretended to accuse them. At the end of the trial, Enfantin and two other members were condemned to one year of prison, while Rodrigues and the other members received a fine.[490] The people of Paris, however, regarded with sympathy the "victims of the government".[491] After these events, Enfantin decided to disperse the members of the Saint-Simonian Church, in particular because the sect had debts to repay and Enfantin realized that the members needed to work in order to survive.[492] Thus, the Saint-Simonian Church died in 1833, but the Saint-Simonians'

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*appelait ses fils: 'Pourquoi ne me tutoyez-vous pas?' il me répondit: 'Je ne vous tutoie pas parce que je ne vous sens pas '*mon fils'.' *Et Bazard, à la même époque, m'accusait de* philosophiquer *la doctrine*" (Pierre Leroux, *Lettre au Docteur Deville*, published in Miguel Abensour, *Le procès des maîtres rêveurs*, p.137).

[488] The financial means for such projects came from the members. Enfantin and Olinde Rodrigues contributed with large sums of money. An interesting point is that many of the members were bourgeois coming from well-to-do families and with significant accomplishments. For instance, Laurent, an important member, had been the historian of Napoleon 1st and Olinde Rodrigues was a well-known mathematician.

[489] Miguel Abensour, "L'utopie socialiste", p.91.

[490] George Weill, *L'école saint-simonienne*, p.131.

[491] Ibidem.

[492] Ibidem, p.132.

adventures did not end here. In the autumn of 1833, Enfantin, together with some Saint-Simonian engineers, arrived in Egypt where, following the discussions with the viceroy, started working at the Suez Canal and the barrage on the Nile.[493]

Saint-Simonian thought clearly has an esthetical dimension. But the esthetical, and the artistic dimension in general, was, for the Saint-Simonians, abstract, disconnected from the artistic accomplishments of humanity, accomplishments which account for humanity's relation with itself, with history and with divinity. Already in *Le Globe* – closed in 1832 – the Saint-Simonians were arguing that the Louvre and Versailles should be destroyed because, as I said, from their point of view, such works of art were the expression of the mentality of an epoch, and, since the two architectural pieces were the expression of the Old Regime, it only made sense, in their view, that they should perish. Now, in Egypt, when a pyramid was in the way of the barrage on the Nile, Enfantin came with the idea that it should be dynamited.[494]

The insistence of Saint-Simonism on engineering and banking projects accounts for the desire of taking into possession the world, that is equivalent to taking into possession the life of humanity itself and subjecting it to a continual progressive transformation. The history of Saint-Simonism shows that, as Abensour says, we deal here with the creation of a doctrinal corpus on the grounds of a "*utopie-mère*" which is that of Saint-Simon and which was brought by them down to earth, to put it this way. This "*diffusion de l'utopie-mère*" attempts

[493] The Saint-Simonians chose Egypt for its special status. Initially, Napoleon led a military campaign in Egypt and Syria between 1798 and 1801. After France withdrew, Muhammad Ali, a military Ottoman officer, governed Egypt which was officially under the authority of the Ottoman Empire. Muhammad Ali wanted to reform and to modernize Egypt, following the model of the French Republic. As such, he sent young men to study in France and asked Europeans, and Frenchmen in particular, to come to Egypt to help establish a sound educational system and develop the Egyptian industry. It is in this context that the Saint-Simonian engineers went there with their industrial plans.

[494] George Weill, *L'école saint-simonienne*, p.175.

to make adjustments to the world-as-it-is with the purpose of eventually seducing it and including it in the Saint-Simonian Church eventually transformed into a global impersonal bureaucratic Apparatus. Could Saint-Simon's utopia have had another fate? This, we cannot know, but Saint-Simon's emphasis on the spiritual scientific power, in the form of a dogmatic authority, and on the taking into possession of the globe through industry, reveals that the Saint-Simonians already had a solid ground for their future dogmatism.

As I said, the Saint-Simonians mark the passage from transcendence to immanence. There is no trace of "*écart absolu*" in their thought which is centered on the idea of society's identification with its model. In Saint-Simonian thought, what defines human beings as human is the fact that they can transform the world through labour and they can do this best when the feeling of belonging to humanity, of brotherhood, is stimulated in them. Human beings experience solidarity (I use here the terms brotherhood and solidarity interchangeably) through labour – and in this way Saint-Simonism announces Marx – and through the fact that they are united in the body of humanity by the *Père suprême*, which reveals an economy of domination. The recognition of this dogmatic authority involves the hate towards reflection, which results in the lack of interest towards political action – understood as interest for *res publica*, for the life of the city. Then there remains only action related to industry, understood as "*l'administration des choses*", as Saint-Simon liked to say, announcing, too, Marx. Utopia was transformed by the Saint-Simonians from reflection into the concrete desire of taking into possession the world and its objects. The desire for the experience of humanity, *i.e.*, for knowing the other as other through a process of discussion and reflection is absent; the possession of the world and of its objects by all, kept alive by

the stimulated collective passions, becomes the experience of humanity. In this sense, it could be said that utopia has been reified.

2.8. The Grand Inquisitor and the incompatibility between freedom and unity

The Saint-Simonians, on the footsteps of their master, Saint-Simon, were claiming that they were accomplishing and overcoming the work of Catholicism: they were giving up what they considered to be its outmoded metaphysics, but were preserving its hierarchical structure, animating it with new dogmas. In a similar manner, Dostoevsky was arguing in the *Diary* and in the legend of "The Grand Inquisitor" that French socialism was continuing the work of Catholicism, mainly by preserving its hierarchical and authoritarian structure. The idea of a powerful State, as the source of the spiritual unity of the people, was taken over by a certain version of French socialism, believed Dostoevsky. I want to emphasize in this section the similarity of structure between the Saint-Simonians and the Grand Inquisitor. The latter develops, too, a utopia which, like that of the Saint-Simonians, is situated in the realm of immanence, any reference to the "*écart absolu*" being rejected.

I would like to begin this section with three questions formulated in an inspiring manner by Travis Kroeker and Bruce Ward, by which they summarize the essence of the legend. I believe that the three questions are fundamental in understanding the thought of Saint-Simon, of the Saint-Simonians and also of the Grand Inquisitor. They are to be understood in relation with the interpretation of the three temptations of Christ, which I will discuss shortly. The three questions are: "What fundamental human need is revealed? What is the

means to the satisfaction of this need? How does history itself verify the truth of this interpretation of the temptation?"[495]

Kroeker and Ward are right to argue that the separate publication of the legend of "The Grand Inquisitor" was not fortunate. We could not grasp its meaning if we forget that Ivan Karamazov is the author of the legend and Alyosha is his listener. I believe, thus, that it is necessary to briefly sketch Ivan, as the "man of an idea". Ivan Karamazov is presented as a thinker and a Euclidean mind. Ivan does not reject the existence of God, but the world as God created it, as it is now and as it will be in eternity. According to non-Euclidean geometry, two parallel lines meet at infinity. God, instead, created the world "according to Euclidean geometry, while he created the human mind with an awareness of only three spatial dimensions".[496] According to the Euclidean geometry – the only one which the human mind understands – two parallel lines never meet. The parallel lines are, in fact, justice and love whose meeting is impossible in this world. The order of the world-as-it-is, according to Ivan, discloses the evil widespread in the world, especially gratuitous evil done to innocent persons. It is impossible for the human mind to grasp the overcoming of this existential condition of evil which necessitates an eschatological resolution, incomprehensible and unimaginable for man. So that the world, as God created it, could be justified, evil needs to be justified first, and an answer is expected to the question of why God allows the suffering of the innocents. God's Euclidean world, says Ivan, cannot offer a rational explanation to innocent suffering, simply because the two parallel lines, justice and love, will never meet. Christianity pretends, according to him, that, at the end of times, creation will be reconciled with itself. In other words, creation will pass from Euclidean

[495]Travis Kroeker & Bruce Ward, *Remembering the End. Dostoevsky as Prophet to Modernity*, Westview Press, Boulder, 2001, p.37.

[496] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.307.

geometry to non-Euclidean geometry, where the two lines will meet at infinity. But Ivan explains that he does not accept the world-as-it-will-be, the world of reconciliation, either. Evidently, the evil perpetrated against the innocents should be punished by God, but, on the other hand, if Hell exists, how could this state be called reconciliation and harmony? Moreover, what satisfaction could the eternal punishment of the torturer bring to the victim, whose suffering cannot, anyway, be effaced by anything? Ivan tells Alyosha:

> I understand what a shaking must rend the universe when all that is in heaven and under the earth flows together in one laudatory voice […]: 'Just and true art Thou, O Lord, for Thy ways are made plain!' […] [I]t may very well be, perhaps, that when I reach the moment in my life at which I see it, or rise up from the dead in order to do so, I myself may exclaim with all the rest […]: 'Just and true art Thou, O Lord!', but it is something I do not want to do. While there is still time I shall hasten to guard myself, and so I decline the offer of eternal harmony altogether. It is not worth one single small tear of even one tortured child …[497]

From the perspective of "the human mind with an awareness of only three spatial dimensions", God's love and God's omnipotence are contradictory. Within the limits of Euclidean geometry, God is either omnipotent – and it means, then, that he wants to allow evil – or good – and it means, then, that he is weak if evil is happening. The only possible justification, believes Ivan, is the leap of faith, beyond Euclidean geometry. But he refuses it for the reason that his mind operates only within Euclidean geometry. Therefore, he concludes that the world is simply absurd. Ivan can think of only two possible answers to this situation – which meet in Euclidean geometry: nihilism and the Grand Inquisitor's communist system. The world-as-it-is lives in a profound duality of good and evil; but the good offers man the intuition of an absolute Good. Ivan / the Grand Inquisitor takes the world-as-it-is and attempts to eliminate this duality, to pretend that the reconciliation is made here, that injustice is annulled. On the other hand, nihilism means the manifestation of the

[497]Ibidem, pp.319-320.

will-to-power. But nihilism and the Grand Inquisitor's communism are not contradictory at all, as it could be seen in the case of Shigalovism. On the contrary, Ivan's creation, the Grand Inquisitor, uses the will-to power, like Pyotr Verkhovensky does, in order to build a world where, allegedly, there would be no injustice, which is the same as the world where the nihilist elites affirm their wills upon those whom they consider slaves. By refusing the relation with the source of life, God, Ivan finds himself prisoner of the contradictions of this world, where the devil imposes himself. So we can see that, despite his compassion for innocent victims, Ivan, acting from within the system, cannot help perpetrating evil. To mention just a few examples, he does not care about almsgiving, he gives a blow and throws out of the carriage the base landowner Maksimov, or tells calmly to Alyosha, after the quarrel between their father, Fyodor Pavlovich, and their brother, Dmitry, that "one reptile will devour another".

We encounter in Ivan's rebellion against God some resemblances but also major differences between Ivan / the Grand Inquisitor and the Saint-Simonians. The latter do not deal with a refusal of God in itself. They sustain the utility of religion as an instrument of the social order and, in this sense, they refuse the Christian God on scientific grounds: Christianity, with its metaphysics, is primitive and inefficient. By contrast, Ivan, like all of Dostoevsky's nihilists, rebels against God because he created an unjust world and this is why their rebellion becomes demonic. Moreover, Ivan realizes that, once God is chased out of the world, science loses its grounds and legitimacy, too. The only solution then appears to be the Grand Inquisitor's communism that combines socialism and nihilism and that pretends, as part of the nihilist elite, that injustice has been eliminated, while being aware of his lie.

Ivan recited the poem of "The Grand Inquisitor" as a strange expression of his thirst for justice. The plot is situated in the sixteenth-century Spain and the Grand Inquisitor is a Roman-Catholic cardinal, a head-figure in the stake-burning of heretics. Nevertheless, as Alyosha says, it is difficult to imagine a Catholic prelate of any time-period to adopt the Inquisitor's discourse. I believe that the Inquisitor expresses rather a nineteenth-century socialist prototype that sustains the ideal of science and progress – although there can be seen here the connection, which Dostoevsky often emphasized in his *Diary*, between the development of Catholicism and socialism. The poem seems, in the beginning, to develop as a dialogue, since it describes the meeting between the authoritarian cardinal and his mysterious Prisoner, whom the Grand Inquisitor recognizes as Christ returned to earth – although Ivan adds that it might as well be a hallucination of the Inquisitor's ninety-year old mind. However, since the Prisoner is quiet all the time, the poem turns out to be a monologue. The Grand Inquisitor accuses Christ to have rejected the three temptations of the mighty spirit in the desert. In this way, he, who, out of love for humanity, shed his blood for it, deprived, in reality, humankind of its most fundamental need. Coming back to the first question expressed in the beginning of this section – "What fundamental human need is revealed? – the answer of the Grand Inquisitor, just as of Saint-Simon and of the Saint-Simonians, is the need for order. Both the Grand Inquisitor and the Saint-Simonians are convinced that the satisfaction of this need excludes the affirmation of freedom. As Alyosha notes, the Inquisitor has a specific understanding of freedom, which is, in fact the same as the liberal understanding, the affirmation of the self.[498]

[498] I was arguing in the previous section that the Saint-Simonians took over Rousseau's statement that the love of self, egoism, and the love of others, altruism, have the same source, that altruism is egoism channeled in a productive way. According to the Saint-Simonians and to the Grand Inquisitor, human beings, in general, are

Christ's refusal of the first temptation, *i.e.*, of the transformation of stones into bread, means, according to the Grand Inquisitor, that Christ chose "to go into the world […] with empty hands, with a kind of promise of freedom which they in their simplicity and inborn turpitude are unable even to comprehend",[499] just because he did not want that love would be dependent on loaves. But, continues the Grand Inquisitor, people will see, in the end, that Christ's ideal of freedom[500] will lead them only to anarchy, even to cannibalism, and will eventually understand that "freedom and earthly bread in sufficiency for all are unthinkable together, for never, never will they be able to share between themselves!"[501] And in the end "they will bring us their freedom and place it at our feet and say to us: 'Enslave us if you will, but feed us'."[502] But this is only part of the truth, the Inquisitor believes. According to him, man is both a rebel and a slave; nothing is more appealing to him than freedom, while, at the same time, he can stand neither the effects nor the pangs of conscience resulted from freedom. As such, the need for order is accomplished not only by earthly bread, but also by finding someone to worship – a thing which was extremely clear for the Saint-Simonians. And the means to satisfying this need lies in the significance of the second temptation through the refusal of which Christ overwhelmed humanity with the burden of freedom, according to the Grand Inquisitor.

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not capable of transforming by themselves their egoism into altruism, but need an authoritarian dogmatic guidance.

[499] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.329.

[500] The Grand Inquisitor is conscious that Christ does not understand freedom in terms of affirmation of the self, but in terms of overcoming the self, through the practice of asceticism. But he does not grasp the meaning of the Christian overcoming of the self, since he seems to equate it more or less with a kind of "masochistic endurance" which he himself is practicing. And he is convinced, by historical experience, that the great majority of people are not capable of self-renunciation, but can exercise their freedom only as affirmation of the self, whose ultimate consequences they cannot bear.

[501] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.330.

[502] Ibidem.

The Grand Inquisitor is caught in the dialectic of freedom and necessity, a dialectic which I believe is characteristic also of Saint-Simonian thought. As Berdyaev explains it, the freedom to choose the good involves the freedom to choose evil, but the latter eventually destroys freedom itself "and it degenerates into an evil necessity",[503] as "the possessed" have proven. Characters like the Grand Inquisitor or the Saint-Simonians believe that the capacity to choose the good involves, for the majority of people, an authority that would deny freedom of evil which, says Berdyaev, "ends equally in a negation of freedom and its degeneration into a good necessity" – and the Grand Inquisitor is perfectly aware of this. But, "a good necessity is not good because goodness resides in freedom from necessity. The fires of Inquisition were the horrifying evidence of this tragedy of freedom".[504]

In the second temptation, Jesus refused to throw himself from the pinnacle of the temple, just like he refused to get down from the Cross, because he "did not want to enslave man with a miracle". He "thirsted for a love that was free, not for the servile ecstasies of the slave before the might that has inspired him with dread once and for all. But even here you had too high an opinion of human beings, for of course, they are slaves, though they are created mutineers".[505] Man is incapable of free love; the only thing he is able to stand is the Law and this is why, as Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians also stressed, he needs Legislators who, in the modern period of scientific advances, are capable to excite the collective passion and love of the masses. This is what the Grand Inquisitor, just like Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians, understands by "miracle, mystery and authority". Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians emphasized the role of the scientific Legislator who would give one certain

[503] Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, p.70.
[504] Ibidem.
[505] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, pp. 334.

dogma, not a Christ-like figure who buries the world in enigmas, through his silence. In this specific aspect, the point of view of Saint-Simon, the Saint-Simonians and the Grand Inquisitor evokes Tolstoy, for whom "Christ's policy appeared like that of a monarch who would go about in rags and obscurity, allowing his realm to fall into disorder, so as to sanctify those few among his subjects acute enough to recognize him even in disguise".[506]

The rebels need a "mystery" "which must be dogmatically 'believed rather than known' " and "the 'authority' of those who preach the 'mystery' will be confirmed […] by 'miracles' or the appearance of miracles".[507] The "appearance of miracles" is given – in Saint-Simonian thought – by the fact that humankind, under the guidance of scientists who master the progress of science, and inspired by artists, take into possession the world. But, in the Grand Inquisitor's case, the greatest miracle (to which Saint-Simonian thought could come close, but is not identified with it) resides in the capacity of the rulers to "endure freedom": "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".[508]

Freedom, this great burden of mankind, cannot be undertaken but by a few thousands, of which the Inquisitor says that Christ is so proud while, in his strange love for mankind, he does not care for the millions of weak beings – "they will at last recognize that the intention of the one who created them mutineers was undoubtedly to make fun of them".[509] The few capable to stand freedom are those who live on locusts in the desert, just like the Grand Inquisitor did once. And this is the other side of the meaning of freedom for the Grand

[506]George Steiner, *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky*, p.262.Auguste Comte, who had been Saint-Simon's follower and parted from the Saint-Simonians, wrote down the name of the Apostle Paul, in his own religious calendar, but not of Jesus Christ, because he saw strong anarchist tendencies in the latter.

[507] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.113.

[508] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.330.

[509]Ibidem, p.334.

Inquisitor, as I already said. If for the great majority of weak people, freedom is affirmation of the self, for the few, it is "masochistic endurance". This endurance is, in fact, still affirmation of the self, but an affirmation characteristic to the Overman, assumed and controlled, presumably capable not to fall into anarchy and cannibalism, the same "masochistic endurance" of which Raskolnikov or Pyotr Verkhovensky talked.

As Kroeker and Ward argue, the Grand Inquisitor's interpretation of the three temptations intends to reveal the essential need of humanity which has manifested itself throughout history. The Grand Inquisitor divides the history of humankind into its childhood, adolescence and maturity, these periods representing three forms of unity. Humanity's childhood is represented by Antiquity, its adolescence by Christianity, and its maturity by communism which, by combining bread and religion, obtains absolute power. The meaning of the first temptation, according to him, corresponds to humanity's childhood, characterized by "'communality of worship' and strict adherence to the 'firm ancient law'."[510] This is the "ancient 'Oriental World'", in which "the individual never comes to the consciousness of independence".[511] The idea of freedom and equality for all has been brought into history by Christianity. Here we encounter humanity's adolescence. It was the task of Roman Catholicism, which represents Christ on earth, to appease "the individual's awakened consciousness of moral independence".[512] The great achievement of medieval Catholicism then appears as the accomplishment of the need for order – in this sense, the Grand Inquisitor has the same unilateral understanding of Catholicism like Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians. For the Grand Inquisitor, just like for Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians, the nostalgic longing for the lost unity is "transformed into the hopeful

[510]Travis Kroeker & Bruce Ward, *Remembering the End*, p.61.
[511]Ibidem.
[512]Ibidem, p.62.

expectation of a future unity, yet on a higher level" because it will satisfy both the need for bread and the "human desire for freedom of conscience".[513] This unity presupposes lying to people that the rulers rule in Christ's name: "we shall persuade them that they will only become free when they renounce their freedom for us and submit to us. And what does it matter whether we are right or whether we are telling a lie?"[514] Man, a slave with instincts of rebel, according to the Grand Inquisitor, wants both bread and a free conscience. And, for this dream, he says, men will build again "the terrible tower of Babel", but during this process they will murder one another because they are not capable of spontaneous unity. The remaining ones will seek the Grand Inquisitor, asking him to bring them to unity by mutilating them, that is, by taking away from them the burden of freedom. The Grand Inquisitor persuades the "millions of weak beings", and they let themselves persuaded by him, that they are free from a political perspective. The Grand Inquisitor will have liberated them from the classical political domination, from the division in family and in society, by imposing his authority. Like Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians, the Grand Inquisitor promises to free people from the limits of nature, that is, from hunger, and from domination, that is, from the Old Regime. But this freedom is founded on authority.

This is the meaning of the last temptation and of humanity's maturity, at the same time: the desire for "universal unity" which, says the Grand Inquisitor, began with the Roman Empire – a unity which "was undertaken by the rebellion of the personal conscience"[515] –, was continued by the Roman Catholic Church, an institutionalized unity – that was undermined by another "great idealist", Luther – and will be fully accomplished under the

[513]Ibidem, p.63.
[514] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.336.

[515] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.116.

Grand Inquisitor's banner, "miracle, mystery and authority" and will be expressed in the formula "the Pope – leader of communism".[516] I believe that, although Dostoevsky's opinions as a publicist prove his belief that there was a logical evolution from Catholicism to communism, this formula is intended to find its best expression in a certain form of nineteenth-century socialism – since the self-proclamation of Popes and *Pères suprêmes* was in vogue among French socialists. Dostoevsky affirmed repeatedly that he did not doubt of the persistence of "the image of Christ […] in the hearts of many Catholics", but, at the same time, believed there was an institutional perversion in the Catholic Church. He argued that the pretentions of the Papacy to infallibility meant that the Catholic Church, as an institution, "proclaimed the dogma that 'Christianity cannot survive on earth without the earthly power of the Pope' " and "thereby has proclaimed a new Christ", "seduced by the third temptation".[517] Eventually, Dostoevsky writes in his *Diary*, the Pope will gather all under his authority, within a humanity that will know no sin, convincing it that "all your sins have been caused by your poverty".[518] This is an idea, which, I believe brings the figure of the Pope closer to the scientific Saint-Simonian *Père suprême* or the Comtean Pope rather than to the Catholic Pope. French socialism, in Dostoevsky's opinion – and it has to be mentioned that Dostoevsky referred here to a specific socialism, like the Saint-Simonian, Fourierist or the Cabetian socialism – "is nothing else but a *compulsory* communion of mankind", continuing, thus, the project of the Roman Empire, which had been "conserved in Catholicism".[519]

[516]Ibidem, p.116.
[517] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.I, p.256.
[518]Ibidem, p.257.
[519]Ibidem, Vol.II, p.563.

There is something attractive in the character of the Grand Inquisitor, which comes from his infinite compassion for humanity, for which he has given up living on locusts in the desert, and whose sins he takes upon himself. There is something attractive as well in the author of "The Grand Inquisitor", Ivan, because his prose poem cries for justice and, as Kroeker and Ward say, "puts the Christian account of divine justice itself on trial".[520] But there is also, in the Grand Inquisitor and in Ivan, something repulsive which comes, in fact, from their resemblance with Raskolnikov (in the first part of the novel) and Shigalov, who divide humanity into a few men of genius and the great majority whom the former are bound to rule. All these characters believe that their "compassion for human suffering justifies [the] questioning of the principles of freedom and equality, insofar as these principles are obstacles to whatever means of happiness is possible for such 'unfinished, trial creatures created in mockery'."[521] In the same manner, the Saint-Simonians conclude that freedom and equality, on the one hand, and unity, on the other, are inconceivable together. The repulsion that such characters inspire comes from the fact that their compassion for humanity is not love, but pity – a feeling which is accompanied by contempt.[522] The essence of the Grand

[520]Travis Kroeker & Bruce Ward, *Remembering the End*, p.100.

[521]Ibidem, p.80.

[522] This synonymy between compassion and pity reminds one of Hannah Arendt's critique of Rousseau's compassion. According to Rousseau, self-love (*amour de soi*) is a natural feeling, but once people enter society, this pure passion is transformed into a negative one, *amour propre*, because, in society, another passion is developed: comparison. People are tempted to compare themselves with others, especially with those that are more beautiful, happier or wealthier. Since all these passions are natural, Jean-Jacques, Émile's educator, concludes that it is not so simple to teach one "to reject by the act of will the vice of envy and choose the opposite virtue of compassion" (Bruce Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing,Grand Rapids, 2010, p.168) and that he should use, instead, some passions in order to temper others. As such, because he believes that "one pities in others only those ills from which one does not feel oneself exempt", Jean-Jacques exposes Émile to the misfortunes of others, making him realize that he himself could one day be in their position. In this way, Émile is encouraged to think that there are others more unfortunate than him, his instinct of comparison being always driven towards the suffering, and he can, as a consequence, exercise compassion – a natural instinct, present also in animals – which is able to temper self-love (*amour de soi*). Hannah Arendt "was troubled by the egalitarian character of compassion", manifested as "*fraternité*", in which Rousseau saw "the fulfillment of humanity" (Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1970, p.12). According to Arendt, "[h]umanity in the form of fraternity invariably appears historically among persecuted peoples and enslaved groups" (Ibidem, p.13). Arendt argues that "the humanitarianism of

Inquisitor's reproach to Christ is that he does not love the millions of weak and trembling creatures who will never be capable of what he is asking from them, a "love that is free" and to voluntarily "share between themselves". Out of the contemptuous pity tyranny is born. The systems of the Grand Inquisitor, of Raskolnikov and of Shigalov "conjoin political power with a nihilism that has exchanged its ferocious aspect for a humanitarian face".[523] It might be difficult at first sight to identify Saint-Simonian thought with the discourses of the Grand Inquisitor or of Shigalov which, in the end, appear as cynical. The self-sufficiency and the self-satisfaction which the Saint-Simonians, the Grand Inquisitor and Shigalov share give birth in them to the despise for their fellows and for the world. It is worth mentioning an aspect that differentiates the Grand Inquisitor from the Saint-Simonians. Unlike the latter, the Inquisitor is conscious of the nihilism of his project and of the fact that, alienated from the other world, this world cannot find in itself any justification and that, moreover, it will be grounded on the degradation of the human being. The cynicism of the Grand Inquisitor consists in the fact that he acts with full awareness. Unlike Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians, Ivan, the author of "The Grand Inquisitor", does not reject religion on scientific grounds, but for the reason that the world cannot be justified. We could say that the Saint-Simonians prove a soft cynicism, while in the case of Ivan and of the Grand Inquisitor, cynicism is close to demonism. Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians do not propound a utopia overtly *against* Christ; their utopia simply rejects Papacy which it takes over in another form. And what is most important, the Saint-Simonians know the Church only as a structure visible in the world, they do not know it from the inside; in other words, they do

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brotherhood scarcely befits those who do not belong among the insulted and the injured and can share in it only through their compassion" (Ibidem, p.16). Compassion, then, becomes pity (which involves contempt), felt by those from the outside for the "insulted and injured" and by the latter for one another.

[523]Travis Kroeker & Bruce Ward, *Remembering the End*, p.76.

not know Christ. By contrast, Ivan and the Grand Inquisitor know and reject Christ at the same time and put forward their utopia *against* Christ. In his monologue, the Grand Inquisitor says: "we took the sword of Caesar, and, of course, in taking it rejected you and followed *him*".[524] From the perspective of the Grand Inquisitor, the Saint-Simonians would be those building the Tower of Babel, who do not grasp his great secret.

Nevertheless, we can identify in all of them a common aspect: their utopia "lowers the sight" of the ideal and makes adjustments to the world-as-it-is. Moreover, the Saint-Simonian emphasis on the stimulation of collective desires and passions, the rule exercised by scientists and artists, with the Father at the top, the transformation of the Saint-Simonian Church into an impersonal bureaucratic Apparatus, compel us to think of at least one similarity between the Saint-Simonian project and the one of the Grand Inquisitor and of Shigalov: they all "compel us to question our usual conception of what a tyranny is, to entertain the possibility of a tyranny *incognito*", the tyranny, as Ward says, "of bureaucracies and corporations gradually becoming oblivious of human equality"[525] and freedom. The love stimulated in the systems of both the Saint-Simonians and the Grand Inquisitor is "impersonal and collective, it drives people to huddle together so that they may not be so frightened of living" and, as Berdyaev argues, such love "is the final term of self-will and self-affirmation. The last refuge for man's 'idealism' is in the pity he feels for his fellows as feeble creatures who are the plaything of blind destiny".[526]

The Grand Inquisitor's exercise of power is both a source of suffering and of pleasure for him. It is a source of suffering because he "deceives those whom he loves, by means of 'noble' lies that they are free, even though they have given up their freedom […]; that they

[524] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.336.
[525] Ibidem.
[526] Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky*, p.130.

are equal, even though their equality is that of slaves; that they have an eternal destiny, even though there is nothing beyond the grave".[527] The source of pleasure resides not so much in the exercise of power, as in the "masochistic endurance" of the Overman supposedly for the sake of weak creatures capable neither of freedom nor of equality, and whose only vocation is to be controlled.[528] As Steiner states, the fundamental reason for which the systems of Shigalovs and of Grand Inquisitors are monstrous is that they "transform men into satisfied brutes"; the destruction of "legal and civil rights" is only of secondary importance, for Dostoevsky, because it is the outcome of a spiritual destruction.[529]

2.9. Dostoevsky: a dialogical utopia

"The truth about an individual in the mouths of others, non-dialogical, second-hand truth, becomes a degrading and deadening lie when it concerns his 'holy of holies', that is 'man in man'."[530] This is, according to Bakhtin, the essence of Dostoevsky's literary world. The "sin" of Grand Inquisitors or of Shigalovs is not that they love humanity too much, but that they despise and degrade it with the greatest lie, that it is they who hold the One, Immobile, and Impersonal, truth about humanity. Dostoevsky shows in his literature that an idea "in one person's isolated individual consciousness" becomes degenerate, like in the case of the monological discourse of the Grand Inquisitor, and is drained of life. The proper environment where it remains alive and bears fruit is the "dialogical relation with other,

[527] Travis Kroeker & Bruce Ward, *Remembering the End*, p.138.
[528] Feodor Dostoevsky, *C.P.*, p.360.
[529] George Steiner, *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky*, p.294.
[530] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, p.50.

foreign, ideas".[531] The monologue, in Dostoevsky's work, is related to the idea of self-sufficiency which, as seen, brings about the contempt for the other. In his monologue, the Grand Inquisitor pretends to put forward his system out of love for humanity. But his love is, in fact, pity, a thing valid equally for the Saint-Simonians. And pity, just like monologism, is self-sufficient; it does not take into consideration the other's feelings and, thus, annuls the other. Pity imposes, thus, what appears to be the truth through a monologue.

Dostoevsky was influenced, according to Bakhtin, by the Socratic dialogue and by the menippea. The Socratic dialogue tests the "philosophical position" of the wise man "in the world".[532] "The content of the menippea", according to Bakhtin, "consists of the adventure of an *idea* or of the *truth* in the world",[533] and one feature of this genre is "the organic combination […] of free fantasy, symbolism and sometimes mystical-religious element".[534] Like the Socratic dialogue, menippea is a literary genre of "ultimate questions", and Bakhtin argues that Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius and Augustine were "masters of this genre", at whose basis "lies the inner man, which is accessible not to passive self-observation, but only to an active dialogical approach to oneself".[535] Menippea also includes "elements of social utopia which are introduced in the form of dreams or journeys to unknown lands".[536] Examples of menippea are Lucian's *Menippus or a Journey to the Kingdom of the Dead*, the Gospels and the *Lives of Saints*, which contain elements of utopia. In modernity, such examples are Voltaire's *Candide* and *Micromégas*. In what concerns Dostoevsky's novels, to give only a few examples, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, "the monk and the atheist", Alyosha and Ivan,

[531]Ibidem, p.71.
[532]Ibidem, p.95.
[533]Ibidem.
[534]Ibidem, p.94.
[535]Ibidem, p.99.
[536]Ibidem, p.97.

solve in a tavern the "ultimate universal questions", in *Crime and punishment*, Raskolnikov and Sonya debate on the social order which begets truth and justice, in *The Idiot*, Myshkin is always involved in discussions by which his interlocutors discover something about themselves etc.

Other two important elements of menippea are "the profound carnival attitude to the world" and the dream. The carnival attitude to the world has three manifestations in Dostoevsky's novels. One is the trivial carnival attitude; such is the attitude of Fyodor Pavlovich, expressed, for instance, in the meeting between him and his sons, on the one hand, and elder Zosima, on the other hand, where Fyodor Pavlovich, out of a permanent feeling of shame of himself, behaves voluntarily in a base and clownish manner which he knows will determine everyone to look down on him. Fyodor Pavlovich Karmazov's life is full of piquant details. He was married twice, from the first marriage having one son, Dmitry, and from the second, two sons, Ivan and Alyosha. Ivan and Alyosha's mother was a sensitive young woman, with mystical inclinations, who had been driven crazy and eventually died because of the debauchery Fyodor Pavlovich was hosting in their house. Fyodor Pavlovich wanted money and comfort, and took pleasure in mocking and degrading other – especially weak – human beings. He knew that he was contemptible and ridiculous in the eyes of the others, but he also knew that, at the same time, they enjoyed hearing the piquant details of his life. And this incited him to behave even more in a base and clownish manner. Fyodor Pavlovich manifested an absolute indifference towards his three children who were left to the mercy of his servants, and were then taken in the care of different distant relatives. Ivan and Alyosha had different paths. Ivan was absorbed into studies and became an atheist thinker, while Alyosha entered a monastery, in the same town where their

father lived, under the guidance of a renowned elder, Father Zosima. After coming of age, the first son, Dmitry, asked from his father, whom he sincerely disliked, his part of inheritance from his mother. Fyodor Pavlovich progressively sent him parts of his inheritance which Dmitry – who also had a part of the Karamazov passionate soul – quickly spent on parties. From the point of view of the father, Dmitry had already received his part of inheritance, while from the point of view of the broke son, Fyodor Pavlovich still owed him part of inheritance. As a consequence, Dmitry, Ivan and Fyodor Karamazov decide to ask Alyosha to obtain for them a meeting with the renowned Father Zosima so that the latter would arbitrate between father and son. The meeting is taking place at the monastery and, here, Fyodor Pavlovich makes ridiculous scenes; Zosima tells him that his lack of authenticity and the profound feeling of shame for himself arouse in him the desire to act even more shamefully. Eventually, Fyodor Pavlovich seems to be completely overwhelmed by this desire, so that the family fails to obtain an answer for their initial request, and everything ends with Fyodor Pavlovich mocking the monks.

The other type of carnival attitude is that of the "insulted and injured", of people offended and despised by society. Such is the case of Marmeladov, in *Crime and punishment*, Sonia's father, and of Snegiryov, Ilyusha's father, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, who, from the status of once respectable people, arrived, due to a certain unfortunate incident or due to personal vices, at a low and despised position in society. They are both drunkards (having been reduced to this condition also by the social contempt) and, as such, it does not cross people's minds that they might feel insulted if they are looked upon exclusively as "lowly" men. For instance, Dmitry Karamazov drags Snegiryov out of a tavern by his beard because he happened to be in his way and Snegiryov is mocked by

everybody because he cannot afford to ask for a duel. Because they know that the world despises and mocks them, both Marmeladov and Snegiryov subconsciously take their role of "tragic clowns" seriously and behave ridiculously so that the world would see to what a human being can be reduced. The fundamental question raised by this type of carnival attitude concerns our respect for humanity which is translated into the question of what we think a human being is. Love for humanity begins with respect for individual human beings and, as Ward says, this attitude of respect, "individually or collectively", "is most tested in our encounter with the 'lowly', the vulnerable, the marginalized, the humiliated in our midst".[537] Ivan Karamazov, like the Grand Inquisitor, believes that humanity can be loved, but not individual human beings: "for anyone to love a man, he must be hidden, for as soon as he shows his face love is gone".[538] Dostoevsky, like Leroux, believes that such love for humanity, which cannot stand to see the face of the neighbor, is caught in the dialectic: either human rights or human obligations. As seen in the first chapter, modern liberalism starts from human rights and, in this paradigm, "justice is the outcome of a social contract entered into by individuals whose primary concern is self-preservation and whose first obligation is to themselves".[539] Human obligations, which are conceived as a dialectic response to human rights, are the essence of the Grand Inquisitor's and the Saint-Simonians' utopias. Since it is hardly imaginable that people might change, it is wiser to impose human obligations on everyone in order to achieve justice. Human obligations, within this dialectic, often take the form of "masochistic endurance", and this by no means changes the perception of the one who endures on the "lowly".

[537]Bruce Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, p.33.
[538] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.309.
[539]Bruce Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, p.34.

The final type of carnival attitude is that of the "wise fool" or the eccentric, such as Myshkin, the Ridiculous Man, Alyosha or the elder Zosima. Such an example appears in the story of the life of Zosima, a story from his youth when, after having led an easy-going bourgeois life and having challenged an officer to a duel, Zosima, suddenly overwhelmed by the beauty and the meaning of God's creation, asks forgiveness from those whom he offended, and from the whole universe. This type of carnival attitude reveals Dostoevsky's utopia which I will discuss shortly. Now I want to refer to the other mentioned element of menippea, the dream.

In his analysis of Dostoevsky's "vision of the Golden Age", Richard Haugh argues that Dostoevsky put forward different versions of the Golden Age, and in most of his novels there is one bearer of the dream of earthly paradise. One such dream is that of the Grand Inquisitor and of Shigalov. Another is the one expressed by Versilov, in *A Raw Youth*, "an earthly paradise established as the direct result of atheism: no longer believing in God, mankind will be forced to unite in love".[540] Another dream, similar in form with Versilov's, is Stavrogin's. The form of both their dreams is linked to Claude Lorain's painting "Acis and Galatea". Stavrogin imagines himself somewhere in the Greek Archipelago which the "sky-blue, caressing waves, [the] islands and [the] rocks" make it appear as "an earthly paradise", "where gods descended from heaven and fraternized with men", and where "people awoke innocent and went to sleep at night in innocence". There, "a feeling of happiness passed through [his] heart until it hurt".[541] But Stavrogin's ecstatic vision is suddenly interrupted by "a tiny dot", "in the midst of the dazzling light", which soon assumed the shape of "a tiny

[540] Richard S. Haugh, "Dostoevsky's Vision of the Golden Age and Human Freedom", in Richard S. Haugh (ed.), *Theology and Literature*, vol. 11, Büchervertriebsanstalt, 1989, p.174. I will return to Versilov's dream in the next chapter.

[541] Feodor Dostoevsky, *Demons*, translated by Robert Maguire, Penguin Books, 2008, Appendix, "At Tikhon's" p.775.

red spider", which he recognizes as the same spider "on the geranium leaf" that he looked at while Matryosha was committing suicide.[542]

The last bearer of the dream of the Golden Age, in Dostoevsky's literary world, is the devil, Ivan's partner of discussion, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, who mocks Ivan and his poem, "The Grand Inquisitor"[543]:

> I love the dreams of my ardent young friends a-tremble with the thirst for life! […] As soon as mankind has repudiated God (and I believe that that period, in a fashion parallel to the geological periods, will arrive), then of its own accord […] the whole of the former world-outlook, and above all, the whole of the former morality, will collapse, and all will begin anew. People will unite together in order to take from life all it is able to give, but only for the sake of happiness and joy in this world. Vanquishing nature […], almost without limits, by his will and his science, man will thereby experience […] a pleasure so elevated that it will replace all his former hopes of celestial pleasures. Every man […] will come to love his neighbor without any need of recompense. The love will only be sufficient for the moment of life, but the very consciousness of life's momentariness will intensify its fire […]. … well, and so on, etcetera, etcetera, in the same genre. Most charming![544]

I was arguing in section 2.4. that Thomas More used rhetorical devices which were meant to educate the reader to take distance from the text and to ponder whether what appeared as the Good, in Raphael's account, was indeed the Good. Of course, Dostoevsky does not use the same style as More,[545] but he seems to use a device similar to that of More. In the version of the Golden Age, where humanity lives in a blissful union, after having

[542]Ibidem, p.776.
[543] Richard S. Haugh, *Op. cit.*, p.187.
[544] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*,p.829.
[545] Some readers of Dostoevsky, such as Albert Camus or D.H. Lawrence, argue that Dostoevsky used the style of writing "between the lines", and that his voice is that of Ivan, of the Grand Inquisitor, or of the nihilists in *The Possessed*. I believe, as I already said in the first chapter, that Bakhtin is right to argue that we may distinguish Dostoevsky's novels, where there is a multiplicity of voices, all on equal footing, and the clear-cut opinions of Dostoevsky, the publicist. When we compare his literary world and his articles, we see that his own opinions are those of his radiant characters. It is true that Ivan's interest in articles about the suffering inflicted on the innocent is Dostoevsky's own interest and, as James Scanlan says, Dostoevsky "calls 'irrefutable' Ivan's point about the senselessness of the suffering of children, meaning that such suffering can't be justified rationally". But, unlike Ivan, and like Alyosha, Dostoevsky does not reject God's world, and "never admits that Ivan's point of view is rationally conclusive as an argument against the existence of God", as it will be explained in the next chapter (James Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2002, p.239).

banished God, the vision of the bearer of the dream is always undermined by something. Dostoevsky's novels are the testing-place of ideas; Stavrogin's ideas, his position in the world, are also tested, and Stavrogin himself is disturbed by the unpleasant detail, the "tiny red spider", which ruined his blissful vision, and which Stavrogin always associates with Matryosha. The spider appears in Dostoevsky's works as "a common symbol for evil", and it instantly compels the reader to remember who the bearer of the dream is. The reader is encouraged to reflect upon the fact that what appears to be the Good, together with Stavrogin's longing for the Good in his dream, is unlikely to be the Good, not because such a blissful union of mankind would not be possible in principle, but because it is the evil done by a person, not the good that a person dreams to do, that "excludes the possibility of a Golden Age".[546]

In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky fully expresses his irony towards the abstract dream of the Golden Age and here the unpleasant detail is the bearer of the dream himself, the devil or what might be the fantasy of Ivan's sick mind, as Dostoevsky mentions. If we go back for a moment to the legend of "The Grand Inquisitor", which the devil mocks, there is in this legend, too, an unpleasant contradiction. The Grand Inquisitor's utopia seduces, just like the utopia of the Saint-Simonians; "it seduces people", as James Scanlan puts it, "into believing that it provides a genuine transfiguration of egoism into brotherhood".[547] The contradiction appears here between the dream of the Grand Inquisitor, on the one hand, and who he is and what he is doing. As Scanlan says, "he is, after all, the Grand Inquisitor, charged with finding and prosecuting those who will not accept the benign mandates of the

[546] Richard S. Haugh, "Dostoevsky's Vision of the Golden Age and Human Freedom", p.178.
[547] James Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, p.162.

authorities; and what he is doing is burning them at the stake".[548] The Grand Inquisitor is by no means bringing peace, contrary to what he claims. Dostoevsky's literary devices grasp the contradiction between what the Grand Inquisitor appears to be in front of the people and what he is in reality. Likewise, Dostoevsky grasps also Stavrogin's contradiction. But in the latter's case, the contradiction is not between appearance and essence, but between his dream and his crime. The contradiction present in Stavrogin is the same as in the other nihilists from *The Possessed*: that between the socialist ideals and the inhuman means through which they are put into practice. The Grand Inquisitor's project reaches the peak of cynicism through the conscious contradiction between what he knows and what he does. According to Kroeker and Ward, the "too fine line between loving solicitude and contempt", in the Inquisitor's discourse, "invites the attentive reader's suspicion about his attitude toward his 'flock'."[549] In *The Notebooks for The Brothers Karamazov*, Ivan tells Alyosha: "I am with the old man's idea, because he loves humanity more"[550] and this is specifically the claim of Ivan/the Grand Inquisitor, that they love humanity "more, and more effectively," than Alyosha/Christ. This is also the devil's mocking claim, that he loves humanity "more, and more effectively", and the use of irony again "invites the attentive reader's suspicion" toward utopias which claim that "the Kingdom of God is merely a fantasy born of man's suffering",[551] of deprivation and absence, while they have as a basis the desire for life and for love.

But this does not stop Dostoevsky from putting forward his own utopia which appears in different places; it appears mainly in "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" and in the

[548] Ibidem, pp.188-189.
[549] P. Travis Kroeker & Bruce Ward, *Remembering the End*, p.140.
[550] Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Notebooks for The Brothers Karamazov*, in Ibidem, p.139.
[551] George Steiner, *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky*, p.257.

"Biographical Notes" of Elder Zosima, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, as well as in the attitude of characters such as Zosima, Alyosha Karamazov or Sonya Marmeladov. For now, I will briefly bring into discussion "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man", a short story in Dostoevsky's *Diary*, in order to sketch the form of Dostoevsky's utopia. As Richard Haugh writes, "in 'The Dream of a Ridiculous Man', Dostoevsky attempted to capture the cosmic unity which preceded cosmic disruption",[552] an element characteristic of utopia, in general. He presents here the vision of the history of mankind, from its childhood to its maturity, which is also characteristic to nineteenth-century utopia. Richard Haugh is right to draw attention to the fact that "The Dream …" is an artistic creation, and not a theological presentation of the history of mankind. Like in many of Dostoevsky's "dreams", and like in More's *Utopia*, "the difficulty is to know how to read it".[553] The reader needs to keep in mind that this is a "dream", and that the bearer of the dream is "ridiculous", a device which suggests that "we should not take it as Dostoevsky's opinion just as it stands".[554] The "Ridiculous Man" – who has always suffered for being ridiculous – intends to commit suicide, but he meets on the street a "ragged little girl" who asks his help but by whom he passes indifferently. Moments later, the girl "evokes in the Ridiculous Man spontaneous feelings of compassion".[555] The meeting with innocence stops the suicide and induces the dream. The Ridiculous Man dreams that he is in the Greek Archipelago, and he is aware that this is an earthly paradise, inhabited by a humanity unstained by the Fall, who knows no sin. If this appears to be humanity before the Fall, nevertheless, this is not a Christian

[552] Richard S. Haugh, "Dostoevsky's Vision of the Golden Age and Human Freedom", p.185.
[553] A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, SCM Press LTD, London, 1973, p.161.
[554] Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky: the Major Fiction*, p.146, in Ibidem.
[555] Richard S. Haugh, "Dostoevsky's Vision of the Golden Age and Human Freedom", p.186.

representation for two reasons: death exists here, which is "unacceptable to traditional Christianity", and the Ridiculous

Man states that sin entered the world through sensuality,[556] which contradicts Orthodox theology and even "Dostoevsky's deepest idea of the origin of evil".[557]

An important detail here is that this is a community of innocents, not of saints – meaning that people's goodness is instinctive, not consciously assumed, like in the case of saintliness. Thus the Ridiculous Man says that "never did I see on our earth such beauty in man",[558] coming from spontaneous love for nature and for one another. They had no temples, but, says the Ridiculous Man, "there was some kind of a daily, live, unceasing communion with the whole of the universe".[559] They had no science and had no need of it either; they did not know jealousy, envy or competition, and hardly understood when their visitor "spoke of the ambivalences of his former life".[560] But his very presence, that of a Petersburg bourgeois, contaminated them, for they learned from him how to lie, and afterwards were taken into

[556] This might raise questions concerning Dostoevsky's own conception of the Fall and redemption and might be an argument in favour of Dostoevsky's writing "between the lines". Dostoevsky did not write anywhere in his work a theological theory, while, at the same time, his whole work is full of theology. We have here a community of innocents who do not know sin, who have no science, nor a religion and temples, and it seems, as Gibson puts it, that "God is as it were dissolved into the community" (A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p.166). Nevertheless, "The Dream …" does have significant Christian elements: the Ridiculous Man begins helping his fellows by first "admitting his failures" and his responsibility for all; Dostoevsky ends "The Dream …" "with an anthropologically Christian formula", which undoubtedly resembles the Christian teachings of Elder Zosima (Ibidem, pp.166, 167). Unlike Stavrogin's dream, which states that such earthly paradise is unattained and unattainable, and unlike the devil's mocking vision of the earthly paradise, the Ridiculous Man's dream states that "cosmic unity" is attainable on earth. Does this mean that there are Christian themes intermingled with non-Christian themes and that they form together the religious thought of Dostoevsky? I believe Boyce Gibson is right to argue that we don't understand Dostoevsky if we don't have a comprehensive vision of his whole work. We have to keep in mind that "The Dream …" is not Dostoevsky's last word about earthly paradise, but Zosima's teachings are instead. It is only in *The Brothers Karamazov*, as Gibson says, that Dostoevsky makes "the linkage of the requirements of action" (fully present in "The Dream …") "with an explicit reference to God – a reference which is present in the *Dream*, but concealed by what looks like a deliberate disconnection" (Ibidem, pp.167-168). I believe that we can make sense of this utopian writing by taking it as an artistic piece and not as Dostoevsky's theological position, and by seeing it as a short piece preceding Dostoevsky's greatest artistic and theological piece of art, *The Brothers Karamazov*.

[557] Richard S. Haugh, "Dostoevsky's Vision of the Golden Age and Human Freedom", p.184.

[558] Feodor Dostoevsky, "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man", in *D.W.*, vol. II, p.682.

[559] Ibidem, p.684.

[560] A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p.162.

"voluptuousness", which further generated jealousy, cruelty, first towards animals and then towards people, and all other vices. As they became self-conscious and self-affirmative they started talking of the need of humanitarianism – some "began to conjecture how to unite again all men" in such a way that none should cease "to love himself above all others".[561] And "as they became criminal, they invented justice".[562] They "began building temples, in which they adored their own idea, their own desire"; they discovered science by which they intended to "find again the Truth" and "embrace it consciously".[563] Then they fell to (voluntary) slavery, wars and extermination, and the horrified visitor, recognizing his fault, asked them to crucify him, but they refused.[564] The Ridiculous Man awakes and is convinced that he "saw the Truth" and utters in excitement: "I know that men can be beautiful and happy without losing their faculty of living on earth. I refuse and am unable to believe that evil is a normal condition of men".[565]

As Richard Haugh argues, "the *whole* point of the story is that the Ridiculous Man had a vision of the holy, of what man was made for, a vision in which he discovers how man has perverted his 'natural' happiness, through the irrational attraction of evil", a point profoundly Christian. But the story does not end with the contemplation of the Christian calling of man. The dream or the contemplation of a blissful humanity awakens in the Ridiculous Man the desire for action: "I did find *that* girl… And I shall go on! […] let, let this never come true and let paradise never come to pass (this much I understand), – well, nevertheless I will be preaching."[566] The Ridiculous Man has not ceased to be ridiculous, but

[561] Feodor Dostoevsky, "The Dream …", in *D.W.*, vol.II, p.688.
[562] A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p.162.
[563] Feodor Dostoevsky, "The Dream …", in *D.W.*, vol.II, p.687.
[564]Ibidem, p.688.
[565]Ibidem, p.689.
[566]Ibidem, p.690.

it is, now, an assumed ridiculousness, which resembles to that of Elder Zosima. In this sense the Ridiculous Man represents the last type of carnival attitude, the "wise fool". It is worth noting that exactly the same details – the Greek Archipelago from the dream and the little girl – are the source of totally different outcomes in the lives of the Ridiculous Man and of Stavrogin. In the case of the former, the Greek Archipelago and the contact with innocence stop him from committing suicide, while in the latter's case, the contact with innocence induces him to commit a crime and the combination between the contact with innocence and the Greek Archipelago eventually leads him to suicide. The difference comes from the fact that Stavrogin is convinced that the dream of the Greek Archipelago is impossible, but he nevertheless promotes it, taking equal pleasure in both the goodness of his utopia and in his crime. By contrast, the Ridiculous Man awakes from the dream with the faith that this utopia is possible. And, in this context, the compassion for the innocent victim takes him from despair to hope. In this sense, utopia appears here as eternal aspiration. By contrast, the awareness that utopia is impossible coexists, in Stavrogin, with the desire to put it into practice or rather to impose it. Stavrogin's utopia appears then as cynicism: he is capable to distinguish between good and evil and, nevertheless, commits evil, and cynically participates to the implementation of a social engineering. It is specifically his embracing of utopia as cynicism that induces him to kill innocence and eventually to kill himself. As it can be seen, what makes the passage from the intention of suicide to hope is active love, in the case of the Ridiculous Man, while what makes the passage from utopia to nihilism, in Stavrogin's case, is the lack of love.

Dostoevsky's utopia is represented by these "wise fools" who, through contemplation of what humanity could be, practice "active love", a concept that will be discussed in the next

chapter. “Wise fools” or utopian figures are those who, through their type of carnival attitude, situate themselves outside of the Euclidean system of either human rights or human obligations, in which Ivan Karamazov situates himself and, on the one hand, silently point and bear witness to the injustice of the system – to which Ivan Karamazov participates, although he rejects it, as I already mentioned – and, on the other hand, are perpetual active founders of the world. As I was arguing in the beginning of the first chapter, citing John Milbank, Ancient Rome – an ideal which, Dostoevsky says, has been taken over by modernity – celebrates the founding hero who ends prior violence by his strong and violent hand. And this is the characteristic of any Euclidean system. The “wise fools” are also founders, but in a totally different manner: the “wise fool” ’s love for a person is translated into direct action for the help and benefit of that person. The “wise fool” is involved, thus, in a perpetual non-violent action against injustice and, in this manner, makes an act of foundation of the world by evoking a change of heart in the people around him and by engaging them not in a relation master-disciple or master-servant, as in the case of the Saint-Simonians or of the legend of “The Grand Inquisitor”, but in a dialogue with the purpose of searching the Truth together, a dialogue which involves the horizontal relation of (Christian) *philia*.

I will explain more broadly Dostoevsky’s utopia in the third chapter by exploring the key-concepts of love, brotherhood and humanity (understood as experience of human relations).

2.10. Leroux: utopia as a new continent called Humanity

Let us return for a moment to the first chapter and let us remember Leroux's conception of synthesis, of society and of art. I was arguing there that Leroux criticized the tendency of the French thinkers contemporary to him, especially of the doctrinaires, of exploring the meaning of society only by analysis, which, according to him, was divisive and applied to the study of society the method of natural sciences. Society, he believed, needed not only analysis, but also synthesis, an organic synthesis of sciences, of arts and of philosophy, so that society could be comprehended as what it naturally was, as an organic whole. Applying the method of natural sciences to the study of society was, according to Leroux, flawed because that method was not capable to put forward a meta-paradigm uniting all sciences and arts (like Christianity did in the Middle Ages) and organizing "*la raison collective de l'humanité vivante*". I was also arguing in the previous chapter that Leroux criticized his contemporary society whose ideal – informed by Napoleon – was, in industry, "*de faire des hommes qui auraient eu une merveilleuse capacité à percer un trou d'aiguille et qui n'en auraient pas eu d'autre*", and in politics, "*de former des rhéteurs ou des dialecticiens, comme à l'École polytechnique des ingénieurs ou des officiers d'artillerie*".[567] He criticized in the same spirit the fact that his contemporary society lacked a system of public education and was satisfied, instead, with what he called *instruction*.[568] Leroux was calling the artists, especially writers and poets, to revitalize the function of art, *i.e.*, to express the anxiety of the present and to propose a theme of future collective renaissance.

[567] Pierre Leroux, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, p.62.

[568] See chapter 1, p.38, and particularly note 114, p.38, for the distinction Leroux makes between instruction and public education.

Now, if we take a look at Saint-Simon's ideas and at the doctrine of the Saint-Simonians, we can identify here all these ideas expressed by Leroux and we can understand the attraction he felt for Saint-Simon's philosophy. But we should not hurry to identify him as a Saint-Simonian. As I explained in the first chapter, Leroux was disappointed, in 1830, by liberalism and by *Le Globe* "*doctrinaire*". Already in 1827, he was attracted by Saint-Simon's philosophy which, as he said, helped him to discover "*la question sociale*".[569] In November 1831, *Le Globe* became Saint-Simonian.[570] Leroux was expressing his adhesion, in an article of January 1831, to what he considered at the time as the most important of Saint-Simon's social ideas: "*l'émancipation complète de la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*" and "*le classement selon la capacité et les œuvres*".[571] Leroux recognized, in this period, Saint-Simon's merit of having identified the law of attraction as the natural human condition, and he appreciated the emphasis of the Saint-Simonian religion on the fact that "*l'humanité est un être perfectible qui s'élève d'âge en âge, embrassant de mieux en mieux dans son ensemble et dans ses détails le Dieu universel dont elle fait partie*".[572]

Leroux was faithful to these ideas, although they suffered some changes after 1831. In his Saint-Simonian period (November 1830 – November 1831), he participated in the dissemination of the Saint-Simonian "*bonne nouvelle*" and was himself an apostle. But he has never been at ease with the hierarchic organization of Saint-Simonism and especially

[569] Jean-Jacques Goblot, *Aux origines du socialisme français. Pierre Leroux et ses premiers écrits (1824-1830)*, p.20.

[570] Leroux has never given up the idea of liberty and, despite his disappointment with liberalism, he has always appreciated and identified himself, up to a certain extent, with the initial purpose of *Le Globe* "*doctrinaire*", that of being a non-sectarian encyclopedic journal, neither against Catholicism, nor against German Romanticism. As Goblot emphasizes in what concerns *Le Globe*, "*la liberté fut son noyau doctrinal*" (Ibidem). And this was a point Leroux has always sustained. What disappointed him was the ignorance on the part of *Le Globe* "*doctrinaire*" toward the issue of association, an issue which he discovered in Saint-Simon.

[571] Pierre Leroux, "Profession de foi", *Le Globe*, 18 janvier 1831, in Bruno Viard (ed.), *À la source perdue du socialisme français*, p.100.

[572] Pierre Leroux, "La religion saint-simonienne. Réponse à un catholique", *Le Précurseur*, 1er juin 1831, in Bruno Viard, *À la source perdue du socialisme français*, p.104.

with the proclamation of Prosper Enfantin as *Père suprême*, who treated the members of the sect as "sons". The fact that, with the Saint-Simonians, utopia lowered its sight disappointed Leroux who saw in the desire to make the ideal coincide with reality an "absolutist" tendency – he called the Saint-Simonian socialism "absolute socialism" – which, in fact, purged utopia of the live desire for the ideal. At the end of 1831, Leroux parted from the Saint-Simonians and concentrated on his own philosophy. In 1834, he wrote, in *Revue encyclopédique*, an article, called "De l'individualisme et du socialisme", which he published again in *Revue sociale*, in October 1845, an article of great interest for my present purpose. It is here that he expresses his detachment from both liberalism and "absolute socialism". Liberty and equality are "*les deux pôles égaux de la science sociale*",[573] but one of them is often annihilated to the supposed benefit of the other and the paradox is that the denial of one involves the denial of the other. I explained in the first chapter how inequality led to the denial of freedom, in the opinion of Leroux and of Dostoevsky. According to Leroux, if the champions of individualism recognize liberty and ignore equality, the champions of "*le socialisme absolu*" negate both liberty and equality:

> *Demandez aux partisans du socialisme absolu comment ils concilient la liberté des hommes avec l'autorité, et ce qu'ils font, par exemple, de la liberté de penser et d'écrire: ils vous répondront que la société est un grand être dont rien ne doit troubler les fonctions. […] [Les partisans de l'individualisme] appellent liberté leur individualisme, ils le nommeraient volontiers une fraternité; les autres nomment leur despotisme une famille. Préservons-nous d'une fraternité si peu charitable et évitons une famille si envahissante*.[574]

[573] Pierre Leroux, "De l'individualisme et du socialisme", *Revue sociale*, première année, no.2, November 1845, p.20. http://books.google.fr/books?id=n0csAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA18&dq=de+l'individualisme+et+du+socialisme+pierre+leroux&hl=fr#v=onepage&q=de%20l'individualisme%20et%20du%20socialisme%20pierre%20leroux&f=false

[574] Ibidem, p.21.

From Leroux's perspective, understanding human beings as particles of the real body of humanity, like the Saint-Simonians do, means not to recognize the dignity of human beings which presupposes that the human being is a whole in itself, in which humanity is revealed. In this sense, Leroux defines humanity as "*un corps mystique, et nous n'en sommes pas les membres, mais nous y vivons*".[575] From Leroux's viewpoint, making humanity a real body whose happiness and unity are given by the existence of three social categories – industrialists, scientists and artists – with a *Père suprême* at the top, involves a certain contempt for human beings – and in this sense Leroux's critique of Saint-Simonism is close to Dostoevsky's critique of the Grand Inquisitor. Such an understanding of humanity, argues Leroux in "De l'individualisme et du socialisme", as well as in *De l'égalité*, makes of the citizen "*un sujet humble et soumis, sans spontanéité, un fonctionnaire enrégimenté, ayant une doctrine officielle à croire et l'Inquisition à sa porte*".[576] According to Leroux, Saint-Simon understood society essentially in terms of three distinct categories (industrialists, artists and scientists), defined by their functions. The Saint-Simonians took over Saint-Simon's understanding and made social unity dependent on the recognition of the natural inequality of the three distinct categories. They transformed, thus, human beings into functions of the body of humanity.[577] The just society is accomplished, in Saint-Simonian thought, Leroux argues, when each individual has been ascribed his function by the leading members of society and when the three categories have been well proportioned. This is necessary, from the Saint-Simonian perspective, because liberty – understood as affirmation of the self – is incompatible with unity. But to affirm this, Leroux says, means not to

[575] Pierre Leroux, "De l'individualisme et du socialisme", p.22. I will discuss Leroux's analogy between Humanity and the "mystical body" in the next chapter.
[576] Ibidem, p.24
[577] Pierre Leroux, *De l'égalité*, pp.83-89.

recognize individual responsibility, and Leroux believes, like Dostoevsky, that this involves contempt for human beings. If humanity/society is vicious, according to Leroux, it is not simply because the three categories have not been rightly proportioned, but especially because man does not reflect upon and does not recognize the effect of his own actions on his fellows. The reflection upon and the recognition of the effects of one's actions on the others beget, according to Leroux, the feeling that "*nous sommes tous responsables les uns des autres. De là suit qu'une charité mutuelle est un devoir*".[578] As mentioned in the previous sections, charity was a primary issue for Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians, too. But they understood charity as a passion that was to be educated by the artists in the collective body of society, while Leroux understands charity as inter-subjective compassion and solidarity.

I will return to this difference in the next pages. For now, I want to emphasize the main criticisms Leroux made to Saint-Simon and the Saint-Simonians. According to Leroux, Saint-Simon took over Bentham's idea of utility and, having noted that, in Bentham, the private interest tended to conflict with the general interest, Saint-Simon transformed the concept of utility into that of production which was meant to harmonize private interest and general interest. Making human relations dependent on production and on labor, Saint-Simon gave to the industrialists the mission to organize society. This, according to Leroux, was only a continuation of capitalism – Leroux reproaches Saint-Simon with having confused industry and capitalism[579] – and, although he set the law of attraction in the center of his philosophy, Saint-Simon was not able to solve the conflict between private interest and general interest. The Saint-Simonians, argues Leroux, took over the concept of

[578] Pierre Leroux, "De l'individualisme et du socialisme", p.22.
[579] Pierre Leroux, *Malthus*, pp.31, 36-37.

production from Saint-Simon, a concept which, coming in the continuation of capitalism, started from egoism. Production was meant to transform egoism into altruism. But, says Leroux, in order to make this leap, the Saint-Simonians simply eliminated egoism and declared general utility or general interest the principal law of the social organization. It is in this context that their emphasis on the binding character of religion should be understood and Leroux argues that for them religion had the literal sense of *religare*, *i.e.*, it had a simply utilitarian binding function, just like art.[580] For this reason the Saint-Simonians saw no problem in dynamiting an Egyptian pyramid, if social utility demanded it. According to Leroux, the Saint-Simonians, taking Bentham as a starting point came to consider "*le dévouement, la charité, la religion, l'art, […] non pas ayant par eux-mêmes une existence et une valeur, mais comme matière utile et comme moyens de résoudre le problème de la production au nom de l'utilité générale*".[581] These sentiments exclude inter-subjectivity, in Saint-Simonian thought, and become "*des* liens *[…]que la société [emploie], avec une parfaite impartialité, pour relier entre eux les divers membres qui la composent*".[582] The outcome of Bentham's theory was translated by the Saint-Simonians into a dogmatic social organization, "*sans contrepoids et sans résistance*", which solved the conflict between liberty and unity by annihilating the first and declaring that "*la société [est] tout, l'individu rien*".[583]

Close to this understanding of the relation between liberty and unity, between individual and society, is the Saint-Simonian understanding of progress. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the idea of progress was very fashionable in the 19th century.

[580] Pierre Leroux, "Bentham", in Pierre Leroux et Jean Reynaud, *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, volume 2, Imprimerie de Bourgogne et Martinet, Paris, 1836, p.595.
[581] Ibidem.
[582] Ibidem.
[583] Ibidem.

Leroux was close to Ballanche in the understanding of progress – he manifested a high interest in the neo-Catholic movement – and he defined it as a natural attraction and advance of humanity towards the Good. Like Ballanche, he considered that humanity's advance was evident in particular in the encouragement of critical thinking, in the human emancipation from hierarchical structures, in the tendency towards freedom and equality, and in the desire to recognize the others and to be recognized as a fellow human being. He also claimed to continue – at least in certain aspects – eighteenth-century critical thinking, which the Saint-Simonians were criticizing. He characterized the eighteenth-century spirit by

> *un sentiment de l'émancipation, de la liberté, de l'affranchissement. Mais ce n'était pas seulement pour être libres […], pour s'affranchir, pour se moquer des rois, des nobles et des prêtres; c'était pour créer, pour organiser. […] distinguer le travail de l'humanité en époques critiques et époques organiques, comme l'avait fait l'école saint-simonienne, c'est un dualisme faux; et […] cette distinction, faite pour expliquer le progrès est la négation même du progrès continu qui entraîne l'humanité*.[584]

The error of the Saint-Simonians was, according to Leroux, to define progress, on the one hand, in terms of superiority of the present over the past, superiority evident in humanity's accumulation of intellectual and material riches, and on the other hand, in terms of succession of contraries – critical and organic periods.[585] Leroux argued that such an understanding of human history was meant to justify the idea that history reached its peak in the present, that the future was a repetition of the present, and that, as Bénichou explains, during the time and by the intervention of the Saint-Simonians, "*le dogme [doit] succéder à la liberté critique*".[586] According to Leroux, the significance of this understanding was that history pointed to the achievement of the Immutable One, whose exterior expression was the

[584] Pierre Leroux, "De la loi de continuité qui unit le dix-huitième siècle au dix-septième", 1833 (t. LVII, p.480-481), in Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.334.
[585] Pierre Leroux, *De la Doctrine de la Perfectibilité*, in *Œuvres de Pierre Leroux*, tome 2nd, Paris, Librairie de la Société Typographique de Paris, 1851, p.78.
[586] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.335.

technocratic State, the individual becoming a function of it. In Leroux's opinion, the preference of the Saint-Simonians for the Immutable One went hand in hand with their deliberate ignorance of the political and with their decision to transform society by posing as "*messies ou […] révélateurs*".[587] Contrary to Fourier, Saint-Simon or Marx, who linked the project of social emancipation to the end of political philosophy, Leroux sustained that this project could not but be articulated "*en rapport avec la tradition qui a défini l'homme comme vivant politique*".[588] By invoking tradition – a complex issue in his thought, as it will be seen in the next chapter – Leroux attacked the claim of utopian thinkers, like Fourier, Saint-Simon or the Saint-Simonians, that they represented the point where history began anew, a claim in which, as Abensour argues, Leroux saw the logical evolution of the sectarian phenomenon, together with its characteristic attributes, "*le culte narcissique et la perpétuation vaine et stérile de la prétendue originalité absolue de l'utopiste complet par lui-même*".[589]

Leroux appreciated in Saint-Simon "*la bonne nouvelle de l'Association*" which, he believed, answered to "*une impulsion démocratique*", as Abensour says.[590] As I already mentioned, Leroux took over the idea of association and democratized it. He strongly argued that "*le temps des législateurs-messies, ou des prophètes-rédempteurs est passé; le législateur ne peut plus être que collectif, pluriel*".[591] If the Saint-Simonians talked about the stimulation by the artists of the collective passions of the members of society, Leroux understood society as the collective effort of individual actions, as "*les efforts et les travaux*

[587] Jean-Jacque Goblot, "L'utopie en débat", in Michèle Riot-Sarcey (ed.), *L'utopie en questions*, p.28.
[588] Miguel Abensour, "Philosophie politique et socialisme, Pierre Leroux ou du 'style barbare' en philosophie", in *Cahier du Collège International de philosphie*, no.1, 1985, p.9.
[589] Miguel Abensour, *Le procès des maîtres rêveurs*, p.98.
[590] Miguel Abensour, "Utopie et démocratie", in Michèle Riot-Sarcey (ed.), *L'utopie en questions*, p.249.
[591] Ibidem, p.250.

de tous ceux qui cultivent leur raison, et particulièrement de tous ceux qui sentent la charité dans leur cœur, et chez qui l'amour du progrès dans toutes les directions échauffe et féconde l'intelligence".[592]

Society, for Leroux, is not represented only by the individuals that form it, but also by the relations between individuals. Society becomes, instead of the Identical One, the space of multiplicity and this is why Leroux emphasizes "*l'hérésie contre l'héritage et la formation d'une orthodoxie*". Leroux criticizes the Saint-Simonian as well as the Fourierist utopias for their unilateral character which begets a dogmatic understanding of society and, consequently, makes utopia claim that it identified the Good and demand everyone to recognize it as such and to work for its accomplishment. According to Leroux, the human condition is one of reflection upon humanity and upon the human being's relation to the objective world. As such, Leroux believes that it is the task of philosophy to reveal to man his own condition,[593] and to open for him the possibility to distinguish, as Abensour writes, "*les divers ordres du réel*" in order to preserve the sense of the complexity of reality.[594] In *Lettre au docteur Deville*, Leroux argues that one fundamental characteristic of utopia is novelty and, in this sense, we can recognize Saint-Simon, Owen and Fourier as the first three utopians that put forth the new idea of association. But Leroux also explains here the unilateral character of their utopias. According to him, Saint-Simon represents "*la Connaissance*" because of his emphasis on the role of scientists, Owen represents the Sentiment because of his attempt to build a community grounded on brotherhood, while

[592] Pierre Leroux, "De la philosophie et du christianisme", in *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.170.

[593] Leroux writes in *De l'Humanité*: "*Donc, il s'agit de vivre conformément à notre nature d'hommes. C'est la Philosophie qui nous apprend à connaître notre nature, et la pratique de ses leçons s'appelle la Vertu*" (*De l'Humanité*, tome premier, p.94).

[594] Miguel Abensour, *Le procès des maîtres rêveurs*, p.103.

Fourier represents Sensation or liberty. As I already mentioned, each of these principles needs to be counterbalanced by the other two, an idea expressed at length by Leroux also in *De l'égalité* and *De l'Humanité*. Utopia, for Leroux, or the human element, is born within the equilibrium of the triad "*Sensation, Sentiment, Connaissance*",[595] or, better to say, within the perpetual quest for the equilibrium, as it will be explained in the next chapter. And, in this sense, Leroux calls himself the fourth utopian thinker. Utopia (as the condition of perpetual aspiration of humanity), in Leroux's opinion, is interwoven with tradition, even though, as mentioned, it is not in a relation of complete obedience to tradition, and all systems which claim to put an absolute beginning cannot but end in despotism.[596]

In the first chapter I was arguing that Leroux defines equality as the capacity of reflection. If freedom is understood by Leroux as manifestation, action upon the world, equality reveals "*le monde social de la connaissance, c'est-à-dire de la conscience que nous prenons de nos sentiments et de nos actes, ainsi que des sentiments et des actes des autres et que nous nous communiquons les uns aux autres*".[597] Leroux argues in *De l'égalité* that equality has been gradually revealed to humanity. If the ancients, for instance, believed that only some were free, they also believed that only some were endowed with this capacity of reflection. Christianity, according to Leroux, revealed that everyone was, in principle, endowed with the capacity to reflect upon his own conscience, upon life and death. The post-revolutionary age raised the issue of the "new organization of collective life" and Leroux argues for what Abensour defines as "*le 'style barbare' en philosophie*". If the doctrinaires were sustaining that religion belonged to the people and philosophy to the elites, Leroux

[595] Pierre Leroux, *Lettre au docteur Deville*, published in Miguel Abensour, *Le procès des maîtres rêveurs*, p. 145.
[596] Miguel Abensour, *Le procès des maîtres rêveurs*, p.98.
[597] Pierre Leroux, *De l'égalité*, p.52.

returns to Socratic philosophy, claiming that the place of philosophy is in the center of the city, the place where all are called. In this sense, as Abensour states, "*Leroux réinsère la philosophie dans le peuple et au-delà dans la 'vie de relation' de l'Humanité*".[598] Philosophy, from Leroux's viewpoint, is inherent in a world which is essentially a world of dialogical human relations. He then argues that the recognition of the proletarian problem could give birth to "a new conception of life" because the proletariat or "*la classe la plus nombreuse et la plus pauvre*" spontaneously raises the question of Justice which waits to be recognized as such. Affirming that other utopias suffer from the unilateral character is equivalent, in Leroux's thought, to saying that they see in the human being only one dimension, industry (or knowledge), in the case of the Saint-Simonians, or desire (sensation or freedom), in the case of Fourier, for instance.[599] This dimension becomes the vehicle for the realization of what is identified by such utopias as the Good and, consequently, these utopias tend to conceptualize "*l'organisation de la cité future sur le modèle d'une cité homogène*".[600] In this kind of utopia, which has the tendency to become technical, as Buber affirms ("society like Nature is to be mastered by technological calculation and construction"), "uniformity as a means", springing from the one privileged dimension, "is to change miraculously into multiplicity as an end; compulsion into freedom".[601] For Leroux, utopia involves instead the education of desire in a multiple sense: the education of liberty (or sensation) – as defined in the first chapter, manifestation in and action upon the world –, the education of brotherhood (or sentiment) – understood as recognition of the effects produced by one's actions in the others –, the education of equality – reflection upon one's

[598] Miguel Abensour, "Philosophie politique et socialisme, Pierre Leroux ou du 'style barbare' en philosophie", p.15.
[599]Ibidem, pp.20-21.
[600]Ibidem, p.21.
[601] Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, pp.9, 13.

own, as well as upon the others' actions and sentiments. Utopia reveals, in Leroux's thought, humanity's desire for the equilibrium between the multiple faces of the desire itself – liberty, brotherhood and equality – in a human being, and, by extrapolation, in humanity, as expression of "*la vie de relation*". Whenever one raises the problem of Justice – by his own existence and manifestation in the world, and by showing to the world the affects born in him as a result of the others' direct or indirect actions on him – this act spontaneously imposes to the world the obligation to recognize the injustice done to a member of the "*corps mystique de l'Humanité*". On this point Leroux and Dostoevsky come very close. For both of them, the recognition of injustice is not simply a theoretical act, but the term involves action, the action taken by the one who recognizes the injustice with the purpose of alleviating that injustice. Like Dostoevsky, Leroux argues that the obligation imposed on the world by no means implies the fact that the world automatically recognizes it as such. On the contrary, the denial of this obligation is a valid option, but its outcome is that it renders humanity imperfect, by situating it farther from the equilibrium. In this context Leroux describes the role of the philosopher: "*homme du sentiment, il se sent uni de sympathie avec tout ce qui souffre, tout ce qui est opprimé dans le monde.*"[602] And, again, here he comes close to the attitude adopted by Dostoevsky's radiant characters. There is, as it can be seen, a "Socratism" of Leroux, which consists in raising universal questions, such as what is Justice and what is the Good. According to him, these questions are raised in the middle of and by suffering common people. The very presence and mode of being of these people raises the universal questions which are ignored by the part of society which lives in self-sufficiency and self-satisfaction. In this sense, Leroux's "Socratism" becomes what Abensour calls "*le style barbare en philosophie*", *i.e.*, the philosophical questioning born from a live and

[602] Pierre Leroux, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, p.252.

experienced injustice.[603] This permits Leroux to make the connection between utopia and democracy, understood not as an ensemble of institutions, but, in a more profound sense, as the public participation in the collective life. As Abensour affirms, Leroux proposes a philosophical interpretation of "*le destin des hommes dans la mesure où ils ne sont pas de simples individus mais les membres d'une pluralité de communautés concrètes et au-delà d'une communauté invisible, l'humanité*". [604] In opposition with what Leroux calls "*socialisme absolu*" which has as a fundamental principle the idea of necessary reconciliation and the annulment of the "*écart*" between reality and the ideal of Justice and Good, Leroux reminds that democracy is a form of social organization which "*laisse libre cours à la question que le social ne cesse de se poser à lui-même*" and is "*traversée par une interrogation de soi sur soi*".[605]

We can say that Leroux's utopia bears certain resemblances with More's utopia in the sense that his style of writing continually invites the reader to reflection. Many of his books and articles are written in a dialogical manner. For instance, in *La Grève de Samarez*, he is addressing to the Reader (a concrete person, but also any person who reads him, in order to stress the common life shared by different individuals), *Le carrosse de M. Aguado* is written also in the form of a dialogue. As it can be noted by reading his works, they are abundant in questions addressed to his contemporaries, as well as to his posterity, since they are universal questions, such as "*Qu'est-ce que l'Humanité?*", "*D'où vient-elle, où va-t-elle?*", "*Qu'êtes-vous les uns aux autres?*" etc. – questions which always bear a tint of assumed

[603] I presented the relation between utopia and philosophy, in Leroux, only briefly here in order to draw the general lines which mark the clear distance between his form of utopia and that of the Saint-Simonians. But I will return on this issue in the third chapter, and I will place it within the large context of Leroux's religion of Humanity.

[604] Miguel Abensour, "Philosophie politique et socialisme, Pierre Leroux ou du 'style barbare' en philosophie", p.20.

[605] Miguel Abensour, "Utopie et démocratie", p.251.

ridiculousness. By these questions, Leroux intends to invite the reader to reflect upon the relation between liberty and association, upon the human aspiration towards the Good, or upon the way political philosophy could be conceived "*à partir du sujet 'humanité'* ".[606] As Abensour states, "*ce mode de questionnement*", characteristic to Leroux's style of writing, "*ne cesse lui-même de se remettre en question*".[607] This determines the reader to sharpen his attention in order not to fall in the danger of dogmatization of the world which points with certainty towards a particular place of the Good. Leroux is right to note that, once Catholicism has been refused the pretention to hold the Truth, after the French Revolution, any pretention of a group to clearly identify the place of the Good, on strictly immanent grounds, is at least dubious. For Leroux, utopia does no longer point to a fictive place of felicity, but has discovered "*un nouveau continent, l'humanité ou la communauté humaine*".[608]

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* *

Both Leroux and Dostoevsky reproach utopias as those of the Saint-Simonians or of the Grand Inquisitor with falling into idolatry. Such utopias identify with certainty as the Good something that is not the Good, but resembles the Good and is then a "half-truth". In *The Possessed*, Dostoevsky expresses through Shatov the following thought, with which Leroux would agree (idolatry being one of the things he utterly rejected): "A half-truth is a despot that has its priests and its slaves, a despot to whom all do homage with love and superstition

[606] Miguel Abensour, "Comment une philosophie de l'humanité peut-elle être une philosophie politique moderne?", in Pierre Leroux, *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.297.
[607] Miguel Abensour, "Philosophie politique et socialisme, Pierre Leroux ou du 'style barbare' en philosophie", p.19.
[608] Miguel Abensour, *Le procès des maîtres rêveurs*, p.93.

hitherto inconceivable, before which science itself trembles and cringes in a shameful way."[609]

For both of them, this inclination towards the Immobile, towards what they would define as idolatry, or the preference for geometrical, rigid forms, reveals what Emil Cioran calls the incapacity to adhere to life:

> *Lorsque vous n'éprouvez plus cette joie qui nourrit le Devenir, tout s'achève en symétries. Ce qu'on a appelé le 'géométrisme' dans de nombreux types de folie ne serait que l'exagération de cette prédisposition à l'immobilité qui accompagne toute dépression. Le goût des formes trahit un penchant secret pour la mort*.[610]

[609]Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, p.227.

[610] Emil Cioran, *Des larmes et des saints*, traduction de Sanda Stolojan, Éditions de l'Herne, Paris, 1986, p.70.

Chapter Three

A Tree of Life

3.1. Introduction

We learn from the Christian narrative of the Fall that, after having tasted from the forbidden fruit, from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, man's eyes were "opened" and he saw the same reality surrounding him with different eyes than before. For the Fathers of the Church, this event is historical, but also has an allegorical, symbolic, significance. Maximus the Confessor says that the entire creation could be the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, to which man is free to relate in different ways. Contemplated by man in a spiritual manner that includes and transfigures the senses and reason, creation offers to its contemplator the knowledge of the good. Taken into possession by the senses and by reason, separated from man's spiritual dimension, creation offers to its possessor the knowledge of evil. "To eat" from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would mean, thus, to attempt to take creation into possession and to uncover it of mystery.[611] Contemplation, according to Maximus the Confessor, does not exclude action, but, on the contrary, cannot but go hand in hand with it. To arrive at the point of contemplating creation, man should, as argued, subject his senses and reason to the spiritual dimension – so that he could become a whole – through an active effort of the will. In other words, he should employ his freedom in a continual

[611] Maximus the Confessor, "Raspunsuri catre Talasie" ("Ad Thalassium"), *Filocalia romaneasca* (*Romanian Philokalia*), III, p.12, in Dumitru Staniloae, *Teologia Dogmatica Ortodoxa* (*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*), vol.I, 3rd edition, Editura Institutului Biblic si de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Romane, Bucuresti, 2003, p.486.

active choice of the good. By contrast, according to the Confessor, man's taking into possession of the creation points to the laziness of the will: man refuses the active effort and chooses, instead, passive freedom, characteristic of the senses separated from the spiritual dimension, which stirs up in man the desire to take into possession ready-made objects.[612] According to Maximus the Confessor and Gregory of Nyssa, among others, God's creation, good as it might be, is not completed or closed, but is subject to man's creative powers, so that man, as a creator himself, could enrich creation.

Gregory of Nyssa underlines that, according to the Christian narrative, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, from which man ate, was in the center of Eden. But also in the center was the tree of life, which means that they represent the same reality – because there cannot be two centers. Hence, this reality, perceived through the senses and the reason which serves the senses, appears as the source of *a* good which is not *the* good. Perceived through spiritual eyes, to which the senses and the reason are subjected, it becomes the source of life or the tree of life. A "tree of life" can, thus, be identified with any person who, because of her love towards me and because of my love towards her, is the source of my life. The "Tree of life" *par excellence* is God, the source of unbounded love for all and of the love of all for all.[613] Dumitru Staniloae argues that the meaning of the narrative according to which the tree of life remained in a place from where man was taken out might be that the world is a potential tree of life which waits that man should make the effort to use his active freedom in order to discover the world as a tree of life, and not simply as a world of objects.[614]

Despite their differences in the understanding of the Fall, Pierre Leroux and Feodor

[612] Dumitru Staniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, vol.I, p.489.
[613] Ibidem, p.498.
[614] Ibidem, pp.498-499.

Dostoevsky, share one significant point: the world and every other person are a potential tree of life, to which man is free to relate as he chooses. And here man has only two choices: to make the effort of using active freedom or to choose passive freedom. This does not mean that the choice is simple or that it lacks ambiguity. This is the starting point for analyzing the main concepts of this chapter which explain the utopian thought of Leroux and of Dostoevsky. These concepts are humanity, *agape* and *philia*. I discussed in the first two chapters about Leroux's and Dostoevsky's understanding and critique of individualism and of what Leroux called "*le socialisme absolu*", and ended the last chapter with the analysis of Dostoevsky's and Leroux's utopias, more specifically with the analysis of the form of their utopias. This last chapter deals with the content of their utopias and this is the reason for concentrating on the concepts of humanity and love.

I will begin this chapter with a comparison between Leroux and Versilov, the character from Dostoevsky's novel *A Raw Youth* – the prototype for Versilov being the ideas of Alexander Herzen, with which Dostoevsky was in partial agreement. In section 3.2., I will make a portrait of Versilov, and in 3.3., I will put face to face Leroux's and Versilov's humanism. The comparison is meant to sketch the universalist conception of humanity shared, to a certain extent, by Leroux and Versilov, of "virtue without Christ", a conception nevertheless indebted to Christianity, as both Leroux and the Dostoevskyan character recognize. The comparison also places Leroux's thought somewhere in between Dostoevsky and his character, Versilov, and brings to light the similar and different themes from Leroux's and Dostoevsky's ideas of community, discussed throughout this chapter. Because both Leroux and Dostoevsky refer to Christianity in their ideas of community, I will analyze in section 3.4. their relations to Christianity. The section is divided into five subsections.

3.4.1. compares Leroux's and Dostoevsky's understandings of the Fall. This theme is directly discussed by Leroux and indirectly discussed by Dostoevsky, and the comparison discloses a fundamental difference between their comprehensions of the Fall. Leroux's understanding of the Fall informs his conception of Revelation, comprehended as a progressive process by which humanity ascends by herself to God, a process which affirms the joy of dwelling in this world. Dostoevsky understands the Fall in terms of the concrete reality of the original sin. Sections 3.4.2. and 3.4.3. concentrate on Leroux's understanding of the Revelation and of the relation between God and Humanity. Starting with 3.4.4., I will discuss Dostoevsky's relation to Christianity. 3.4.4. deals with the issue of who Christ is, in Dostoevsky's work. In 3.4.5., I argue that one image of Christ is represented by the Russian monk. As such, I will bring into discussion here Father Zosima and Alyosha, pointing out that Dostoevsky expresses through them his belief that this world and the world to come form one reality, a belief that lays stress on the idea that this world "is a good place to live in".

With section 3.5., I begin the analysis of *agape* and *philia* in Dostoevsky and in Leroux. The section is divided into three subsections. In the first I put forward a few guidelines for understanding *agape* and *philia* in Christian thought, which serve as an explanation of Leroux's and Dostoevsky's uses of the concepts. Subsection 3.5.2. presents Dostoevsky's comprehension of the concepts, and 3.5.3. deals with Leroux's uses of *agape* and *philia*. I argue that *agape* is central in Dostoevsky's thought, while Leroux's philosophy is centered on *philia*. I will show the differences between the Christian and Dostoevsky's *agape* and *philia*, on the one hand, and Leroux's *philia*, on the other.

Section 3.6. discusses the idea of community in Leroux's republican thought. The section

is divided into four subsections. 3.6.1. analyzes the contrast between memory, which preserves the living tradition, transmitted directly from generation to generation, and history, which studies tradition with the objectivity of the scholar, a central aspect in Leroux's conception of community. Leroux reproaches the eclectic philosophers for the fact that they study tradition exclusively from a historical perspective and, consequently, transform it into a museum.[615] In 3.6.2., I analyze Leroux's idea that religion and philosophy are united in a superior form, that is, the democratic religion of Humanity, where philosophy is the true religion. 3.6.3. deals with the role of primitive Christianity in Leroux's idea of community and with the relation between the Republic and *philia*. Leroux wants to revive the tradition of primitive Christianity, without returning to it, in his idea of republican community. The "symbolic constitutive law" of the Republic, according to Leroux, is *philia*, which proves the primacy of the life of relation. Finally, in 3.6.4., I discuss the importance of the sovereignty of the people in Leroux's philosophy.

The last section, 3.7., divided into five subsections, deals with Dostoevsky's conception of organic togetherness. In 3.7.1., I will return to the story of Raskolnikov, begun in the first chapter, and I will analyze how he attempts to make the way back to the people. The central concepts related to the return to the people of the "Russian intelligentsia" alienated from it are *tselnost* (integrality of knowledge) and *sobornost* (togetherness). The two terms, developed by the Slavophiles, are not used as such by Dostoevsky, but his idea of community is built on them. In 3.7.2., I will present the two concepts as they appear in the works of the Slavophiles Ivan Kireevsky and Aleksey Khomiakov. In 3.7.3., I will put forward Dostoevsky's analysis of the incompatibility between freedom and unity, in the

[615] The ideas of the contrast between memory and history and of the transformation of tradition into a museum have been taken over by Charles Péguy.

West, an analysis inspired by the Slavophiles. I will continue subsections 3.7.4. and 3.7.5. with the analysis of *tselnost* and *sobornost*, as they appear in Dostoevsky's thought and I will show the connection between them and Dostoevsky's idea of universalism and his Christian socialism.

In what concerns Dostoevsky, I will not use different sources than I used in the last two chapters. I consider that the novels relevant for this chapter are *A Raw Youth*, which I will use in order to make the portrait of Versilov, *Crime and Punishment*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*, where the concepts of *agape* and *philia* are most present, and where Dostoevsky presents the community, founded by Alyosha. I will also use *The Diary of a Writer* and *Winter Notes*, in order to present Dostoevsky's opinions as a publisher about the alternative idea of community. In what concerns Leroux, I will use in particular *De l'Humanité*, a fundamental work for this chapter, because Leroux discusses in this book all the themes that I analyze here: the Fall, *agape*, *philia*, unity within difference – defined by Leroux as the solution to the problem of social evil, that is, division. I will also use the text "Aux Politiques", from *Trois Discours*, published in 1841, *La Grève de Samarez*, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, *Projet d'une constitution démocratique*, and *Du Christianisme et de son origine démocratique*, where Leroux discusses the issues of tradition and of the relation between Christianity and republicanism.

3.2. A Portrait of Versilov

Andrey Petrovich Versilov, once a wealthy aristocrat, and the biological father of Arkady Makarovich, the young hero of *A Raw Youth*, that I presented in the first chapter, is a

"philosophical deist", as he calls himself. More specifically, he is a seeker of truth and "a preacher of the Christian religion", as Dostoevsky writes in the *Notes forA Raw Youth*,[616] even though he does not believe that Christianity still has the power to transform the world. In his youth, after his return from Europe to Russia, Versilov corrupted the young wife of the much older peasant Makar Dolgoruky. The latter accepted this, not without grief, as an accomplished fact and became a pilgrim, while Sofya Andreevna, his legal wife, became Versilov's illegitimate wife. Makar Dolgoruky forgave both Versilov and Sofya, without, at the same time, calling just what would always remain, both in his and in their eyes, unjust. Sofya Andrreevna is conscious that she did evil. As a consequence, she bears her fault by "anchoring" herself in the critical state of a "silent suffering" which paradoxically gives her the feeling of "God's presence". In this way she embodies the humbleness, the infinite capacity for suffering and the faith of the Russian people.[617] Versilov himself is conscious, too, that he did evil and that he continues to do it. Inspired by Rousseau, he feels pity towards his peasant wife. At the same time, he is positively attracted by the peasant force that emanates from her, the conquering force characteristic of the Russian people, he believes. His illegitimate peasant wife becomes a path of salvation for him and he eventually accepts her as such. Sofya Andreevna and Makar Dolgoruky are the first instances, in Dostoevsky's work, of "peasant Russia" which is not simply background but plays an active role.[618]

Versilov confesses to his illegitimate son, Arkady, that he finds the ideal of "usefulness" and that of satisfying men's material needs as repugnant, because the issue of faith will

[616] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Mantle of the Prophet*, p.152.

[617] Romano Guardini, *L'univers religieux de Dostoïevski*, traduit de l'allemand par Henri Engelmann & Robert Givord, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1963, p.51.

[618] Joseph Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p.163.

always remain an open question, greater than the ideal of "usefulness". The ideal of material satisfaction, believes Versilov, is bound to become boring and man will ask: "I've eaten it and what am I to do now?"[619] Versilov refers here to the socialist ideals in Europe which he calls "virtue without Christ" [620] or "the idea dominating the whole of present-day civilization".[621] Versilov himself is attracted by the ideal of "virtue without Christ", in which he sees the possibility of a renewed humanity: people will love one another spontaneously, humanely, and not for fear of eternal punishment or for the promise of a heavenly reward. The ideal of "virtue without Christ", says Versilov, continues and overcomes Christianity, in the eyes of Western Europe. For the Western European man, human beings are equal by virtue of the fact that they all possess a "conscious will" and have "the capacity for moral goodness".[622] But Versilov feels tormented and, although he states that human beings, embracing the ideal of "virtue without Christ", will cling to virtue and love one another, he also contends, like Ivan Karamazov, that, within this paradigm of "virtue without Christ", he does not find vice "repugnant at all […] and refuses to recognize that there is anything natural about virtue".[623] He takes pleasure in confessing to his illegitimate son his corrupting "innermost secrets" while, at the same time, like Rousseau, he feels that by this very fact he proves that he possesses a conscience. On the footsteps of the Geneva author of *Confessions*, he wants to "uncover" his inner self and to show that he, as a representative of all humanity, is not lovable. As Ward argues, by confessing both "the thoughts and actions which do him credit and the many shameful thoughts and actions […] for which he feels remorse",

[619] Feodor Dostoevsky, *A Raw Youth*, p.240.
[620] Ibidem.
[621] Feodor Dostoevsky, *Notes for A Raw Youth*, 16 : 281, in Joseph Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p.159.
[622] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.47.
[623] Feodor Dostoevsky, *Notes for A Raw Youth*, 16 : 35, in Joseph Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p.160.

Rousseau believes himself to be "redeemed in the reader's eyes" because he has a conscience, that thing which "raises" men "above the beasts", and which proves his worthiness.[624] The same mechanism takes place in Versilov's thoughts and he argues, on the grounds of his inner experience, that people are not lovable and that "to love one's neighbour and not despise him is impossible".[625] Nevertheless, Versilov believes, people are loved by virtue of that feeling, innate in human nature, called compassion (*la pitié*). Like Rousseau, Versilov believes that compassion can and should be exercised towards the lowly, the vulnerable, such as his illegitimate wife, and he sustains that, on the grounds of this feeling, he could theoretically extend his love towards the entire humanity, and could "endure evil from [people] as far as may be without anger, 'mindful that [he] too [is] a man'."[626]

On the other hand, Makar Dolgoruky seems to embody everything Versilov is not. A peasant rooted in the Russian Christianity, almost completely ignorant of European culture and a pilgrim almost all of his mature life, Makar Dolgoruki lives in a world which he sees as a whole transfigured by mysterious divine beauty, without ignoring its injustice. He offers to the young Arkadi a glimpse of his life, confessing the feelings of universal harmony and brotherhood he experienced once, while waiting to venerate the relics of some saints:

> I lifted up my head […]. Everywhere beauty passing all utterance! All was still, the air was light; the grass grows – Grow, grass of God, the bird sings – Sing, bird of God, the babe cries in the woman's arms – God be with you, little man […]. And it seemed that only then for the first time in my life I took it all in. […] Do not repine, young man; it is even more beautiful because it is a mystery.[627]

Lacking a cultural background and scientific knowledge, but possessing a simple, natural

[624] Bruce Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, p.39.
[625] Feodor Dostoevsky, *A Raw Youth*, p.242.
[626] Ibidem.
[627] Ibidem, p.395.

wisdom, rooted in the Russian soil, Makar Dolgoruky reasons that the West exchanged faith in "the one Truth" for cultural achievements and scientific knowledge. Therefore, he believes, the life of such people is "torment". And, he concludes that, since no one can live without a god, they have been looking for idols and found them in scientific knowledge. At a closer look, it appears that Versilov is not so far from Makar Dolgoruky. As Joseph Frank argues, "what Makar expresses in terms of Russian apocalyptic religiosity", "Versilov projects in terms of European history".[628]

I was arguing in the last chapter that a significant aspect of Dostoevsky's utopia is represented by the dream and I discussed there Stavrogin's dream, of the Golden Age, and "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man". Versilov's dream seems to resemble Stavrogin's, for it is also the dream of the Golden Age. Nevertheless, the differences between the two dreams are significant. Let us remember that Versilov is a character from the '40s, tormented by the division he operates between his belonging to the Russian soil and his love for Western Europe, always balancing between the two, while Stavrogin is a character from the '60s, tormented by his "accidentalness" and by the fact that he is totally uprooted from the soil and, hence, no longer capable to make the distinction between good and evil. As Frank argues, because Stavrogin cannot find any grounds for the distinction between good and evil, his dream "reveals that he cannot free himself from an overpowering sensation of guilt and self-loathing". Versilov's dream "is not moral-psychological", like Stavrogin's, "but historical-philosophical".[629]

Versilov tells his adolescent son that he dreamed of Claude Lorraine's painting, "Acis and Galatea", which he called "The Golden Age", as if it were reality. He imagined himself,

[628] Joseph Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p.189.
[629] Ibidem.

like Stavrogin, in the Greek Archipelago, three thousand years ago, where "there lived a splendid race": "they rose up and lay down to sleep happy and innocent". "[H]ere was the earthly paradise of man: the gods came down from the skies and were of one kin with men".[630] It was an "earthly paradise" for which, says Versilov, "men have given up their life and all their strength" and without which "the peoples will not live and cannot die".[631] Suddenly, Versilov's dream was interrupted. But unlike Stavrogin's, Versilov's dream was not destroyed by an unacceptable inner evil, but by the pain resulted from comparing the first and the last days of the European civilization, whose "death knell" was sounded by the Franco-Prussian War and by the Paris Commune. Versilov had seen Claude Lorrain's painting during the Paris Commune and, in the name of the ideal represented in the painting, he refused to accept the violence of the Commune. The blissful vision of the ancient "Greek archipelago" reveals Versilov's "yearning to return to the spontaneous life of the ancient patriarchal community"[632] which, nevertheless, has a fault: it does not know freedom. But Versilov believes that the "spontaneous life" of the early Antiquity could be reconciled with freedom by the Russian spirit, "for the highest Russian thought is the reconciliation of ideas".[633] And here Dostoevsky puts in Versilov's mouth his own ideas concerning the fact that the Russian spirit is the bearer of universality: "I am in France a Frenchman", Versilov says, "with a German I am a German, with the ancient Greeks I am a Greek, and by the very fact I am most typically a Russian."[634] Here, Versilov echoes the words of the Apostle Paul: "for though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the

[630] Feodor Dostoevsky, *A Raw Youth*, p.506.
[631] Ibidem.

[632] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.47.
[633] Feodor Dostoevsky, *A Raw Youth*, p.506.
[634] Ibidem, p.508.

more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law […], that I might win those who are without law" (1 Co 9:19 – 22). The Apostle's words have a pastoral dimension which Versilov's thought lacks, but Versilov's words share the messianism of the Apostle and express Dostoevsky's faith in Russia's role to reveal universal Christian brotherhood to all peoples. According to Dostoevsky, if France represents a universalism that ignores the particular dimension, and Germany represents the particular opposed to universalism, Russia, on the other hand, embodies the authentic universalism that includes the particular.

Versilov makes a historical and philosophical analysis of what Makar expressed in simple terms: the replacement by the West of Christian faith with cultural achievements and scientific knowledge. These eventually led to destruction which only followed its logical course, because, according to Versilov, the West was not capable to harmonize the requirement for freedom with that for unity. Versilov tells Arkady that, during the Paris Commune, "in all Europe there was not one European: I alone among all the vitriol-throwers could have told them to their faces that their Tuileries" (*i.e.*, setting fire to the Tuileries) "was a mistake. And I alone among the avenging reactionaries could have told them that the Tuileries, although a crime, was none the less logical".[635] Just like Makar is a pilgrim in Russia, Versilov wanders through Europe, with an aching heart for the destruction of the continent which he calls the Russian intellectual's "second fatherland". In his opinion, the French or the Germans sustain almost unconsciously the destruction because, in their longing for universal brotherhood, they do not possess the universality of the Russian spirit, but are "too German and too French, and have not yet finished struggling in those national

[635]Ibidem, p.507.

characters".[636]

3.3. Leroux's humanism as compared to Versilov's

In the heart of Europe, Pierre Leroux expressed similar ideas, not about Russia, but about France, which he considered the first in everything:

> *Comment doit se continuer, pour être digne de lui-même, le peuple qui fut le premier-né des Barbares, le premier initié, le premier civilisé, le premier qui abandonna les forêts, le premier qui cessa de brûler des hommes sur les autels druidiques pour adopter les mœurs policées de la Grèce et de Rome, le premier qui abandonna le Polythéisme pour la religion du Christ, le premier qui comprit la sagesse des évêques et la nécessité d'unir et de pacifier la terre désolée, le premier enfin qui fonda l'Europe en fondant l'Église, le peuple de Clovis et de Charlemagne?*[637]

Leroux shares with Dostoevsky the belief that a great people is recognized by its universal ideal. Leroux, especially in his late maturity, became more and more convinced of the universal and providential role of France in Europe. In the text "Aux Politiques" published in 1841, Pierre Leroux was arguing that two countries were competing for being the center of Europe: England and France. In his opinion, the superiority of France over England came from the fact that France was grounded on a universal principle, while England's Constitution, extraordinary as it might be, was historical, *par excellence*, and, therefore, too British. He believed (echoing Versilov's thoughts about Russia) that parts of

[636]Ibidem, p.509.

[637] Pierre Leroux, "Aux Politiques", *Trois Discours sur la situation actuelle de la société et de l'esprit humain*, 1841, in *Œuvres de Pierre Leroux (1825-1850)*, tome premier, Société Typographique, Paris, 1850, p.232. http://books.google.fr/books?id=LVwRAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=oeuvres+de+pierre+leroux+(1825-1850)&hl=fr#v=onepage&q&f=false

In the first and second chapters, I used the text "Aux Politiques" which is identical with the one called "De la philosophie et du christianisme", published by Leroux in 1832. In 1841, Leroux wrote a different text, with the same title, "Aux Politiques", which takes a few fragments from the first one. It is the text "Aux Politiques" published in 1841 that I will use in this chapter.

the French spirit – whose universality was proved by the fact that the French people had always been the first in everything – could be identified in any European nation, because it was the spirit of humanity.[638] As already argued, Leroux preserved from Saint-Simon the distinction between analysis and synthesis and, like the latter, he considered England to represent the analytic spirit, and France the synthetic spirit. According to him, if France assumed its duty, if it accepted its central role in Europe, it would offer the continent the synthetic, universal principle which contained in itself the analytic principle. If the analytic spirit (which reached its peak with capitalism) assumed the central role in Europe, it would throw out of balance and even sweep European Christianity and its cultural achievements because it would affirm not an organic, common belief, but individualism. France should assume this central role because "*la France est une religion*", argues Leroux. It is the universal Republic founded on the triad *Liberté, Fraternité, Égalité*, which is the manifestation of Providence within humanity.[639] I will explain in the following sections the meaning of this formula. For now, I will limit myself to saying that Leroux identifies in the ideal of the French universal Republic the same universal significance present in the sermon delivered by Apostle Paul at the Areopagus, which Leroux paraphrases: "*J'ai trouvé jusque sur votre autel l'inscription du Dieu que j'adore. Celui que vous honorez sans le connaître, c'est celui que je vous annonce*".[640] For Leroux, the synthetic dimension is, thus, the same as universalism. As the bearer of universalism, the French Republic has the mission to spread the three tenets – freedom, brotherhood, equality – to the surrounding European states. But Leroux notes that, of all European states, Russia will not accept the mission of France,

[638] "*La France a dans ses veines du sang de l'Italie, de l'Espagne, de l'Allemagne*", Pierre Leroux, "Aux Politiques", *Trois Discours*, p.232.
[639] Ibidem, p.288.
[640] Ibidem.

because she fancies herself to be the bearer of universalism. Dostoevsky, on the other hand, insisted on the fact that Russian universalism was of a completely different nature and therefore essentially opposed to French presumed universalism. For him, France was and would remain the most Catholic country in the world, "even if there shouldn't remain in it a single person believing in the Pope or even in God".[641] According to Dostoevsky, France had inherited from the Catholic Church "the Roman idea", initially developed in the Roman Empire. And for this reason, "French socialism", as the third and final stage of the "Roman idea", was regarded by Dostoevsky as "nothing but a compulsory communion of mankind".[642] Of course, Leroux is not referring to this type of universalism, but Dostoevsky believes that this is the main form of universalism which France can sustain.

The spirit of capitalism, the peak of the analytic spirit, argues Leroux, is part of "*la théorie fameuse de l'*équilibre", sustained by Jean Bodin, among others, a theory which affirms as the natural condition of humankind the domination of the stronger nation over the weaker.[643] The theory of the equilibrium between the stronger and the weaker is, according to Leroux, falsely called as such because this alleged equilibrium is always translated as the victory over and the humiliation of the weaker by the stronger. But, believes Leroux, the history of humanity is not only the history of the winners. It is also the history of the defeated who seem to have fallen victims to obliteration. I was arguing in the last chapter that, in his utopia, Leroux intends to revive and to offer to heresy the same rights as

[641] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol. II, p. 721.
[642] Ibidem, p. 563.
[643] Pierre Leroux, "Appendice aux Trois Discours. De l'Union Européenne", in *Trois Discours*, p.295. The article "De l'Union Européenne" which appears here as appendix to the three discourses was first published by Leroux in 1827 in *Le Globe*.

orthodoxy has.[644] According to Leroux, the thought of Thomas More, François Fénelon, and the *abbé* de Saint-Pierre, belongs to heresy, while the thought of Jean Bodin, Thomas Hobbes, and Niccolo Machiavelli, belongs to orthodoxy. Leroux claims to belong to the tradition opened by the first three thinkers who, in his opinion, replaced the false equilibrium with the true one, which represents Humanity as the perpetual aspiration towards perfection. In fact, believes Leroux, the victory belongs to More, Fénelon, and Saint-Pierre, because the human spirit is naturally attracted by the principles which they sustained and which are the source of the true equilibrium: the Just and the Good.[645] In this sense, Leroux's words echo Versilov's: it is not by virtue of conquest and centralization that France should assume its central role in Europe, but by virtue of the word which expresses the universality of the human spirit and through which each other country of Europe will become the center of Europe.

It could be argued that Leroux and Dostoevsky's character, Versilov, share also a humanist and deist vision of a world that has given up the belief in a Christ both human and divine. Versilov's dream of the Golden Age is continued with the expression of "the beauty and the pathos of this ultimate phase of European civilization"[646] when all destruction will have been accomplished and everything that man will have will be his neighbour. It is worth quoting a part of Versilov's dream:

> After curses, pelting with mud and hisses, has come a lull, and men are left alone, according to their desire: the great idea of old […] that till then had nourished and fostered them was vanishing like the majestic setting sun in Claude Lorrain's picture […]. Men left forlorn would begin to draw together more closely and more lovingly […]. The great idea of immortality would have vanished, and they would have to fill

[644] Heresy, in Leroux's conception, should be understood from both a religious and a philosophical and historical perspective. By "heresy" he understands everything that has been ascribed by official religion, philosophy, or history, a secondary place, meant to be forgotten.

[645] Pierre Leroux, "Appendice aux Trois Discours. De l'Union Européenne",*Trois Discours*, pp.302-303.

[646] Joseph Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p.190.

> its place; and all the wealth of love lavished of old upon Him […] would be turned upon the whole of nature, on the world, on men, on every blade of grass. […] On awakening they would hasten to kiss one another, eager to love, knowing that the days are short and that is all that is left them. They would work for one another, and each would give up all that he had to all, and by that only would be happy. […] Meeting, they would look at one another with deep and thoughtful eyes, and in their eyes would be love and sorrow.[647]

Versilov, too, like Makar, feels and thirsts for beauty, but while Makar was longing for and even experienced the mysterious *divine* beauty of the world, Versilov is longing after the *mysterious beauty of the world*. And this answers, in Dostoevsky's opinion, for the difference between the vitalized "joyous serenity and childlike gladness" of Makar "even in the face of death" and the sadness of Versilov.[648] The rootedness in the Russian soil, together with the faith in a life beyond the grave, is the source of Makar's tranquility and love for the whole creation. As Frank argues, the " 'sorrow' of a world without God" – that "sorrow" which accompanies the majestic image of a world which strives to accomplish by itself the Christian ideal of mutual love – mentioned at the end of Versilov's dream "is Dostoevsky's artistic answer to the sublimest secular ideals of Socialism".[649]

But Versilov is tormented by "self-doubt and melancholy". He confesses that he could not have lived without the dream of this majestic image of humanity, but that, paradoxically, his dream always ends "with Heine's vision of 'Christ on the Baltic Sea'". And Versilov adds: "I could not help imagining Him, in fact, in the midst of His bereaved people. He comes to them, holds out His hands, and asks them, 'How could they forget Him?' "[650] This also reflects Dostoevsky's belief that socialism, in its sublimest version, is indebted to and imbued with Christianity which, in fact, gives its force and universal aspiration. Does it

[647] Feodor Dostoevsky, *A Raw Youth*, pp.510-511.
[648] Joseph Frank, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, p.191.
[649] Ibidem.

[650] Feodor Dostoevsky, *A Raw Youth*, p.511.

mean that Makar Dolgoruky is, according to Dostoevsky, the ideal Russian character and the response to Versilov's socialism? Dostoevsky believes that Makar's rootedness in the Russian soil represents the solid ground, essential for what could be built upon it. However, in his opinion, Makar's ignorance of the European culture makes the character incapable to dialogue with and to respond to this culture. On the other hand, Versilov has the necessary tools to understand the European culture but lacks the solid ground, a reason for which he can only immerse himself in the European culture but is, too, incapable to respond to it. It can be argued that, for Dostoevsky, the ideal Russian character is a combination of Makar and Versilov, a combination which Dostoevsky will portray in the character of Alyosha Karamazov.

"*Croire à l'Humanité, c'est réellement croire à Jésus*",[651] stated Leroux in his book, *La Grève de Samarez*. In this book, maybe more than in other places, Leroux affirms that he believes in the religion of Christ, but purged of miracles and, implicitly, of the greatest miracle itself, from a Christian perspective, *i.e.*, Christ or the Second Person of the Trinity incarnate.[652] The religion of Christ, according to Leroux, is, in reality, the religion of Humanity and, hence, he believes, like Versilov, that this religion does indeed promise a

[651]Pierre Leroux, *La Grève de Samarez*, tome I, Librairie de E. Dentu, Paris, 1863, p.219.http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k109191f/f3.image.r=la+greve+de+samarez.langEN

[652]According to Leroux, God who created the world out of love cannot be the author of evil; the only responsible for it is humanity which saves itself and, as such, is also responsible for eliminating evil. If God, reasons Leroux, intervened from time to time, in human history, with a miracle, it would mean that he accepted evil in general. If he does not accept evil, God should do a permanent miracle that would annihilate evil. But if God did this, reasons Leroux, he would annihilate man's freedom and his miraculous intervention would prove humanity incapable of ascending by itself to God. On the contrary, he says, God works through the laws of nature because humanity is capable to ascend to God by itself. The question is why God is passive, in Leroux's thought. Is he passive because he wants to allow man's freedom to manifest? If this is Leroux's premise, then it is not contradictory to Christianity. In the Christian narrative, God respects man's freedom, but intervenes miraculously when man asks his help or in order to put an end to evil. Or is God passive because the defeat of evil needs to be exclusively the work of humanity? But does this not imply the undeclared premise that God does not, in fact, exist? The question of whether or why God accepts evil remains unanswered by Leroux. And the greater question which Leroux does not tackle is the following: even if humanity defeated evil by itself, how could it account for the past innocent victims whose suffering remains absurd in eternity?

future happiness, but on earth, not in another life, not in a different time and space. Like Versilov, Leroux affirms his indebtedness to Christianity and, although he states repeatedly that he does not identify himself as a Christian, he sustains that he believes in the Mystery revealed by Christ, *i.e.*, in the Sacraments or the Eucharist. In his view, the Eucharist points indeed to Jesus Christ, but to the extent to which Christ is not the Son of God and the Second Person of the Trinity, but one historical incarnation of Humanity or a perfect example of how human beings should relate to Humanity. The Eucharist is, for Leroux, the symbolic "*repas en commun*" which Humanity needs to accomplish and to make universal. In Leroux's opinion, Christ, maybe the greatest human being having existed, brought the good news of everyone's freedom and equality to Humanity, as Saint Paul affirms: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). Leroux declares that the city which he has "preached" all his life is the "city of God,"

> *qui comprend toute l'espèce humaine, les femmes aussi bien que les hommes, les pauvres comme les riches, les ignorants comme les savants. Je suis, je veux être de cette cité, qui va, dans un temps prochain, se manifester sur la terre. C'est à tous les citoyens de cette cité future que je dédie mes ouvrages.*[653]

The revelation of everyone's freedom and brotherhood opened the path for the aspiration of mankind towards equality whose best theoretical expression was revealed by Rousseau, according to Leroux. Like Versilov, Leroux believes that Christians' faith in heaven and hell channels their energy towards the other world, estranging them from this world and even urging them to hate it. Consequently, according to Leroux, Christians tend to perceive the precept "love your neighbour as yourself" as a duty which has as an outcome personal

[653] Pierre Leroux, *Œuvres de Pierre Leroux (1825 – 1830)*, Tome Premier, "Avertissement sur cette édition. À Gustave Sandré, Libraire", Société Typographique, Paris, 1850, p.xiii.

reward or punishment in the afterlife. Behind this "duty" is hidden, according to Leroux, Christians' indifference towards this world. As Hannah Arendt would say, Christians perceive the world as a desert through which they have to pass in order to arrive to the Promised Land and, as a consequence, in Leroux's opinion, they allow the transformation of this world into a desert by leaving it into the hands of vicious people.

Leroux does not want to reduce man and the world to the status of completely material existences and, in his work, they are in a *sine qua non* relation with God, this strange Being from Leroux's philosophy, to whom he sometimes refuses personhood, while at other times, he prays to Him. From God, says Leroux, emanates what he calls Universal Life capable to transform daily human relations into living reality. As such, what Steiner says about Tolstoy could be valid for this particular perspective of Leroux: "to know God and to live are one and the same thing".[654] The Universal Life allows people to live a life worthy of human beings by virtue of love, a love which Christianity always preached but made dependent on the other world, decreasing, thus, man's love for his neighbour in this world.[655]

Unlike Versilov, Leroux does not believe in an abstract love for humanity. This difference comes from the fact that Leroux criticizes Rousseau's vision of man and of the relations between men, which Versilov adopts. For Rousseau, the natural man is happy because he is a self-sufficient whole. The civilized man or man as a social animal has been corrupted by society, founded on private property. According to Rousseau, in the state of nature, man was dependent not on other men but only on the things of nature, which allowed him to be self-sufficient in relation to other human beings. As Rousseau puts it, "the only one who does his own will is he who, in order to do it, has no need to put another's arms at

[654]George Steiner, *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky*, p.252.
[655] This is *agape* which will be replaced, through the historical evolution, by *philia*.

the end of his own […]. The truly free man wants only what he can do and does what he pleases."[656] Society, continues Rousseau, "has made man weaker not only in taking from him the right he had over his own strength, but above all, in making his strength insufficient to him."[657] According to Rousseau, the more society makes man dependent on others and, hence weaker, the more it multiplies man's unnecessary desires. Grounded on private property, as already mentioned, modern society, sustains Rousseau, fashions individuals who are at the same time dependent on one another and competitors with one another. As Manent points out, the dependence on one another of individuals forces them not to harm one another, while their competitiveness forces them not to wish the wellbeing of one another. In such a society, continues Manent, neither of the great feelings of the ancient citizen – the active love for one's city and the hatred for the enemies – can survive and their place is taken by the modern man's feeling, *l'amour propre*, which brings man to that state where he cannot live but "*dans le regard d'autrui*". For this specific reason man tends to hate his fellow citizens.[658] Rousseau wants to give man back to himself and, as such, looks for the autonomous, authentic and city-concerned citizen who would be as self-sufficient and happy as the natural man was. For this reason, he thinks of moderating "bad" passions, such as envy, with "good" passions, such as sympathy or compassion for the lowly. Rousseau's beautiful pages on sympathy and friendship are nourished by his abstract love for humanity, a thing which Rousseau himself recognizes:

> *J'ai un cœur très aimant, mais qui peut se suffire à lui-même. J'aime trop les hommes pour avoir besoin de choix parmi eux; je les aime tous, et c'est parce que je les aime que je les fuis, je souffre moins de leurs maux quand je ne les vois pas. Cet intérêt pour l'espèce suffit pour nourrir mon cœur; je n'ai pas besoin d'amis*

[656]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, translated by Allan Bloom, Basic Books, New York, 1979, p.84.
[657] Ibidem.
[658]Pierre Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme*, pp.154-155.

particuliers mais quand j'en ai, j'ai grand besoin de ne pas les perdre ... .[659]

Leroux repeatedly affirms that man is, *par excellence*, a social animal, and that man conceived as a solitary brute is an exception in which we can hardly identify traces of humanity. Society, according to Leroux, informs man who, from the very moment he is born, enters an incessant relation with his fellows and the world which represent for him the objective reality that gives meaning and finality to his life, and without which "*sa vie subjective reste latente et sans manifestation*".[660] Man is free to relate to this objective reality either by affirming and enriching the communion with his fellows or by violently using it in order to satisfy his needs. However, because man is born in a family, has property and belongs to a city – as long as family, property and city are what they should be – he has the possibility to experience concrete *philia* which does not need to and should not be limited to one's family or fellow-citizens. It is also in this sense that Leroux champions decentralization and the spontaneous association between members of different communities, for economic, social or political purposes.

3.4. Leroux's and Dostoevsky's relations to Christianity

The association, according to Leroux, offers man the possibility to concretely love his neighbour and, by virtue of this concrete love, to expand his love to humanity. Dostoevsky talks, too, about concrete and active love, as contrasted with abstract love of humanity. In order to grasp these aspects of Leroux's and Dostoevsky's thought, it is necessary first to

[659]Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Lettres à Malesherbes*, IV, O.C. Pléiade, I, pp.1144-1145, in William Acher, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Écrivain de l'Amitié*, Éditions A.-G. Nizet, Paris, 1971, p.79.
[660]Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, Livre Deuxième, tome I, p.127.

understand their relations to Christianity, which I will analyze in what follows.

3.4.1. The Fall in Dostoevsky's and Leroux's works

Dostoevsky never wrote a piece of theology, however, as several authors noted, like Bakhtin and Boyce Gibson, Dostoevsky's work is imbued with theology and is deeply rooted in Orthodoxy. It is true that "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" puts forward a vision of humanity before the Fall which is not Christian, for reasons I already explained in the last chapter. But "The Dream ..." should be read as an artistic rather than as a theological piece. From the analysis of Dostoevsky's work as a whole it results that "the most important consequence of the Fall is", as Ward points out, "the obscuring of the spiritual principle within humanity" or the obscuring of "the image of God" within men.[661] From a Christian (or at least a certain type of Christian) perspective, that man bears and accomplishes the image of God within him means that man contemplates God's creation in a spiritual manner that includes and transfigures the senses and the reason. Dumitru Staniloae argues that, after the Fall, man's capacity to contemplate creation in such a manner was diminished, but not totally effaced. Man's desire to employ his active freedom in a continual choice of the good has been weakened. It cohabitates and is sometimes eclipsed by man's choice of the passive freedom which engenders in man the desire to take into possession the world of beings and of things. This is, generally speaking, the approach Dostoevsky uses in order to depict fallen human nature and he affirms, in his novels, that evil is the result of the free choice of *fallen* human nature. Dostoevsky's work is a testimony of the fact that, in the world, there is good

[661] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.154.

just as there is evil, that there is ugliness just as there is beauty. For every Raskolnikov there is a Sonya and for every Ivan or for every Smerdyakov there is an Alyosha. This feature of Dostoevsky's work is meant to show that, in the Orthodox vision, the fallen world has not been reduced to opacity and fatality and that transcendence is not opaque for the world. People can still partially break through this opacity and have some kind of knowledge of and enter some kind of relation with the transcendence and the world. But by themselves, they are incapable to conquer this opacity. Nevertheless, the elder Zosima from *The Brothers Karamazov* continually repeats that paradise "remains accessible to humanity", as Ward writes, "through that ultimate bridge between this world and the other world", who is "the God–man" or Christ, the only one who can and does – if man accepts – restore to man "the spiritual principle of his being".[662]

For Leroux, the Fall has strictly a symbolic significance meant to explain the history of the revelation of Humanity to itself. About the Fall Leroux writes extensively in *De l'Humanité* where he states, interpreting different rabbinic sources and the writings of some Christian authors, such as Saint Augustine and Origen, that Adam is not an historical, particular person, created by God, as the Christian narrative affirms, but represents the human race. The human race or what is called Adam, according to Leroux, existed in potency in Eden and was living in a complete non-reflected identity with itself and with the Universal Life; the self and the other were completely undifferentiated. It was a state of ignorant happiness: "*tel est le Paradis ou Éden primitif*", reasons Leroux, "*le paradis terrestre, l'âge d'or placé derrière nous. C'est la vie* naturelle *de l'homme, déjà créé, mais non achevé*".[663] In this state of amorphous unity, the human race wanted to acquire

[662] Ibidem.
[663] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, "Tradition", tome II, p.49.

knowledge. This is the symbolic meaning of the sin of having tasted from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. According to Leroux, to take *ad litteram* the Christian story that man, having eaten from the forbidden fruit, provoked the wrath of God who punished man with death means to ascribe human passions to God. The original sin consists instead, Leroux sustains, in that the human race or Adam passed from the state of unity to that of differentiation and reflection through egoism. The human race, argues Leroux, wanted to be like God, to take possession of the world, being unable to understand God's power in the light of God's love. Omnipotence and love are united in God. According to Leroux, just as according to Christianity, power and love could be united in man, too, but only when man reaches spiritual maturity. In a state of immaturity, man wants to take creation into possession, wants, thus, to exercise his power. In this context, he perceives God as the absolute power which limits his own. On the contrary, perceiving God as love, man sees him and the other human beings not as competing powers, but realizes that, although omnipotent, God opens himself, at the same time, to all others as love. Understanding this spiritual principle, man consequently does not regard any longer the world as relations of power, but opens himself, too, through love, to the others. Separating God's omnipotence from his love, man understands God exclusively as the possessor of the world and tries to imitate this divine attribute. The plan of the Providence, believes Leroux, was that man would develop reflection upon himself and the world within unity with his fellows and with God, while the human race chose to develop reflection in separation, division, and, thus, to relate to the world, in a possessive manner. The idea that, after the Fall, man was destined to die means, according to Leroux, that man passed from the state of unity to the state of division: "*il a connu; mais, ayant connu avec égoïsme, il a connu son isolement, sa faiblesse, sa nudité; il*

a connu la honte, la crainte, le désespoir, et tous les maux qu'engendre la combinaison de la science et de l'égoïsme", "*tous ces* contraires de l'être *ou de la vie*".[664] The myth of Cain and Abel, writes Leroux in *De l'Humanité*, is the continuation of the myth of the Fall; it continues the history of the individual man who tries to know the world of human beings and of things by violently relating to it and by trying to dominate it.[665]

Despite the Fall and its implications, the human history is not exclusively the history of division and separation, but also that of humankind's attempt of reconciliation with itself and with God. This double history is explained by Leroux through the fact that, since the Fall, humanity has been in ignorance, but the more it advances in time, the more it becomes aware of itself. On the one hand, ignorance induced humanity to spread division. But, on the other hand, the desire for unity and reconciliation has always been present in humanity whose goal is to accomplish this unity. What Christianity calls the Fall, believes Leroux, then represents also a progress. Even though egoism or separation was not a necessary step for man's becoming a reflective being, in the aftermath of the Fall, man acquired reflective capacities which he can employ in order to make a progress, *i.e.*, to become what he is: human, in the full sense of the term. When the *Genesis* says, according to Leroux, that, through the Fall, suffering and death entered the world, it means that man alienated himself from what Leroux calls "*la Vie Universelle*" which emanates from God. This "*Vie Universelle*" both animates and represents Humanity in a continual process of reconciliation. At the same time, suffering and death give birth in man to a reflection upon his own condition in the world and upon injustice. This reflection, in its turn, makes man more aware of his desire for unity and

[664]Ibidem, pp.64, 59.
[665] Leroux even claims that the name Cain means, in Hebrew, "I possess" (*De l'Humanité*, tome II, p.77).

reconciliation.[666] This desire has always existed in germinal form in humanity. In this way can be explained the fact that, despite the existence of different forms of domination, men always tried to put communion ("*le repas en commun*") into practice, even if in incomplete forms. Jesus brought a form of communion perfected through its universality, which proclaimed all human beings brothers.

It could be said that Leroux values Christianity more than any other nineteenth-century utopian thinker, but, paradoxically, at the same time, de-Christianizes it more than any other utopian thinker.[667] Leroux echoes Maximus the Confessor who argues that God would have wanted man to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but to eat together with God, when man would have chosen out of his free will to be with God.[668] On the other hand, Leroux's narrative of the Fall is different from the Christian narrative, according to which a personal God[669] created not the human race in potency, but a human person who, out of his free will, disobeyed God and, consequently, separated from Him.

3.4.2. Revelation and communion in the understanding of Leroux

If Dostoevsky remains within the Christian paradigm, understanding Revelation as the historical Incarnation of the second Person of the Trinity who transfigures every person who accepts to be transfigured and the world as a whole, Leroux understands Revelation as an

[666] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, tome II, "Tradition", p.55.
[667] Frank Paul Bowman, *Le Christ des barricades*, p.207, in Vincent Peillon, *Pierre Leroux et le socialisme républicain*, p.162.
[668] Maximus the Confessor, "Raspunsuri catre Talasie" ("Ad Thalassium"), *Filocalia romaneasca* (*Romanian Philokalia*), III, p.12, in Dumitru Staniloae, *Teologia Dogmatica Ortodoxa* (*Dogmatic Orthodox Theology*), vol.I, p.486.
[669] In this particular account of Leroux about the Fall, it is not clear who or what God is, but for sure He does not appear as a Person.

eternal and a progressive process by which Humanity ascends by itself to God and reconciles with itself. Jesus Christ, believes Leroux, can indeed be called the redeemer of Adam, but not in the sense in which Christianity understands the idea of redemption. If the human race or Adam left unity and separated from the Universal Life, Jesus Christ shows humankind the path towards reflected unity, as in Jesus' prayer: "*Père saint, garde en ton nom ceux que tu m'as donnés,* afin qu'ils soient UN comme nous".[670] What Christ brings new, according to Leroux, is that he includes in this "UN" the entire human race, past, present and future. It is in this sense, believes Leroux, that should be interpreted the Apostle Paul's words: "*Nous sommes tous une seule race, un seul homme, un seul homme éternel*".[671] Christians believe, Leroux argues, that Christ left them the gift of the Eucharist, by which they become one with Christ and continually participate to the Mystical Supper, becoming, thus, "UN" within the mystical body of Christ. But Leroux empties the Eucharist of the divine meaning and insists on the symbolic meaning or what he calls "*le repas en commun*" which is recurrent in many of his works, especially in *De l'Égalité*, *La Grève de Samarez* and *De l'Humanité*.

As Paul Viallaneix points out in his article, "Pierre Leroux, théologien socialiste", the juxtaposition Leroux operates between the scriptural narrative and the utopian representation of the communion makes Leroux a representative of the humanitarianism of his century.[672] And by this juxtaposition, Leroux reveals his approach which "*consiste à effacer jusqu'à l'abolir l'individualité du Christ eucharistique*".[673] Leroux sustains that, since the Bible affirms that Christ came to save *all* sinners, what the Church calls "communion" is wrongly

[670] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, "Tradition", tome II, p.56.
[671] Ibidem, p.35.
[672] Paul Viallaneix, "Pierre Leroux, théologien socialiste (à propos de la *Grève de Samarez*), in *Romantisme*, no.32, 1981, p.79.
[673] Ibidem.

restricted to a specific Church. Communion, in his opinion, is meant to become universal.[674] For Leroux, as Villaneix rightly summarizes, "*l'Église invisible se confond avec l'Humanité ou encore avec la Société*".[675] All human beings are members of the mystical body not of Christ, but of Humanity. Leroux's statement serves then as an answer to the Saint-Simonians who were conceiving Humanity as a "substantialized" body or what Leroux was calling "*un gros animal*". In this sense, in order to distinguish himself from the Saint-Simonian school, Leroux even avoids the term "members" of Humanity and says: "*Oui, la société est un corps, mais un corps mystique, et nous n'en sommes pas les membres, mais nous y vivons*".[676] What is the meaning of this?

I argued earlier that revelation, for Leroux, was an eternal and progressive process by which Humanity was in reconciliation with itself. Revelation started together with human history whose beginning, situated in times immemorial, we can hardly identify. This conception places Leroux in the vicinity of Tolstoy together with whom he could affirm that "humanity never dies and always is".[677] The human race came to knowledge through an egoist or a negative act: it negated unity and subsequently affirmed the separation, the division, the self over otherness. However, human nature always possesses the germ of that which accounts for man's humanity, the germ of Universal Life, which in the aftermath of the separation, manifests within man a desire for unity or desire for Life. According to Leroux, even those who affirm their self and deny unity affirm, in reality, unity and Life. In

[674] This does not contradict Christianity (at least a certain type of Christianity) which sustains, too, that communion is meant to become the communion of all humanity to the extent to which all humanity accepts Christ. But the difference between Leroux and the Christian narrative is that Leroux does not accept communion centered on Christ, who is both human and divine.

[675] Paul Viallaneix, "Pierre Leroux, théologien socialiste", p.79.

[676] Pierre Leroux, "De l'individualisme et du socialisme", p.24.

[677] We should be careful to distinguish the nuances of the "always is" of Leroux. His conception on the eternity of humanity is ambiguous and it seems that he sometimes equals the idea that humanity will exist for a very long time with the idea that humanity is eternal.

his opinion, evil is the shadow of and the result of man's ignorance of the good, and does not have existence of its own.[678] In fact, its very presence points towards that which has existence of its own, namely the good, which, nevertheless, according to Leroux, does not mean that evil ceases to appear as evil. As Le Bras-Chopard points out, for Leroux, evil does not "assist" the triumph of the good, but the good will triumph because of the weakness and ultimate nothingness of evil: "'*la force vive qui entraîne l'Humanité est toujours le bien' et c'est à notre ignorance que le mal emprunte sa 'force relative'*."[679]

Following the spirit of his time, Leroux believes that the history of humanity is divided between its childhood, represented by Antiquity, its adolescence, represented by Christianity, and its mature age, which began in the eighteenth century and is still to be accomplished. What is common to all these periods and manifests itself with greater intensity the more humanity advances in time is the desire for communion or "*le repas en commun*". And Leroux tries to convince his readers, especially in *De l'Égalité*, that communion existed as a symbolic act in all societies, which proves, according to him, that human beings are naturally attracted to one another. We find it, argues Leroux, in Sparta, "*la ville des égaux*", in Egypt or in the Passover of the Jews. But Antiquity was not capable to put forward a universal conception of the human being – which was defined by each city in its own terms, a thing that accounted for the distinction between citizens and enemies of the city or between freeman and slave. As such, "*le repas en commun*" admitted the participation of a very limited number of people.[680] Communion was revealed by God through all the prophets and the sages of the world, from Moses to Buddha. But with Christ, who communed with the poor and the lowly, communion was taken on a different path.

[678] This is an idea present in Plato and in the Christian literature.
[679] Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.96.
[680] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Égalité*, pp.133-157.

Moreover, the act by which he gave his life for the world accounts for the fact that "*les Agapes ont commencé*" and his sacrifice, believes Leroux, reveals that all people are called to communion and represent Life for one another.[681]

3.4.3. Leroux: "les deux infinis" or God and Humanity

Leroux sustains that there are what he calls "*deux infinis*" or "*deux* ciels". The first is "*le ciel absolu*" or God, who is incomprehensible and cannot be represented[682]: "*le ciel [absolu]* ne se voit pas*; Dieu ne se voit pas. […] Il n'est nulle part, dans aucun point de l'espace, puisqu'il est l'infini. […] Il ne viendra jamais, il ne se montrera à aucune créature; il ne tombera jamais dans le temps*".[683] Leroux could not accept the personalization – which, for him, was equal to the humanization – of God. In his opinion, "*[une] conception d'un Dieu doué de personnalité et de conscience […] qui entendrait nos plaintes*"[684] would mean to endow God with human feelings and passions, the ultimate significance of this act being idolatry. A God who punishes and then blesses, a God who takes revenge, is a God endowed with human arbitrariness and Leroux justifies his act of "*démystifier le miracle*", in Le Bras-Chopard's words, by his intention to refute arbitrariness.[685] Leroux's God could be called the great Absence-Presence: human beings are in communion and communicate with him indirectly, by being in communion and communicating between themselves, while God is

[681] Ibidem, p.125.
[682] God cannot be known directly, but he can be known indirectly, through his manifestations in the world of inter-subjective relations. To the extent to which these are relations of *philia*, they point to God, who created Humanity out of love.
[683] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, Livre cinquième, tome I, p.185.
[684] Armelle Le Bras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.119.
[685] Ibidem, p.120.

the direct source of life, love and reason for humanity.[686]

The second of "*les deux* ciels" is "*le ciel relatif*" or the life of the world, created by God, and manifested in its plenitude in Humanity.[687] Sometimes Leroux seems to identify completely "*le ciel relatif*" with Humanity. Humanity or "*le ciel relatif*" is, thus, "*la vie manifestée; c'est le temps, c'est l'espace; c'est le fini, manifestation de l'infini; le présent, manifestation de l'éternel*".[688] God continually reveals to the world its *raison d'être* indirectly, through Humanity. The latter, according to Leroux, is the manifestation of God in the world, by which Humanity is revealed to itself. Throughout history, God chose certain characters, like prophets and sages, Jesus Christ, in which Humanity was manifested more clearly than in other persons, in order to show to the human race its ideal destiny. Now, believes Leroux, that freedom, brotherhood and equality have all been revealed, Humanity faces a new era, translated as a potential new mode of being in the world. Now, that Humanity is aware that all people are brothers and are called to *philia*, it can virtually organize its mode of being in the world, in accordance with the divine ideal. Henceforth, believes Leroux, Humanity will become manifest not just in certain extraordinary characters, but in everyone. Whether people will organize themselves in accordance with the divine ideal depends on their acceptance of Humanity and of God, or, in other words, on their acceptance of communion with their fellows and with God.

According to Leroux, Jesus revealed to the world the two fundamental precepts, the love of God and the love of others, which are together *agape*. Leroux has a great admiration for

[686] The verb "to communicate", in Leroux's philosophy, comes from "communion". Human beings can communicate with one another and with God as long as they are in communion with one another and with God. In the absence of communion, the process of communication is reduced to mere speaking which, because there lacks the ultimate sense of life, is devoid of meaning. However, there are always traces of communication among human beings because communion, which is the same as Life or unity, is an objective reality which no human being can deny in totality.

[687] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, Livre cinquième, tome I, p.186.

[688] Ibidem, p.186.

the first Christian communities, characterized by spontaneity. The Church, laments Leroux, slowly institutionalized these precepts and opened the path for the fragmentation of man and of the world. On the one hand, says Leroux, the Church divided human affairs between temporal affairs – abandoned to the laity – or the State / Cesar and spiritual affairs – given exclusively in the hands of the clergy – or the Church / Pope. This, continues Leroux, paved the path for the Reformation which drew the clear line between individual salvation and otherness. The individual was induced to believe that earthly communion was a vain dream which would be attained only in the afterlife. This deepened the fragmentation between the public and the private spheres. God came to be conceived as a Being who created the world and withdrew from it, a Being supposed to be venerated in the Church, understood as an institutional background of veneration, and not glorified in the world, within the communion of people or what Leroux calls the invisible Church. From here comes, Leroux argues, the absence of the desire for life understood as love of the world, since the individual conceives, in Leroux's words, "*un Dieu hors du monde et de la vie; un homme à part de ce Dieu; un autre homme, le prochain, également à part de Dieu, et à part aussi de l'homme son semblable*".[689]

According to Leroux, who often refers to the Apostle Paul, by whom he was fascinated (and in this sense, Leroux's socialism could be called a Paulinic socialism), God is Love, *par excellence*, and, consequently, God-Love cannot abandon his own.[690] Although God is incomprehensible and cannot be represented, he is known by man through his manifestations. And the fundamental manifestation is Life, as God is the source of Life. Leroux always makes analogies between Universal Life and Light, arguing that Humanity,

[689]Ibidem, p.169.

[690] I use the term "love" here because it is not clear whether, when he speaks of God, Leroux refers to *philia* or to *agape*.

as an expression of Universal Life, is for man what Light is for the eye, without which, the eye as an organ would be useless.[691] Light is that which allows the physical eye to see, but also the spiritual eye of the "inner man" which illuminates him, as in the Biblical words, "the lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light" (Matt 6: 22). In this sense, for Leroux, Humanity cannot be conceived separately from human beings, but exists within them and in the inter-subjective relations between them. Likewise, human beings cannot be conceived outside of Humanity, since they are manifestations of Humanity.[692]

3.4.4. The presence of Christ and the Christian life in Dostoevsky's work

"God is in us, therefore he is".[693] Vladimir Solovyov means by this sentence that "the deity with which we are united, and which acts and reveals itself in us, is something 'distinct and independent' of us"[694]. For Dostoevsky, this paradoxical relation of God and humanity is accomplished in Christ. The first question we should ask, concerning Dostoevsky, is: through which character from his work is Christ's presence in the world made manifest?

In section 2.8., I analyzed the discourse of the Grand Inquisitor, pointing out the similarity between his socialism and that of the Saint-Simonians. The main aspect they have in common is monologism, defined as the incapacity of a self-sufficient being to take into consideration the desires and feelings of those with whom he relates or whom he governs. The legend of "The Grand Inquisitor" appeared to begin as a dialogue between the Inquisitor

[691] This specific idea is very powerful in Plato's *Republic*, as well as in the Christian literature.
[692] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, Livre cinquième, tome I, p.198.
[693] A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p.200.
[694] Ibidem.

and his strange Prisoner, whom he recognizes as Christ come to earth. But as Christ is silent, the encounter is in reality, the occasion of a monologue of the Grand Inquisitor. The latter reproached Christ with the fact that, because he did not impose himself, but waited that man would love him freely, he left the world in a profound disorder. According to Romano Guardini, we must pay particular attention to the fact that the author of the poem is Ivan Karamazov, a man who has frequent hallucinations in which he fancies that the devil appears to him. In the poem, Christ *does* nothing, but *is* sheer and infinite compassion and he "invites us to leave the world".[695] In this sense, argues Guardini, the Christ of the legend seems to render justice to Ivan, seems not to defy the idea that the world is a vale of tears where the millions of weak beings suffer injustice and sometimes perpetrate injustice at their turn. He is, in the words of Guardini, inoffensive to the spirit of the world or rather to the "mighty spirit".

I believe that Guardini is right to argue that this is not Dostoevsky's Christ, as it is difficult to conclude that the belief Dostoevsky acquired throughout his life is that Christ was an ideal. "To depict Christ as an ideal"[696] would have meant "to declare him incomparable, and therefore out of reach"; on the contrary, for Dostoevsky Christ was a "presence".[697] This is why Dostoevsky emphasized so much the Incarnation. Dostoevsky wrote: "Many think that it is enough to believe in the moral teaching of Christ to be a Christian. It is not Christ's moral teaching, not Christ's doctrine, that will save the world, but

[695] Romano Guardini, *L'univers religieux de Dostoïevski*, p.118.

[696] It is worth mentioning that, as critics, like J. Steinberg and A. Boyce Gibson note, Dostoevsky's use of the word "ideal", when referring to Christ, is strongly related to the Platonic Idea and, as such, by "ideal" he "refers to what in the nature of things does not belong to this world at all" (A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p.37).

[697] Ibidem, p.17.

faith that the Word has become flesh".[698] In the Notebooks for *The Possessed*, Dostoevsky also wrote that "Christ came to us so that humanity should find out that the nature of the human spirit can appear in such a heavenly splendour, in actual fact and in the flesh, and not only in a kind of dream, or as an ideal".[699] Herein lies the reason for the failure of the character who has been often depicted by critics as "a failure of Christianity", Prince Myshkin, from *The Idiot*. Let us describe first this character before coming back to our question: who is truly Christ, according to Dostoevsky?

Under the influence of Romanticism, Dostoevsky intended to depict Myshkin as "the perfectly beautiful man" or "the best possible emissary of humanity".[700] It is important to note that Dostoevsky depicted Myshkin as "the perfectly *beautiful* man" and not as the "perfect" man. To understand this important distinction we must begin with a summary of *The Idiot*.

The central figure of the novel who represents the "test" for the "perfectly beautiful man" is Nastasya Filippovna. We learn that she was an orphan and was brought up by the rich Totsky. It seems that Totsky, who "had been as it were *in loco parentis*",[701] seduced Nastasya in her adolescence and now was keeping her in a fancy apartment. But he did not want to marry her, looking for a more profitable and decent marriage with one of the Yepanchin girls. He, nevertheless, gives Nastasya a consistent dowry and finds her a "match", Ganya Ivolgin, on strictly utilitarian grounds. A weak and greedy bourgeois, Ganya is attracted by Nastasya's beauty, while at the same time, despises her for having been

[698]Feodor Dostoevsky, XI, 187-188, N. Zernov, *Eastern Christendom*, 1961, p.232, in Malcom Jones, *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience*, Anthem Press, London, 2005, p.17.

[699] Feodor Dostoevsky, Notebooks for *The Possessed*, original text, p.155, in A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, pp.17-18.

[700] A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p.115.

[701] Ibidem, p.107.

"Totsky's concubine". But he is eager to get Nastasya's dowry and is almost certain that, in order to get rid of her "shame", Nastasya would marry him. Ganya is wrong, because Nastasya is proud and has a great strength of character. Although she "kept [Totsky] off",[702] Nastasya cannot forgive him for having seduced her, as a teen, and, most importantly, cannot forgive herself. The novelist tells us that "she was accepting money" from Totsky, "certainly not as payment for her maidenly shame, in which she was blameless, but simply as a recompense for her ruined life".[703] It is exactly her acceptance of Totsky's money that she cannot forgive. She feels the judgment and the despise of society for her entire being, and in this sense, her grievance has almost no limit. Her purpose in life is to destroy Totsky, that is, to give birth in him to the same sense of guilt that she is struggling with, by destroying herself. As such, she seduces and makes jealous the rich and passionate Rogozhin, knowing that, in the end, he will kill her. It is in this context that Myshkin enters the scene. He returns from Switzerland, where he was treated for a very serious form of epilepsy due to which he had fallen into idiocy. When he comes to Russia, he is healed, but, nevertheless, his nervous system is extremely fragile. His first contact in Russia is with the Yepanchin girls, one of whom should be Totsky's "match". There he sees a portrait of Nastasya and he is oddly fascinated by the deep grief that her beauty expresses. Just after a few days in Russia, the Prince arrives at a party organized by Nastasya Filippovna, where she makes a scene with the purpose of humiliating Totsky by showing her own humiliation. The Prince proposes her to marry him: "I believe that you would be doing me honour, not the other way about. I am nothing, but you suffered and emerged from that hell pure, and that means a great deal".[704] Although impressed by Myshkin's words – Nastasya exclaims that she saw *man* for the first

[702] Ibidem.
[703] Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, translated by Alan Myers, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992, p.51.
[704] Ibidem, p.174.

time in her life, that is, a human being who does not despise her – Nastasya cannot accept his forgiveness. She is too proud and too wounded. In the rest of the novel, the Prince attempts to save Nastasya from herself, with little success, though, having in view that he feels too much pity and has too little strength and health. Out of the proud desire to destroy herself, Nastasya runs away with Rogozhin who, because of his unbearable passion, kills her. Myshkin runs after them, trying to save Nastasya, but finds only Rogozhin and her dead body. His whole adventure ends with his falling back into complete "idiocy". The "test" which Myshkin – like any authentic Christian – has to pass thus appears to be composed of two parts: sin and death, that need to be defeated so that Christianity could be victorious.

For Dostoevsky, Christ is incarnate to the extent to which Jesus the man reflects the omnipotent God. Omnipotence is therefore tested in two ways: through its capacity to save the world by defeating evil and through Resurrection, that is, the capacity to conquer the absolute enemy, death. Dostoevsky's work as a whole echoes the Apostle Paul's exclamation (borrowed from the Old Testament): "Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" (1 Co 15: 54 – 55). For his part, Myshkin, the "perfectly beautiful man", reveals himself as totally deprived of the capacity to help people. He can only express his compassion, or his pity, but he is incapable of any redemptive action. This is one of the reasons for which Nastasya Filippovna cannot accept his forgiveness and, moreover, says that she could not "ruin a babe-in-arms".[705]

The entire novel is constructed around Holbein's painting depicting "the Saviour, just taken down from the cross".[706] In Rogozhin's house, the Prince is fascinated by the painting, but sees "no hint of Resurrection" in it. This reveals the crucial question here: can beauty

[705] Ibidem, 179.
[706] Ibidem, p.228.

overcome death? If even the most beautiful man is incapable of redemption or he himself dies, what is then the sense of life, asks Dostoevsky, through the voice of his characters? Even if he has the beauty of the kindest man, Myshkin's incapacity to prevent the murder of Nastasya brings him to "idiocy" and makes him appear in the end as the "god that failed".

The outcome is, thus, that beauty indeed attempts to save the world and might even pierce the hearts of people, but that ultimately death will swallow it. According to Boyce Gibson, Myshkin's evolution in the novel shows not the failure *of* Christianity, but failure *in* Christianity; Myshkin failed not because he was Christian, but because he was not Christian enough, he was not incarnate enough,[707] or did not understand what to be incarnate meant. In everything Dostoevsky wrote, he insisted on "Christ as man transfigured", as a presence in the world, who acts upon the world. Zosima repeatedly talks about the Christian active love and sends Alyosha *in* the world; Sonya sends Raskolnikov to the cross-roads to ask forgiveness from the people. In the *Diary*, Dostoevsky constantly repeats that, as a Christian, one should ask himself what he can do for the others and do it. Myshkin's spiritual features make him to be too sacrificial and less passionate, unlike Sonya, for instance, as Boyce Gibson stresses, who feels not pity for Raskolnikov, but both compassion and passionate love, being capable not simply to help him confess, but to follow him through the hardship of Siberia. For Dostoevsky, it appears that Christianity has nothing to do with sheer beauty.

Dostoevsky affirmed in a letter sent in 1854 from Siberia to Natalia Fonvizina that "if someone were to prove to me that the truth lay outside Christ, I should choose to remain with Christ rather than with the truth".[708] This affirmation formed the basis for the accusation of Alain Besançon that to make such a statement is equivalent with the

[707] A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p.114.
[708] Feodor Dostoevsky, XXVIII, i, 176, in Malcom Jones, *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience*, p.7.

determination to "[follow] an imposter".[709] The accusation may have its grounds. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to read Dostoevsky's affirmation in the light of Pascal's belief that even truth can be made into an idol, because truth, separated from love, is not God, but only his image, and it is not proper either to worship or to love it.[710] For Dostoevsky, neither beauty, nor truth, nor reason, isolated from the other attributes of divinity, are God, because each, taken by itself, is an idol, and, therefore, far from perfection.

Dostoevsky makes another attempt to test the Christian in the world and the attempt finds its expression in Alyosha who is contrasted with Myshkin. Alyosha is "well-grown, red-cheeked, clean-eyed"; a "realist" as "contrasted with 'fanatic' and 'mystic'"; "happy and vigorous, with great powers of recovery, he is brought back from his moment of despair through the most joyous of all miracles, that of Cana".[711]

The essential moment which Alyosha overcomes and which represents the real alternative to Myshkin consists in his confrontation with Zosima's putrefaction.[712] If his faith is shaken first, it is immediately resurrected. In his grief, near the coffin of his elder, he falls asleep for a moment and while asleep, he hears someone reading from the Bible the miracle of Cana – where Jesus, present at a wedding, turns water into wine – and Alyosha has the vision of Zosima resurrected. He is, then, overwhelmed by joy and leaves the small room where the coffin stands, because "[h]is soul, filled with ecstasy, thirsted for freedom, space, latitude". Outside, he feels the sky and earth united in one whole and vibrating in his soul:

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[709] Alain Besançon, *The Rise of the Gulag. Intellectual Origins of Leninism*, translated by Sarah Matthews, Continuum, New York, 1981, p.139.

[710] "*On se fait une idole de la vérité même; car la vérité hors la charité n'est pas Dieu, et est son image, est une idole, qu'il ne faut point aimer, ni adorer*" (Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Léon Brunschvicg, Nelson éditeurs, Paris, 1949, no.582, p.290).

[711] A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p.174.

[712] After Zosima's death, everyone in town was waiting with reverence or curiosity to see whether Zosima would have holy relics – one test, but not the only one, for relics being the pleasant smell emanating from the saint's body. But the outcome is disappointing because Zosima's body emanates a strong unpleasant smell.

> The earth's silence seemed to fuse with that of the heavens, the earth's mystery came into contact with that of the stars... Alyosha [...] suddenly cast himself down upon the earth [...]. Why he embraced it he did not know, he did not try to explain to himself why he so desperately wanted to kiss it. [...] He wanted to forgive all creatures for all things and to ask forgiveness, oh, not for himself, but for all persons, all creatures and all things.[713]

The reality of Zosima's putrefaction remains behind, because the general resurrection is affirmed in Alyosha's soul, the resurrection where the heavens and the earth, power and love are one. Alyosha cannot, indeed, prevent his father's murder, but he, unlike Myshkin, has the interior power to ask forgiveness for all and from all. He has the power to truly console his brother Dmitri, unjustly condemned, and to convince him that he is not guilty, even if he wished the death of their father. By contrast, Myshkin is not capable either to console or to convince Nastasya Filippovna that she is not guilty. Alyosha can do this by putting into practice Zosima's teaching, that of assuming responsibility for all. Sin, in this case, is defeated through repentance, that is, the repentance for the fact that the order of creation has been shaken and brought to disorder and division through sin. Death is conquered through Alyosha's live feeling of general resurrection. These two, repentance and Resurrection, are Dostoevsky's final answer to death. This explains why the motive of the Paschal resurrection is so deeply present in Dostoevsky's work. Raskolnikov passes through a period of repentance and surrenders himself to the police just before Easter. The devil tells Ivan that, on the night of Christ's Resurrection, even he almost "wanted to join in the chorus and cry [...]: 'Hosannah!' [...] But common sense [...] restrained [him] within the proper limits and [he] let the moment slip".[714] Resurrection is then, according to Dostoevsky, active in repentance and, once one repents, he comes, and brings others, as well, from death to life.

Thus, for Dostoevsky, to follow Christ does not mean to be simply the "perfectly

[713] Feodor Dostoevsky, *B.K.*, p.469.
[714] Ibidem, p.827.

beautiful man", neither to simply follow the truth, alone. According to Dostoevsky, God makes himself known to man through his manifestations. The presence of God can be experienced in the world "through the joy and gladness of nature" and especially "by way of Christ and his gospel".[715] Christ is God incarnate who came into the world and revealed the Father: "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father".[716] This was the belief and the conclusion which Dostoevsky fully expressed in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Christ, according to Dostoevsky's belief, has not withdrawn from the world. Dostoevsky, "like Peter", "saw Christ as man transfigured".[717] And, from his viewpoint, every man who accepts Christ becomes personally the vessel of the Holy Spirit, "irrespective of his moral standing or merits".[718] The history of Dostoevsky's work is, thus, the history of man who attempts to become the bearer of Christ, to become, as he was destined to be, "in the image and likeness of God". There is only one place, in the novels, where man is depicted like this, and that is Dostoevsky's final work, *The Brothers Karamazov*. In his whole literary work, previous to *The Brothers Karamazov*, Boyce Gibson argues, Dostoevsky created characters that he tested in the world: could they pass the test of the world? If they did not pass the test of the world, it meant that they failed to be Christ-like characters. But if they did not pass this test, could there be any human being who would? Alyosha and Zosima, as we shall see now, are the successful examples.

[715] A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p.196.
[716] Ibidem.
[717] Ibidem.
[718] Ibidem.

3.4.5. The Russian monk as the image of Christ

Zosima's message to the world is simple: "we are not happy, and we were meant to be: and, with no more than a change of disposition, we can be".[719] The first sin of pride and, consequently, of taking into possession the surrounding world, has made of the world a place where people suffer and perpetrate at their turn wrongdoing, and much more than wrongdoing: gratuitous evil. Zosima's teaching continues and, at the same time, overcomes "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man". Like the Ridiculous Man, Zosima, a "wise fool", too, teaches that what saves man from the destruction of the self and of the others is "fellow-feeling", promising that evil – which is a terrifying presence – is not overwhelming and all-powerful, and that life could be paradise. The "compassionate and joyful" monk Zosima, who is "as active in good works as his withdrawn profession permits",[720] commands Alyosha "to withdraw from withdrawal", to go into the world and, without forgetting the evil of the world, to be "utterly convinced that it is a good place to live in".[721] The Western civilization, Zosima says, is split between freedom, understood as affirmation of the self, and compulsive union. The problem is that it desires to make the world "a good place to live in" through an erroneous method, that is, by reconstructing the world according to the ideal-model. The Western civilization has in mind, he continues, the impersonal ideals (again, here ideal is related to the Platonic Idea, as something out of the reach of this world) of truth and justice. But, "having rejected Christ, [the Westerners] end by bathing the world in blood, for blood seeketh blood, and they that take the sword shall perish with it too".[722]It is an idea

[719] Ibidem, p.165.
[720] Ibidem, p.190.
[721] Ibidem.
[722] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.411.

repeatedly expressed by Dostoevsky in the *Diary*, too.[723] Zosima's response is that the authenticity of the world as "a good place to live in" starts not from impersonal ideals, but from every person, when men stop thinking in terms of benefits for the self and assume responsibility in all things.

Here we find a strong similarity between Dostoevsky and Leroux. In *De l'Humanité*, Leroux lays stress on the fact that Cain's murder of his brother Abel is the continuation of the first sin of the proud and egoist Adam taking possession of the world. Having broken the relation with God, according to Leroux, man is most tempted to relate to the others by dominating them, a thing which makes the world, says Leroux, to become barren, poor in life and *philia*.[724] Zosima lays stress on the cosmic dimension of both love (*agape*) and sin: "all is like an ocean […] if you touch it in one place it will reverberate at the other end of the world".[725] The "responsibility of all for all" which Father Zosima emphasizes is the expression of the concept of *sobornost* or togetherness, a central concept of Dostoevsky's work, which will be explained soon. Leroux finds, too, the "remedy" for the bareness of the world in every individual's assuming of responsibility, a thing which opens the path for the solidarity of people:

> *S'il y a dans le monde tant d'hommes misérables et vicieux, si tous nous sommes atteints de vide et de misère, cela nous découvre l'ignorance et l'immoralité qui affligent encore l'Humanité. Si l'Humanité était moins ignorante et plus morale, il n'y aurait plus dans le monde tant d'êtres misérables et vicieux. Nous sommes donc tous responsables les uns des autres. De là suit qu'une charité mutuelle est un devoir. De là suit que l'intervention de l'homme pour l'homme est un devoir.*[726]

The elder Zosima entreats the monks, on his death-bed, to love the whole creation, without forgetting the evil perpetrated by sin, and, at the same time, without being afraid of

[723] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, pp.906, 911, 1005.
[724] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, Livre troisième, tome I, p.147.
[725] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.414.
[726] Pierre Leroux, "De l'individualisme et du socialisme", p.22.

men's sin. Fear of sin, he says, induces man to withdraw from the world, while love for God's creation, irrespective of sin, leads man to action.[727] To the extent to which people do not love one another, they make the world into hell. Zosima says that it is clear that the absence of love is hell: " 'What is hell?' I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love".[728] Leroux shares the belief that hell is the incapacity to love – although, as mentioned, Leroux refers exclusively to the "earthly hell" – and on different occasions cites his favourite phrase from Saint Teresa of Avila concerning Satan: "*Le malheureux! Il n'aime pas*".[729] Love of the world, according to the Russian monk, has its spring in the (divine) life which vibrates in everyone and he affirms that humanity – which is represented by all human beings and by the loving relations between them – exists and is capable of love because God exists:

> God took seeds from other worlds[730] and sowed them upon this earth and cultivated his garden, and all that could come up, did so, but that which has grown lives and has its life in the sense of its mysterious contiguity with other worlds, and if that sense weakens or is destroyed in you, then what has grown dies within you. Then you become indifferent to life and even conceive a hatred of it.[731]

As Ward argues, "for Dostoevsky, the affirmation of the earth is inseparable from the affirmation of 'other worlds' ",[732] just as justice on earth is inseparable from "the simultaneous affirmation of eternal justice",[733] and, consequently, from the immortality of the soul. For Dostoevsky, the fact that the world might even last for a very long time is not good enough because, he reasons in his *Diary*, man cannot suffer the absurdity of life. That, despite the beauty of the world, "all will be made equal to that same zero", in the end, "is

[727] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, pp.412-414.
[728] Ibidem, p.417.
[729] Pierre Leroux, "Aux philosophes", *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.105.
[730] Dostoevsky clearly refers here to transcendence, but his choice for the plural (*worlds*) is awkward.
[731] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.415.
[732] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.152.
[733] Ibidem, p.149.

profoundly insulting, and all the more unbearable as there is no one who is guilty".[734] But the fundamental argument for the Christian faith in the immortality of the soul, according to Dostoevsky, is that which regards evil or the issue raised by Ivan: the suffering of innocents. As Ward points out, in response to "Ivan's thirst for justice here and now, Zosima appeals to the mystery of 'eternal justice', as it is revealed in the Book of Job",[735] while Alyosha points to Christ "as that being who has the right to 'forgive everyone everything and for everything', even for the suffering of the innocents, because 'he gave his blood for all and for everything'."[736]

3.5. Agape *and* Philia

In this section, I will present *agape* and *philia*, as they appear in Christianity, in Dostoevsky and in Leroux. Since my main interest is to compare the way *agape* and *philia* are used by Leroux and Dostoevsky, I do not intend to write a theological theory concerning the two terms. I realize that different branches of Christianity define the two terms differently. It is not my purpose to discuss these differences. I want to bring forth, in the first subsection, a few guidelines from Christianity which define *agape* and *philia* in a similar manner Leroux and Dostoevsky define them. Since *philia* is not a central concept in itself in Christianity, I will grant it little space. I bring into discussion the Christian *philia* because Leroux emphasizes the role of *philia* in his philosophy. And I intend to show the similarities and the differences between his *philia* and the Christian conception of *philia*, the same which

[734] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol. I, p.472.
[735] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.145.
[736] Ibidem.

is present in Dostoevsky. My argument is that Christian *agape* presupposes equally a vertical and a horizontal relation formed of two components: one is the divine love, expressed as the love of God for man and as the love of man for God; the other is brotherly love, in the light of the divine love. The Christian *philia* is a sub-division of *agape*. It is the second component, brotherly love, in the light of the divine.

3.5.1. Guidelines for philia, agape *and* eros

Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches point out that the best known biblical passage where both terms *agape* and *philia* are used is the following:

> This is My commandment, that you love (*agapate*) one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends (*filoi*) if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you (Jn 15:12 – 16).

Love for one another has a "unit of measure", that is, divine love. The criterion by which it is recognizable is one's availability to "lay down one's life for his friends". This is *agape*, which consists of divine love and of brotherly love, understood in the light of the former. Brotherly love in the light of the divine love means that all human beings are called to love one another by virtue of the fact that Christ took a human face and, thus, revealed man as the image of God. He has revealed, then, that all human beings are brothers because they all bear the image of God. Thus, universal brotherly love is grounded on a common fatherhood, revealed by Christ. This brotherly love or friendship is the same as *philia* which means to participate in the love of Christ who, by emptying and humbling himself, took upon him the sufferings of people. In Christ's humbling, Hauerwas and Pinches point out, Christians "see

[…] Christ as 'befriending' humans".[737] It means, then, that *philia* is a sub-division of *agape*, and is dependent on a transcendent reference. This explains why *philia* is not so much used in the Christian vocabulary, as it is presupposed that *agape* includes it.

"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Co 13: 13). The Greek term used by the Apostle Paul for love is *agape*, its Latin translation being *caritas*. In answering to Evagrius, "the philosopher monk *par excellence* of the 4th century", who had defined *agape* as a state (*stasis*), and centered the concept on contemplation, Maximus the Confessor replaced the definition of *agape* as a "superior state" with a "good disposition". Maximus the Confessor thus "altered the perspective from a static to a dynamic one".[738] *Agape*, according to the Confessor, is a disposition of the soul who participates in the love of God and, by this, is moved not toward the contemplation of, but toward action in the world, with which he enters in a dynamic relation. By virtue of this relation, man puts himself in the service of his fellows. Maximus the Confessor insists in opposing *agape* to pity; he argues that pity towards the poor and the lowly springs from comparison of oneself "to weaker men" which implicitly involves a relation of superiority and induces the one who thus compares himself to the weaker to "fall into the pit of conceit". His advice against this mode of relation is to "rather reach out to the commandment of love".[739]

Agape is understood, thus, as "regard for the neighbour", "the regard for every human person qua human existent, to be distinguished from those special traits, actions etc. which distinguish particular personalities".[740] It refers to a dynamic turn from the self towards the

[737] Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches, *Christians among the Virtues. Theological Conversations with Ancient and Modern Ethics*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 1997, p.47.
[738] George Berthold, note 4, in Maximus the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Chapters on Love*, in Kevin A. Lynch (publisher), *Selected Writings*, translated by George Berthold, Paulist Press, New York, 1985, p.87.
[739] Maximus the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Chapters on Love*, Third Century, § 14, p.63.
[740] Gene Outka, *Agape. An Ethical Analysis*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1972, p.9.

neighbour, with an "active concern for what *he* may want or need".[741] As different authors, like Gene Outka, Richard Niebuhr, Anders Nygren, among others, lay stress, one criterion for *agape* is "neighbor-love itself", as it "involves substantive overlap with love for God, as a test and mark of its genuineness".[742] *Agape* is, thus, universal and, in it, "neighbor-love" and love for God test each other: "If someone says, 'I love God', and hates his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also" (1 Jn 4: 20). Thus, one who feels a trace of hatred "toward any man whoever he may be […] makes himself completely foreign to the love for God".[743] According to Anders Nygren, Jesus' act of having fellowship with the lowly, with "publicans and sinners", is then essential in the understanding of divine love as "spontaneous and unmotivated", defined in opposition to "fellowship with God conceived of as a legal relationship" which renders "Divine love in the last resort […] dependent on the worth of its object".[744] Nygren continues arguing that "if God's love were restricted to the righteous it would be evoked by its object and not spontaneous; but just by the fact that it seeks sinners, who do not deserve it and can lay no claim to it, it manifests

[741] Ibidem.

[742] Ibidem, p.44.

[743] Maximus the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Chapters on Love*, First Century, §15, p.37. Unless I mention differently, whenever the authors I quote use the terms "love" or "charity", they refer to *agape*.

[744] Anders Nygren, "Agape and Eros", in Alan Soble (editor), *Eros, Agape, and Philia*, University of New Orleans, Paragon House, Saint Paul, 1989, p.86. Anders Nygren brings an illuminating perspective on the concept of *agape*. However, I must make the observation that his definition of *agape* or divine love as "a value-creating principle" tends to reduce almost to zero the "value" of humanity; humanity seems to be, in Nygren's theology, almost devoid of any goodness if it were not for the "value-creating" *agape*. According to Nygren, the affirmation that "all who bear a human face are of more value than the whole world", which supposes that "an infinite value" belongs "to man by *nature*, "has its roots elsewhere than in Christianity" (p.87). I do not intend to open a theological debate on Nygren's statement, but I want to emphasize that this particular view, which is part of his definition of *agape*, does not reflect the Christianity which Dostoevsky and Leroux embrace. In what concerns Dostoevsky, it can be argued, on the grounds of the Christian beliefs he expressed, that, in his opinion, nature, taken in itself, does not ascribe any value to man, but human nature was created by God and this changes the whole perspective. Man was created "in the image and likeness of God" – this is Dostoevsky's creed – and for this reason the phrase "all who bear a human face are of more value than the whole world" is, for Dostoevsky, very Christian. For this reason, too, man, in the sense of every single human being, is conceived, from the beginning of his creation, as an end in himself, and, as such, has "irreducible value".

most clearly its spontaneous and unmotivated nature".[745] It is in human fallen nature to cling to a love that is "motivated", *i.e.*, to love the righteous rather than the unrighteous. But Jesus "is not concerned with love in this ordinary sense" and commands to his disciples, too, this "revolutionary" kind of love, entreating them to love one another "as I have loved you". By this, it becomes obvious that *agape* is not only divine love, but also human love with roots in the former. This human love can be called brotherly love or *philia*, which is universal. Thus, *agape* includes brotherly love which means that human beings ought to love one another like Jesus loved them, that is, to the point of sacrificing his life for the ones whom he loved. The loved ones, in this case, represent all human beings who ever existed and will ever exist. *Agape* (with both its components, divine and brotherly love) then "vitalizes" humanity and raises it up to God through the fact that God loved human beings first and descended into humanity.

Humanity represents, in Christianity, not only all human beings, but also the bond that is interior to every man, since all men share in humanity and recognize their own reflection in the others and the others' reflection in themselves. At the same time, *agape* can be said to be ecstatic. By this, I mean that it is not directed towards the self, but towards the others and the "ultimate Other, God", and creates a loving union of wills. Contrariwise, the self which relates to objects exterior to it, in which it does not recognize its reflection or humanity, is concerned exclusively with its wellbeing and then manifests "a turning inward of human energy, which by nature was created to be ecstatic".[746] It is in this sense that Maximus the Confessor says that self-love, "the mother of the passions", "is the passion for the body".[747] Here we encounter one of the senses in which the term *eros* is used in Christianity.

[745] Ibidem.
[746] George Berthold, in Maximus the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Chapters on Love*, note 69, p.91.
[747] Maximus the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Chapters on Love*, Second Century, § 8, p.47.

According to Augustine, *eros*, understood as acquisitiveness, does not wish the good of its loved object, but unconsciously, or sometimes consciously, desires to consume it.[748] In the relation between two persons, the lover, he argues, derives a certain satisfaction from the fact that he bestowed a gift upon the one in need; and, thus, the giver finds himself wishing in a most subtle way that the receiver be subject to him.[749] It is worth quoting a passage on this use of the term *eros* from Karl Barth:

> [*Eros*] does not have its origin in self-denial, but in a distinctively uncritical intensification and strengthening of natural self-assertion. It is in this that the loving subject finds itself summoned and stirred to turn to another. It is hungry and demands the food that the other seems to hold out. This is the reason for its interest in the other. […] As this other promises something – itself in one of its properties – there is the desire to possess and control and enjoy it. Man wants it for himself: for the upholding, magnifying, deepening, broadening, illuminating or enriching of his own existence: or perhaps simply in a need to express himself: or perhaps even more simply in the desire to find satisfaction in all his unrest.[750]

All kinds of love appear as a disposition of the soul. But while *agape* is a disposition of the soul characterized by a dynamism which is in movement towards the infinite, *eros* is a disposition of the soul which presupposes a movement in circle, as Barth says. The individual wants to transcend his finiteness and tends towards the infinite, but, through his orientation in the world, he always returns to the same point of departure: himself. The *eros*-type of love is not defined only or necessarily as sensual; it might be directed towards the loftiest things and values, it may, as Barth writes, "even reach out to the Godhead in its purest form". But the essence that prevails in any form it takes is one: "it will always be a

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[748] Although Eastern Christianity recognizes this use of the term *eros*, it puts forward also another, positive, meaning, which appears especially in the writings of Gregory of Nyssa: "human eros under the influence of God's grace becomes transformed into divine love". (George Berthold, in Maximus the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Chapters on Love*, note 96, p.92.)

[749] Augustine of Hippo, *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*, 8th Homily, § 5, in *Catholic Encyclopedia*, from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series*, translated by H. Browne, 1888, revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/170208.htm

[750] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. IV/2, translated by G.W. Bromiley, Edinburgh, T.&T. Clark, 1958, p.734.

grasping, taking, possessive love (self-love) and in some way and at some point it will always betray itself as such".[751]

Eros is, then, blameworthy in so far as it is acquisitiveness, that is, in so far as the self seeks – consciously or unconsciously – its wellbeing first of all, lacking interest in the wellbeing of the loved person. According to the Orthodox theologian Christos Yannaras, self-love can be blessing in so far as it is self-realization, that is, in so far as it presupposes *agape*. For him, self-realization is not contradictory, but, on the contrary, is accomplished only through *agape*. Thus, human nature, as it was created by God, consists in the affirmation of man's reciprocal relation of *agape* with his fellows and with God, which includes "an act of self-transcendence".[752] Man's mode of being, then, appears as relation of *agape*, and self-realization consists in the direct participation of the self in this relation. The self does not "project onto the other" its own preferences and needs, "but accepts [the other] as he is".[753] Self-realization consists, thus, in the desire to be in a relation of *agape* with the others; it presupposes the orientation towards the others and towards God.

The biblical command goes as follows: "You shall love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind" and "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mt 22: 37 – 39). No sane person, thus, hates herself or wishes her own destruction. The meaning of this love for oneself from the biblical command has two levels. On the first (and basic) level, to love yourself means to desire your own good irrespective of your distaste for some of your qualities. Thus, to "love your neighbour as yourself" means to desire his good irrespective of your distaste for some of his qualities. On the second and (superior) level, to

[751]Ibidem, pp.734-735.
[752] Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, translated from the Greek by Elizabeth Briere, Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York, 1984, p.21.
[753] Ibidem, p.23.

love yourself means to seek self-realization. But self-realization cannot be accomplished in isolation, but only when the self is oriented to a human being other than itself. Paradoxically, thus, self-realization consists in orientation to others, in self-transcending and self-giving. In fact, self-realization is accomplished in the relation of *agape* with others, through which the self recognizes itself, its humanity in the others and theirs in itself. Through this act of self-giving, the self accomplishes human nature, as it was created by God, in itself and in others. It could be said that "whatever spiritual wealth the self has within itself is the by-product of its relations, affections, and responsibilities, of its concern for life beyond itself".[754] Thus, to "love your neighbour as yourself" means to wish for him the same self-realization that you wish for yourself. You desire, thus, that he would be in a relation of *agape* with yourself and with the others. The moment the self puts the selfish concern for itself first, it is in isolation and self-realization is not possible. What remains is *eros*. When the individual rejects the call to the reciprocal relation of *agape*, he denies his human nature and "becomes alienated from himself" by imagining himself as self-sufficient in relation to others.[755] In this case, "existence is identified with the instinctive, natural need for independent survival".[756] The individual's natural needs, "such as nourishment, self-perpetuation and self-preservation, become an end in themselves".[757] Self-sufficiency is, nevertheless, only an illusion, because the individual is still in a relation with others. Yet he is not in a reciprocal relation of *agape*, but in a relation in which the individual perceives the others as objects which promise to fulfill his needs.

[754] Richard Niebuhr, *Faith and History*, p.177, in Gene Outka, *Agape. An Ethical Analysis*, p.66.
[755] Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality*, p.30.
[756] Ibidem, p.31.
[757] Ibidem.

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Agape and its subdivision, *philia*, are not, as it can be seen, exclusively other-worldly. Although the fullness of the relation of *agape* and *philia* will be experienced, from a Christian perspective, in the other world, it can be "tasted" here. Moreover, according to (at least a part of) Christian theology, if one has not experienced the relation of *agape* and *philia* here, it is impossible for him to experience it in the other world. The relation of *agape* and *philia* presupposes that the Christian cannot be indifferent to the evil suffered in the world by anyone, specifically because all human persons are "in the image and likeness of God". The best biblical expression of this is Christ's parable about the Final Judgment from Matthew's Gospel:

> Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you [...]: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and gave You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? And when did we see You sick or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me' (Mt 25: 34 – 41).

3.5.2. Dostoevsky: **philia***, as sub-division of* **agape**

Dostoevsky never uses the terms *agape* and *philia*. However, his novels are built around the meaning of these terms. He uses, instead, "love" (*lyubov'*) and "brotherhood", which have exactly the same meaning. For Dostoevsky, just like in Christianity (the version of Christianity that I depicted in the presentation above), *agape* presupposes equally a vertical

and a horizontal relation with two components: divine love and human love, in the light of the former. *Philia* is, for him, too, a sub-division of *agape*, in the light of Christ's Incarnation which revealed man as the image of God. Because Dostoevsky does not use the terms *agape* and *philia*, only in this section I will use the terms "love" and "brotherhood".

For Dostoevsky, Christ is love incarnate. He is the God-Man who descended among humans out of love, befriended them, and taught them to love one another like he loved them. In order for brotherly love to be possible, a commandment is not sufficient; God has to communicate to men his being/nature through the Incarnation. In the presence of God incarnate, the purely transcendent love becomes equally transcendent and immanent. Ward emphasizes that this idea of God's simultaneous transcendence and immanence "in relation to the world" is "at the heart of Dostoevsky's thought about earthly paradise".[758] Thus, in Dostoevsky's novels, the characters who participate in God's love are characters active in the world. They do not operate a separation between the two worlds. Like Christ, they are living love and befriend the others by taking upon themselves their sufferings. Thus, because Christ came into the world and loved us first, we can authentically love one another, that is, we can be brothers, sacrificing ourselves for the others, like he did. In loving our brothers, according to Dostoevsky, we love "the image and likeness of Christ". Love, in Dostoevsky's novels, always has an image. And the best images which express love and brotherhood are Zosima and Alyosha.

The story about love in the elder Zosima's case begins with his brother, Markel, who died young, while Zosima was still a child. The brother, who had lived a worldly life, fell suddenly ill and unexpectedly started, one day – close to the celebration of Easter, of Christ's resurrection – to see the world with different eyes and to see himself as responsible

[758] Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.150.

for the suffering not only of human beings, but of the whole creation. He became the "wise fool" who is asking forgiveness from the whole creation and is preaching a world of authenticity – authentic freedom, authentic love, authentic equality – where the social convention of master and servant does not find its place.[759] Markel shows, as Guardini puts it, that the world "*n'est pas quelque chose de fermé et de fini; il dépend toujours d'abord de l'homme, et subit les transformations que cet homme lui impose ou laisse s'y accomplir*".[760] The seed of Markel's disposition of soul and orientation in the world remained germinal in Zosima's heart and suddenly sprang – during the episode of Zosima's hitting a soldier and fighting in a duel – when Zosima stopped for a moment and reflected on the small evil he perpetrated around him which contributed to and intensified the evil in the world. Dostoevsky does not conceive evil as having an existence of its own, but as the shadow of the good, as Leroux also liked to say. The way Dostoevsky understands good and evil can be explained – although he does not use this word explicitly – through the Greek term, *energeia*, taken by Gregory Palamas and by other Fathers of the Church from Aristotle, a term that could be translated into English by "being-at-work". Since love is defined by Maximus the Confessor as a disposition of the soul, the good is the *energeia* of love or love being-at-work, in a continual action and development, in the world. Likewise, evil is the *energeia* – or the being-at-work – of sin which takes place in us and from this perspective – although there is obviously a difference of degree between sins – it does not matter essentially how great or how small the perpetrated evil is. What matters is that it is an energy

[759] "To the servants who came in", tells the elder Zosima about his brother, "he would say every moment: 'My beloved, my dear ones, why do you serve me, am I worthy of it? If God would have mercy on me and let me stay among the living, I would serve you, for all must serve one another" (Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.374).

[760] Romano Guardini, *L'univers religieux de Dostoïevski*, p.79.

at work in the world which calls a similar energy from another individual and so on.[761]

What Zosima realizes is that his non-reflected and non-reflective arrogance (which is nothing else but an instance of the *eros*-type of love: "grasping, taking, possessive") leaves its imprint in the world: he hits a fellow-man, socially considered lower in rank, and does not find anything abnormal in that, contributing, thus, to the generally spread and self-justifying social conception that there is nothing outrageous to hit or to humiliate someone lower in rank. But suddenly there takes place in him a change of heart, possible only through divine grace which, in Dostoevsky's view, is offered to but not accepted by everyone, and without which, according to him, man could never actively transform by himself the *energeia* of evil (primarily the *energeia* of *eros*) into an *energeia* of love. Zosima's arrogant and grasping mode of being in the world – although the evil perpetrated by him is by no means something hideous, but only belongs to the spirit of the world – is turned into an act of "self-surrender" "through the way of Christ-like *kenosis*". Ward explains that this surrender is not humiliating because it is not "simply to others or more precisely to the power of others".[762] The surrender remains a mystery: by the being-at-work (*energeia*) of love, the person empties herself in order to be "filled" with the presence of Christ, without losing her individuality, just like Christ emptied and humbled himself and became a man. Such characters of Dostoevsky's literary world, like the elder Zosima, the monk Tikhon, from *The Possessed*, or Sonya Marmeladov, are not humiliated, but "elicit a strange respect from the most self-willed of those near them" specifically because they "do not enter the power game even as its victims", but "transcend it or embody an alternative way of being in the world. This

[761] A similar understanding of good and evil, in terms of *energeia* of love or of evil, can be recognized in Leroux's thought, too.

[762] Bruce Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, p.107.

possibility", writes Ward, "seems to arise from the nature of their self-surrender as surrender to a truth beyond the self, inwardly accessible, yet not defined by the self; rather this truth defines *it*".[763]

Zosima resembles Makar Dolgoruki through his rootedness in the soil and in the Russian people, but, unlike Makar, who represents the eternal Russian peasant, he is a modern man, one who possesses a sound knowledge of his time and who is capable to respond to one of the most convincing representatives of the young generation, Ivan Karamazov. In response to Madame Khokhlakov, who sincerely tells him about her "philanthropic ambitions" which are hampered by her almost instinctive desire to feel the gratitude of those helped by her, Zosima answers by making the distinction between "love in dreams" and "active love". The Russian monk lays stress that authentic love always begins with sincerity to oneself – once this lacks, one will surely fall prey to the *eros*-type of love, like in the case of the Byronic and fascinating character Ivan, or of his ridiculous father: "the main thing is to shun lies, all forms of lies, lies to yourself in particular. Keep a watch on your lies and study them every hour, every minute. Also shun disdain, both for others and for yourself."[764] Sincerity to oneself allows a person to distinguish between *eros* and love. Zosima calls these two types of love "love in dreams" and "active love":

> Love in dreams thirsts for a quick deed, swiftly accomplished and that everyone should gaze upon it. In such cases the point really is reached where people are even willing to give their lives just as long as the whole thing does not last an eternity but is swiftly achieved, as on the stage. […] Active love, on the other hand, involves work and self-mastery, and for some it may even become a whole science.[765]

As it can be noted, "love in dreams" does not mean love which does not become concrete, but is synonymous with the type of *eros* described by Karl Barth. It is the *eros*

[763]Ibidem, p.108.
[764] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, pp.79-80.
[765] Ibidem, p.80.

which animates the Grand Inquisitor. His love, like the Saint-Simonians', is grasping and possessive. This strange character seems to be sincerely, and at the same time, strangely, interested in the fate of the "millions of weak beings". His "secret" is, as Alyosha tells Ivan, that "he does not believe in God" and, not believing, he cannot imagine what he calls the "millions of weak being" as capable to recognize themselves in one another, nor can he recognize them in him or him in them. And yet he loves them, with a grasping love, which does not care for their freedom because he believes that such "weak beings" could not care less for their freedom, if they were asked to choose between freedom and wellbeing. The same love is shared by the "Grand Inquisitor" 's author, Ivan Karamazov, who, suffering sincerely for the torment of the innocents, always returns to the point of departure, his own self. It is not he, but Alyosha who actively and ecstatically manifests his care for the children, while Ivan insists, in fact, on the suffering generated in *him* by the children's suffering. Ivan's love, although certainly sincere, is not ecstatic; although not directed towards his wellbeing, it is not actively directed to others.

By contrast, the elder Zosima sends Alyosha into the world, and the beginning of his peregrination is marked by the "vision" of the marriage at Cana. There, Alyosha thinks to himself, "it was not the grief of human beings but their joy that Jesus visited" because "whoever loves human beings loves their joy": the essential teaching of the deceased Father Zosima, Alyosha remembers.[766] Through their mode of being in the world, Zosima and Alyosha show that authentic compassionate love might not always be an inward, personal drive. But this is exactly the reason for which compassionate love is possible in the first place: it is neither "exclusively this-worldly" – it is rooted in transfiguring divine love – nor "exclusively other-worldly" – "it is enacted ('lives and grows') in this world, directed not

[766] Ibidem, p.466.

towards the eternal destiny of immortal souls but towards living, suffering human beings".[767] Without being part of the Euclidean world, Alyosha nevertheless takes part to this world, by taking upon him the suffering of the people around him:

> A passive love was something of which he was not capable; the love conceived within him, he at once went to assist. For that it was necessary to set a goal, to have a firm knowledge of what was good and desirable for each of them [Ivan and Dmitri] and, having ascertained the correctness of the goal, to proceed towards the next natural step of helping them.[768]

The Brothers Karamazov is the novel which, among many other things, presents the fullness of brotherhood, being at work in the world. Alyosha founds an authentic brotherhood or community of adolescents which is grounded neither on violence nor on the contemplation of suffering. The brotherhood is founded after the death of Ilyusha who stood up for the honour of his father, Snegyriov, dragged by the beard out of a tavern by Alyosha's brother, Dmitri, for no reason. Ilyusha confronts the mockery of his colleagues, throws stones at them and they at him. A stone hits him "in the chest, above the heart", pointing towards the injustice done to his father, which was the real blow in his heart. The two incidents, his father's humiliation and the stone in the chest, seriously aggravate Ilyusha's already sick state, and lead to his death. But before that, his colleagues, under Alyosha's influence, return to him and recognize him, in a dignified manner, as the innocent victim who suffers the evil and the injustice of the world.

It is worth quoting a part of Alyosha's "speech by the stone", for it is fundamental in understanding Dostoevsky's vision of community:

> Gentlemen, we shall soon be parted. […] So let us, here, by Ilyusha's stone, agree that we shall never forget – in the first place Ilyushechka, and in the second one another. And whatever may befall us subsequently in life, even though we do not meet for twenty years hereafter – all the same let us remember how we buried the

[767]Bruce Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, p.192.
[768] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.246.

> poor boy, the one at whom you formerly threw stones […] – but whom everyone came to love so later. He was […] a kind and brave boy, he had a sense of the honour and of the bitter insult that his father bore and for which he rose up. And even though we may be occupied with the most important matters, attain honours or fall into some great misfortune – all the same let us never forget how good we found it here, all of us in association, united by such good and happy feeling, which for this time of our love for the poor boy has possibly made us better than we are in actual fact.[769]

There are two elements in this founding act of brotherhood, both pointing to the foundation of brotherhood by Christ through his willing sacrifice. The first element consists in Alyosha's befriending and taking upon himself the sufferings of others (especially of Ilyusha's family). The second element is Ilyusha, the innocent victim, whose suffering and humiliation in the world are "rescued from meaninglessness", in Dostoevsky's view, because there will always be the eternal innocent victim, Christ, the one who can "forgive everyone everything and for everything". The memory of the innocent victim, which is a type of Christ's image, and the action of Alyosha, which means following Christ, found brotherhood. Because the symbols used here by Dostoevsky point clearly to Christ's image, it results that, for him, brotherhood exists only in the light of Christ's love, and is, thus, a sub-division of love.

On the other hand, when Alyosha befriends Ilyusha's wretched father, Snegyriov, and family, he approaches them with respect, and the relation between them is not the relation between a superior (in virtue, fortune etc.) and an inferior, but becomes a twofold relation between two equal human beings: one gives and the other receives. But Alyosha is capable to give to his equal fellow-man (without, thus, humiliating the receiver) because, unlike Ivan, who does not want to receive anything which is not his own so as not to be indebted to

[769] Ibidem, pp.982-983.

anyone, he is capable also to receive help in a most natural manner.[770] And more than that, because he knows how to receive, he knows how to manifest his consideration for the recipient so that the latter would not feel humiliated. The relation between the two evokes Snegyriov as a human being "whose inner life is not entirely a product of his lowly circumstances".[771] It reveals, as Ward argues, that "what claims respect in Snegyriov is not 'some special something' […]; it is an openness to transformation by love, a love both pointing towards and rooted in eternal love".[772]

3.5.3. Leroux: **philia** *overcomes* **agape**

For Leroux, *agape* consists in God's love for men and in the commandment that men should love God and their fellows as themselves, in order to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.[773] Because *agape* is motivated by the promise of paradise or by the fear of punishment, our world is depreciated; the Christians are not interested in its fate. Thus, on the one hand, the relations of *agape* are not authentic. On the other hand, *agape* is a commandment which requires from Christians total self-sacrifice for the sake of the afterlife, and, as such, Christians leave the world in the hands of vicious people through their refusal to be active in the world. The main problem consists, thus, in the other-worldly character of

[770] Dostoevsky is careful to register this key difference between Ivan and Alyosha: "Ivan Fyodorovich […] had spent his first two years at university in poverty, supporting himself by his own efforts, and had since early childhood sensed bitterly that he was living as a dependant on his benefactor". Alyosha is the opposite of his brother, and their relative, Miusov, characterizes him as follows: "Behold possibly the only man in the world who, if one were suddenly to abandon him alone and without money on a square in an unfamiliar city of a million inhabitants, would on no account […] die of hunger or cold, because he would instantly be fed, instantly be settled, and, if he were not, then he would instantly see to it that he was, and this would cost him no effort and no degradation, and the person who settled him would […] view it as a pleasure" (Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.33).

[771] Bruce Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, p.63.

[772] Ibidem, p. 64.

[773] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, tome I, Livre quatrième, p.168.

agape which underestimates this world and, hence, inhibits the social and political action. However, Leroux admires greatly Jesus Christ, who taught people to love and to commune with one another, on the grounds that they are all human. The first Christian communities successfully put into practice his teaching. But the transcendent reference in *agape* has always been an impediment for action in the world and the more Christianity advanced in time, the more it insisted on *agape* for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, which made Christians withdraw more and more from the world. Through its insistence on communion, Christ's teaching was pointing towards *philia*. But so that the latter could be accomplished, the reference to the Kingdom of Heaven needs to be eliminated, so that human beings could love one another for the sake of the fact that they are human beings and could, thus, actively transform the world.

Christianity does not recognize this world as the right object of *agape*, in Leroux's conception. As such, this Christian conception of *agape* transforms this world into a vale of tears. From here result two possibilities. Since God and the other world are completely transcendent, without relation with this world, some people choose the path of asceticism and renounce their properties and families, in a word, renounce this world. They live in complete self-renunciation, only with their God, with the purpose of attaining the afterlife, having no interest in who takes care of this world. Other Christians remain in the world; but, in fact, they work for the Kingdom of Heaven, too. *Agape* is manifested towards one's fellows through the fact that one gives something to those in need without real interest in their fate or in the relations that could be developed between them. Christians, thus, give out of fear of eternal punishment or for the hope of the reward in heavens. Leroux then reproaches *agape* with the fact that, other-worldly as it is, it imposes on Christians the duty

to renounce themselves and to "turn the other cheek" whenever they are offended.

Leroux rejects the idea that Christ is God descended into history. God, then, cannot be known directly, but only indirectly through his manifestations, present in the inter-subjective relations. Such a God cannot communicate directly to Humanity his being, which is love. It is absurd, then, according to Leroux, to claim that you love your fellows because you love God. On the contrary, you can say that you love God, indirectly, because you love your fellows. By making the first affirmation, the Christian, in fact, recognizes God alone as lovable, alienates himself from the world and perceives his fellows as instruments for his salvation.[774] Leroux finds, thus, fault in *agape* because it fragments human relations and weakens their authenticity: "*Ce qui trouble en effet l'esprit des hommes, ce qui les empêche de vivre et d'être vraiment religieux, c'est la chimère [...] du paradis*".[775] But Leroux also argues that there are Christian writers, like Basil the Great, Clement of Alexandria, or Augustine, who, even if they put the *agape* for God first, teach people to recognize one another as ends in themselves. The problem is that it is rather an exception.

According to Leroux, God created not man personally, but the human race in an amorphous unity. After its "Fall", through an act of possessive individualism, the human race was separated between a subjectivity and an objectivity, between the self and the other, a separation which is not bad in itself, because humanity is then called back to unity, through a reflective effort of uniting self and otherness. Subjectivity and objectivity are not two entirely separate entities, but two beings attracted by one another by the very nature which they share, with the purpose of becoming one humanity. Leroux is inspired in writing about "*le mystère de leur union*" by Plato's *Banquet*, where Aristophanes explains that love (*eros*)

[774] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, Livre quatrième, tome I, pp.163-166.
[775] Ibidem, p.193.

has its origin in a feeling of absence and in the individual's regret of having lost his other half. *Eros* is, in this perspective, the perpetual quest for this other half. But Leroux did not build his conception upon the ancient *eros* – which, he believes, is exclusive of certain categories of human beings. He develops instead his own conception of *philia* which is inspired in part from Plato's *eros*, from Aristotle's *philia*, and has its main roots, he insists, in Christianity.

Leroux borrows from Aristotle the idea that cities are held together by *philia*. According to Aristotle, "when men are friends they have no need of justice, while when they are just they need friendship as well" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155a 25). For Aristotle, there are three kinds of *philia*, directed towards the pleasant, the useful, and the virtuous; the perfect *philia* is the one directed towards the virtuous. I do not intend to discuss at length Aristotle's understanding of virtue and *philia* here, but I want to underline a few points, so that we can further see where Leroux differs from it and embraces rather a Christian perspective. It seems that, for Aristotle, virtuous friends – because here *philia* is directed to that which is similar – "love the virtue which characterizes both" and this seems to imply that, in befriending another, "we are doing nothing essentially different from loving ourselves. If this is so, does it make sense to say we are loving another as another?"[776] *Philia* directed towards the virtuous then "appears to consist in giving rather than in receiving affection" (1159a 26).

The main critique Thomas Aquinas addresses to Aristotle is that this concept of *philia* of virtue "is directed to none but a virtuous man"[777] and, thus, is limited because it "places

[776] Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches, *Christians among the Virtues*, p.40.

[777] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, ed. Kevin Night, online edition, 2008,Objection 3, Art. 1, "Whether charity is friendship?", Question 23, Second Part of the Second Part. http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3025.htm

distance between [the virtuous] and others who […] do not share their virtue".[778] Aquinas then argues that Christian *philia* is in contrast with Aristotelian *philia* in so far as, while it may be directed to "a virtuous man as a principal person", it consists in the fact that we, as Christians, also love those who may "be not virtuous: in this way, charity, which above all is friendship based on the virtuous", "extends to sinners whom, out of charity, *we love for God's sake*".[779] Moreover, it seems that, for Aristotle, "there is no redemption possible of a life that has been plunged into great suffering; the sufferer does best to recognize this and cut himself loose from his friends".[780]

As we have seen, *agape* includes *philia*, in Christianity. But Leroux believes that *agape* does not include *philia*. As *philia* is made dependent on divine love, it does not have authenticity, for him. What Leroux does then is to take the Christian *philia* and to eliminate from its definition the reference to transcendence. Thus, if the definition of the Christian *philia* is one's love for all who have a human face because they are "the image and likeness of God", Leroux's definition of *philia* is one's love for all who have a human face.

Under these conditions, we can say that Leroux attempts to accomplish or to perfect Christianity outside of Christ-God, through the immanent relation between human beings. If, in Christianity, *philia* is a sub-division of *agape* and is dependent on the Incarnation of God who befriended men, Leroux's *philia* involves instead a historical evolution. The Aristotelian *philia* and the Christian *agape* represent historical moments or steps by which *philia* is progressively revealed in human history. The history of Humanity is then identified by Leroux with the history of *philia* which takes what is essential for its realization from the

[778] Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches, *Christians among the Virtues*, p.46.
[779] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Reply to Objection 3, Art.1, Question 23, Second Part of the Second Part. My italics.
[780] Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches, *Christians among the Virtues*, p.48.

previous historical moments and overcomes them. This is not to say that these moments are of equal value: if *philia* is this-worldly for Aristotle and if *agape* is other-worldly, the latter has, nevertheless, the invaluable advantage to include everyone, in other words, to be universal. However, if there is clearly a philosophy of history here, Leroux cannot be identified as a prophet of the end of history, as *philia* is always manifested imperfectly (whatever its forms are: Aristotelian *philia*, *agape*, or the Republic, as we shall see) and its perfection is always to come. In this sense, *philia* is an active utopia.

For Leroux, as we have seen, freedom involves manifestation and action upon the world and, implicitly upon other human beings. Leroux says in *De l'Égalité* that "*la non-liberté, c'est la défense d'être*". But, on the other hand, he writes in *De l'Humanité* that the source of all social evil is self-love, or *eros*, understood as acquisitiveness. Because its action consists in the destruction of unity, *eros* (acquisitiveness) is "*le contraire de l'être*". *Eros* (acquisitiveness) is action upon the world which takes possession of it. But, Leroux explains, "*l'être n'est pas seulement le* moi*, il est le* moi *uni au* non-moi*. L'être n'est pas la vie* individualisée*, il est la vie individuelle unie à la Vie Universelle. L'homme a commencé par se* séparer*,* s'individualiser *d'une façon absolue; et voilà le mal*".[781]

Since each person acts upon the world, each person feels the effects of the others' manifestation and each asks that the feelings engendered in her by the others' actions be recognized by the others. But this is not enough for unity to exist; each person needs to recognize also the feelings engendered in others by her own actions. What man needs to do, according to Leroux, is to allow the "bridge" that makes the recognition of the self in the other and of the other in the self possible. Because *philia* is this relation between human beings *qua* human beings, it reconciles self-love with *agape* – in the absence of this

[781] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, "Tradition", tome II, p.63.

reconciliation, self-love is *eros* (acquisitiveness) – by taking out from *agape* the reference to transcendence. If we recognize and love the reflection of the other in the self and of the self in the other, "*toute antinomie cesse*", argues Leroux. He writes in the *Revue sociale*:

> *Entre l'amour de soi, ou l'égoïsme, et l'amour de tous nos semblables, ou la charité, il y a un abîme, sur lequel la religion n'a pas su jeter un pont. Et pourtant l'humanité a toujours produit spontanément ce qui devait servir de lien entre l'égoïsme et la charité […] un sentiment qui n'est ni égoïsme pur ni charité pure, qui participe […] de l'amour de nous-mêmes et de l'amour de tous nos semblables: ce sentiment, c'est l'amitié*.[782]

In this context, self-love can become self-realization, which is possible in the inter-subjective relation of *philia*. The love of self and the love of others overlap here because life is unity manifested in the relation of *philia*. This means that the self loves the others and the others the self because in this way they are accomplished human beings. The fulfilled life is, hence, not the other-worldly paradise, but the earthly one which is in the future. The meaning of self-realization here is similar to the meaning of self-realization in Christianity, with the fundamental difference that, in Christianity, self-realization presupposes inter-subjective human relations in the light of the relation of *agape* between God and man. According to Leroux, in the relation of *philia*, even though a person does not enter into direct communication with every other person, she longs for the unity not only with a specific person, but with the entire humanity. In other words, her longing for unity with certain persons engenders her longing for the entire humanity. Thus, in Leroux's vision, the other, whoever that might be, is not exterior to me, like an object is exterior to a human being; he belongs to the same humanity which is interior to all human beings, therefore, the other is always recognizable in me, like I am in him.

[782] Pierre Leroux, "Analyse des fonctions pour servir à l'intelligence du principe d'organisation appelé triade", *Revue sociale*, janvier 1848, in Bruno Viard (ed.), *À la source perdue du socialisme français. Anthologie*, p.419.

Self-realization, for Leroux, founds *the* right, that is, not the right to self-preservation, manifested as *eros* (acquisitiveness), but the right to unity. The fundamental right, he argues, is then the right to life. And, as Leroux never tires to point out, life is unity. In "De l'individualisme et du socialisme", Leroux explains that unity is not the antonym of difference, but of division, and compares the relation between Humanity and the individual with the relation between the mother and the child. While the mother and the child are two different beings, they are united by an indestructible bond; the mother is the source of nourishment for the child, but not simply of material nourishment. It is difficult to imagine a child surviving with material nourishment alone; the mother introduces the child, through language and caresses, without which a child could hardly be called human, into the world of human beings.[783]

This specific point which connects the concepts of unity and of life from Leroux's philosophy echoes a theological argument of Maximus the Confessor. For him, after the Fall, the entire cosmos has suffered because its different parts – supposed to be different within unity – were also divided, so that difference becomes synonymous with division which introduces the problem of death. Interpreting Saint Maximus' argument, John Zizioulas explains that "by turning difference" (which should be maintained because it is good) "into division" (which is a perversion), "through the rejection of the other, we die".[784] Whenever one annihilates the possibility of communication between him and others, whenever he does not recognize the feelings generated by his action in the world, he violates the right both of the other, whom he does not recognize, and of himself, because he deprives both of what

[783]Pierre Leroux, "De l'individualisme et du socialsme", p.22.
[784] John Zizioulas, *Communion and Otherness*, p.3.

Leroux calls "*la portion objective*" of their lives.[785] This, believes Leroux, is only the repetition of what the Bible describes as the murder of Abel by Cain. The latter represents "*la* possession *individuelle, exclusive, égoïste, jalouse*".[786] Cain embodies, according to Leroux, sheer manifestation in the world, sheer desire of possession, which is the expression of *eros* (acquisitiveness). Leroux cites Saint Augustine, arguing that Cain is the first expression of *Civitas terrena*, the founder of a world through violence. By contrast, Abel is the eternal innocent victim and the founder of a world built "upon the memory" of a murder. But Cain hurts himself, argues Leroux, because he becomes a fugitive on earth. The Cain-type of person, believes Leroux, does not develop his interior world which consists in the recognition of the humanity common to all human beings, but relies on his relation to exterior objects, whose possession does not bring satisfaction to the self.[787]

It results from Leroux's reflections on capitalism and Saint-Simonism that the love that animates both is *eros* (acquisitiveness). The Saint-Simonians' definition of humanity informed their understanding of love. Conceiving humanity not as "a mystical body" in which we live, like Leroux, but as a concrete body, as "*un grand animal*" in Leroux's words, they failed to see in humanity the interior bond by which one recognizes himself in the others and the others in him. On the contrary, within their paradigm, one recognizes the others by virtue of the fact that they are all parts of the body of humanity, which remains exterior to their *self*. Since humanity is a body, it possesses the individuals, they are its own. Love, in this understanding, cannot but be defined in the same terms of possession. It is not a

[785] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, Livre troisième, tome I, p.145.
[786] Ibidem, "Tradition", tome II, p.74.
[787] Ibidem, pp.78-79. Karl Barth explains in a beautiful manner the calling of man, from a Christian perspective, which strongly reflects Leroux's viewpoint: "Human nature […] does not consist in the freedom of a heart closed to the fellow-man, but in that of a heart open to the fellow-man. It does not consist in the refusal of man to see the fellow-man and to be seen by him, to speak with him and to listen to him, to receive his assistance and render assistance to him […]. Man is human in the fact that he is with his fellow-man gladly" (Karl Barth, *Dogmatics*, III/2:278,in Gene Outka, *Agape. An Ethical Analysis*, pp.223-224).

coincidence that Prosper Enfantin opened what Abensour calls "*le règne d'éros*" through all the references to sensuality. He argued that the priest and the priestess should have the greatest control over the members of the new Church. Even when the members of the sect refuted Enfantin's ideas and did not refer to any sensual-type of love, the love they shared for the world, even in its loftiest and purest forms, was grasping, a thing most visible in the essence of their teaching: the taking into possession of the world. Within this mode of being in the world, the infinite quest for love is turned into a circle, as Barth explains.

Instead of this relation founded on possession and violence, Leroux insists that *philia* is founded on the gift. For him, *philia* presupposes the relation between a giver and a receiver, the utmost act, in this relation, consisting in self-giving. *Agape* presupposes, too, a relation between a giver and a receiver and self-sacrifice. What is, then, the difference? Leroux understands *agape* as self-renunciation. This means either to give everything to the others and to renounce the world, for the sake of God, or to give to the others for the sake of the reward in heavens. *Philia*, on the other hand, presupposes not the act of giving, as renunciation to the self and to the whole world, but instead an act of *sharing*. In this sense Leroux emphasizes man's rooting in property, family and city. According to him, if property, family, and city are defined as self-sufficient realities, in antagonistic terms with other such realities, they are sources of domination and of isolation for the individual. But conceived as realities which open a universal perspective for the individual and represent a window onto the world, they appear as the individual's objective world. It is in and through these social realities that man experiences the relation of *philia* with his fellows. Because this relation is inter-subjective, each needs to be giver and receiver at the same time.[788] The

[788] Bruno Viard writes in his book, *Les Trois Neveux ou l'altruisme et l'égoïsme réconciliés*, that Leroux anticipates Marcel Mauss' theory of "reciprocity as the grounds of social morality".

city is the place where all the citizens share *res publica*. This needs to be an organic, spontaneous relation. Once society imposes a sacrificial ethics on the part of its members, it creates, in fact, "absolute socialism".

The community grounded on *philia*, in its universality, has been, indeed, founded by Christ, believes Leroux. But since for Leroux Christ is not God, it is not his sacrifice (which is, in fact, the absolute renunciation to everything) that founded this community, but his act, at the Last Supper, where he shares the bread and wine with the apostles and gives them the commandment of *agape*. Christ is, thus, loved by his apostles as a friend, not as God. The importance of the Christian communion comes from the fact that it represents a moment in time which revealed the universality of relations that should be accomplished in *philia*. According to Leroux, the Catholic Church, which lived out of the world, and organized *agape* (leaving *eros* to the world), only prepared the path towards *philia*: "*L'Église n'était réellement, dans les desseins de la Providence, qu'une figure de la grande Église, qui réunira dans son sein ce qui avait été faussement séparé jusqu'ici, le règne de Dieu et le règne de la nature*".[789] The kingdom of God is, for Leroux, not that in heaven, but the "kingdom" of *philia*, always (incompletely) present on earth. Humanity represents both the totality of human beings and the relations between them. Since *philia* represents the inter-subjective relations, it means that *philia* is Humanity.

As it can be seen, the type of relations involved by Leroux's *philia* shares similarities with the type of relations involved in the *agape* and *philia*, as defined by Christianity and as they appear in Dostoevsky. The fundamental difference is that, while in the former type of relations, History is above Revelation(s), in the latter type of relations, Revelation governs

[789] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Humanité*, tome I, Livre quatrième, p.175.

history because God descended into history.

3.6. Community, solidarity and association in Leroux's republican thought

In this section, I will discuss Leroux's idea of community. I will explain first his understanding of tradition, in order to show that the historical realization of his idea of community rests on the living memory of the past. I will analyze how Leroux combines tradition and progress in order to arrive at the democratic religion of Humanity. This explains also his idea that the social organization should follow the model of the first Christian communities, and at the same time, should overcome it in the Republic.

3.6.1. Leroux's critique of eclecticism and his understanding of tradition

In his book, *Inventing the French Revolution*, Keith Baker makes an interesting distinction between memory and history. Memory preserves the past in a lively manner, *i.e.*, in a manner that blurs the sharp distinction between past and present, and affirms their continuity. Without being trapped in the nostalgia for the past, the present takes further the past, which is a continual lively source of inspiration for the present. By contrast, according to the author, history appears on the scene when the present begins to study the past with the coolness of the objective scholar. While memory is never homogeneous, but constructed of the diverse ensemble of collective memories, history is a homogeneous block situated outside of the different collective memories.[790] From this perspective, there is always the risk

[790]Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, p.55.

with history that it would transform the past into pieces meant to be displayed in museums.

Pierre Leroux reacted against the turning of the past into a museum because this approach, according to him, would eventually make the human element to vanish from man – in his opinion, the past was not simply a chaining of events, but "*l'humanité vivante*". The transformation of the past into a museum was amplified, believed Leroux, by the French bourgeois society of the 1830s and by its liberal elite, the doctrinaires, who put forward an eclectic philosophy. As already mentioned in the last chapters, eclecticism was, according to Leroux, the philosophy of the French universities and, starting with the 1830s, a state-philosophy ("*la philosophie de l'État*"), which encouraged, as mentioned, the division of labour and the subsequent narrow specialisation of individuals uprooted from their tradition. In politics, the eclectics combined elements from monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, with the purpose of finding what they would call the political *juste-milieu*. In philosophy, the eclectic philosophers were, like Leroux, men of their time, meaning that, if they were inspired by the entire classical and Christian tradition, they were also the offspring of the 18th century, and thus highly interested in the history of this new and strange subject whose name was on everyone's lips, humanity, and in whose progress and perfectibility they believed. But Leroux calls them scholars and not philosophers because he sees in their philosophy the subtle affirmation of the fact that humanity has born all the suffering throughout history so that the bourgeois would eventually feel at home. The eclectics put forward an alleged realism, Leroux believes, on the grounds of which they take as granted the division between a mass of population, which can hardly take political decisions, and an educated bourgeois elite, which perceives itself as the intellectual part of humanity. Leroux concludes that the eclectic philosophy lacks the vision of a common humanity in a continual

active aspiration towards a future where there will be no suffering or injustice.[791] According to Victor Cousin, explains Leroux, "*la philosophie n'est pas à faire, elle est faite. […] La philosophie n'a pas d'autre but que le présent*".[792] Cousin also adds that "*la philosophie est l'aristocratie de l'espèce humaine*".[793] On these grounds, Leroux argues, the eclectic philosophers state that philosophy is for the elites, while religion is for the people because the latter lives on myths. Leroux argues further that, for the eclectics, the Truth, the Good, the Just, etc. are transcendent, absolute ideas; these are not incarnate, lived realities, for them.[794]

By understanding philosophy no longer as a "private art", as it used to be for the Greeks, and by putting it in the service of the State, Leroux believes that the eclectic philosophers, inspired by Cousin's interpretation of Hegel, opened the path for the transformation of philosophy into a bureaucratic and elitist discipline.[795] On the one hand, Leroux affirms, this paradigm empties philosophy of spontaneity and of its active character, and, as Miguel Abensour explains, "*la réduit à une simple faculté d'enregistrement de l'histoire condamnée à s'exercer toujours 'après', post festum*".[796] On the other hand, Leroux argues – and here he announces Marx's critique of Hegel – that, despite its pretention of being the function of the State which embodies the universal, the eclectic philosophy sanctifies, in fact, the existing division of classes in bourgeois society.[797] This leads Leroux to conclude that the eclectic

[791] Pierre Leroux, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, p.51.
[792] Ibidem, p.252.
[793] Ibidem, p.250.
[794] Ibidem, pp.35-36.
[795] Miguel Abensour, "Philosophie politique et socialisme, Pierre Leroux ou du 'style barbare' en philosophie", p.14.
[796] Ibidem.
[797] Ibidem, pp.12-13.

philosophy champions a figure of the philosopher[798] who "*vit* de *la philosophie et non* pour *la philosophie*".[799] Because eclecticism rests on the censitary suffrage and on a moderate liberalism of the *juste-milieu*, Pierre Leroux contends that it lacks a living ideal. He deduces from this that eclecticism is not interested in the living tradition, on which a living ideal could be built, but only in the tradition become museum.[800]

Tradition, as Bénichou argues, belongs to the vocabulary of the counter-revolution which sees in it the source of stability within a world of always greater instability. Tradition represents for Leroux, too, a source of stability, in so far as it is integrated to what he defines as Humanity. As such, for him, Christianity is only one of the traditions of Humanity. In order to organize society as the equilibrium between freedom and unity, Leroux needs what he calls "*un point fixe*".[801] Not taking a certain dogma as the point of reference, but the whole tradition of humanity which includes opposing dogmas, is possible because, for Leroux, it is not Revelation which is above history, but "*c'est l'Histoire qui inclut toute révélation comme un moment de son devenir; et la substance de l'Histoire est l'Humanité, 'considérée comme source de toute certitude'*."[802]

In *De l'Humanité*, *La Grève de Samarez*, *De l'Égalité*, and *Du Christianisme et de son*

[798]Leroux took philosophy literally as a way of life. He refused the position of state-remunerated philosopher and opted for an independent life which had severe material consequences on him and his large family, certifying, thus, it might be argued, Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's beliefs that "*le philosophe privé [...] doit [...] rester célibataire et sans enfants*" (Miguel Abensour, "Philosophie politique et socialisme, Pierre Leroux ou du 'style barbare' en philosophie", p.14).One of the ways by which he assured his survival was through friendship, especially with George Sand, a friendship which was thought as an alternative mode of living, one – *the* one, according to Leroux, in consistency with human nature – centered on the gift, as Abensour affirms.

[799] Miguel Abensour, "Philosophie politique et socialisme, Pierre Leroux ou du 'style barbare' en philosophie", p.13. My italics.

[800] Jérôme Peignot argues that Pierre Leroux incited and helped George Sand to write *Les Sept cordes de la lyre*, a book where Sand talks about the universe as a harmonious whole in a Pythagorean manner. And here, she puts in Mephistopheles' mouth the following words: "*En un mot, je suis éclectique, c'est-à-dire que je crois à tout à force de ne croire à rien*" (Jérôme Peignot, *Pierre Leroux, inventeur du socialisme*, Éditions Klincksiek, Paris, 1988, p.35).

[801] Vincent Peillon, *Pierre Leroux et le socialisme républicain*, p.170.

[802] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.336.

origine démocratique, Leroux reviews different traditions – ancient Greek, Indian, Jewish, Christian, etc. – in order to show that all account for one essential feature of human nature: the attraction between human beings by virtue of which the mode of dwelling in the world is communion and communication, rather than anomie and division. Indeed, Christianity accomplishes – still imperfectly though – the preceding traditions because, on the one hand, it has been nourished by the entire ancient wisdom, and, on the other hand, it brought to light the revelation that *all* human beings are brothers. In explaining Christianity, Leroux proposes, in *La Grève de Samarez*, his own narrative of moderns versus ancients, the grounds of his philosophy. In his opinion, the ancient thinkers are oriented towards the past rather than towards the future[803], and the ancient writings usually begin with the incantation of the muse, while the authentic modern thinker – who, for Leroux, is rooted in Christianity – takes tradition towards the future and begins his writings with a word to the Reader (who can be a concrete person, but also any person who will ever read his writing).[804]

In his attempt to harmonize tradition and progress, Leroux affirms that there is in the tradition of Humanity not only truth, but also error.[805] Therefore, tradition should be regarded through the glasses of the 18th century, that is, should be subjected to the examination of critical reason. But reason, believes Leroux, should be, at its turn, under the supervision of tradition. He reproaches Enlightenment philosophers, like Voltaire, for mocking religion in all its forms. Leroux sees here the danger of Humanity's alienation: accepting that Humanity lived in error until the 18th century, when some enlightened minds

[803] The ancients' interest in the future, says Leroux, is simply given by the desire of glory after death, and not so much by the concern for future generations. It is Christianity, he affirms, which has educated in men the concern not only for the neighbour, but also for future generations.

[804] Pierre Leroux, *La Grève de Samarez*, vol.I, pp.47-48.

[805] Leroux does not tackle the issue of whether some traditions are more than others the receptacles of truth. He does, nevertheless, suggest that Christianity, propounding universal brotherly love, contains "more" truth than the preceding traditions.

allegedly revealed her the truth, justifies Humanity's need of an enlightened authority to guide her to her lost unity.[806] Nevertheless, how is one to distinguish between truth and error within tradition in the absence of such an authority? The answer (which remains ambiguous) is to be found in tradition itself: given that tradition accounts for the attraction between human beings, then "*tous ceux qui ont marché dans cette voie, tous ceux qui ont contribué à établir parmi les hommes la fraternité, l'égalité, la liberté, la solidarité, ont été dans la voie religieuse*".[807] He claims, on the footsteps of Saint Justin and of Clement of Alexandria, that "*la sainte philosophie*" is that which, grounded on tradition, is in a perpetual state of aspiration towards the unity of humankind.[808] Bénichou argues that Leroux's traditionalism "*témoigne de l'invincible répugnance du saint-simonien à faire dépendre le progrès de la raison individuelle*".[809] I would add that the combination he operates between tradition and progress testifies also for his liberal attachment to critical reason and horror in front of dogmatic authority. While claiming to transcend the individual, tradition, defined as a continual movement, excludes the invention of new dogmas, a favourite topic of the Saint-Simonians, which Leroux detested. Such a combination accounts, in Leroux's philosophy, for an ambiguous future: on the one hand, Humanity has been and will always be expecting the future, while, on the other hand, it remains unknown to Humanity. People hear the voice of Humanity within themselves, they have the intuition of Humanity, as it were, but the complete revelation of Humanity and people's full consciousness of Humanity remain in the

[806] Pierre Leroux, *Du christianisme et de son origine démocratique*, vol.I, Boussac, Imprimerie de Pierre Leroux, 1848, p.4 http://books.google.ca/books?id=zmI-AAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

[807] Pierre Leroux, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, p.46.

[808] Leroux gives as an example championing his theory Clement of Alexandria who defines philosophy as such: "*Ce que j'appelle la philosophie, ce n'est ni celle des stoïciens, en particulier, ni celle des platoniciens, ni celle d'Épicure, ni celle d'Aristote; j'appelle philosophie tout ce que ces sectes diverses ont dit de bon pour nous former à la justice et à la piété. Tout cela forme le trésor de la philosophie.*" (Clement of Alexandria, quoted by Pierre Leroux, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, p.54; reference not given.)

[809] Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.337.

future, in a state of perpetual aspiration.[810] This ambiguity of desire and of the unknown represents a fundamental characteristic of Leroux's utopia.

It is in this key, of the combination between tradition and progress, that Leroux's concept of emancipation should be understood. As Miguel Abensour writes, Leroux talks about a triple emancipation: Protestant, philosophical, and utopian. The first rightfully reacted against the papal despotic tendencies, Leroux argues, while, at the same time, it brought into the world individualism, in a germinal form. The second was the Enlightenment, with its proclamation of critical reason, which reacted against dogmatic authorities, but, at the same time, deprived humanity of its stable point, tradition. The last form of emancipation is, according to Leroux, the most interesting. It involves what Abensour calls "*la sortie de la société de castes*", meaning humanity's real breach with the principles of hierarchy and domination.[811] The utopian form of emancipation affirms that Humanity's purpose is association.

3.6.2. Religion and philosophy united in a superior form: the democratic religion of Humanity

I was arguing earlier that Leroux criticized the state-philosophy and the state-philosopher. The understanding of philosophy by the eclectic philosophers as the privilege of the elite and their subsequent separation between people/religion and elite/philosophy comes, argues Leroux, from the recognition of the difference between philosophers and religious men: "*les hommes religieux sont mus par le sentiment [...], tandis que les*

[810] Ibidem.
[811] Miguel Abensour, *Le procès des maîtres rêveurs*, p.17.

philosophes sont consacrés uniquement au culte austère de la pensée".[812] Leroux contends that philosophers, like everyone else, live in the mystical body of Humanity, that is, through *philia* in its different manifestations. Leroux argues that it is not in politics and in history that "*le point solide*", on which Humanity rests, is to be found, but in philosophy, which transcends politics and history altogether.[813] Philosophy and religion then become one and the same: philosophy becomes religion and religion becomes philosophy, this is the great revelation of modernity. And here can be identified, as it will be seen, a similarity between Leroux's philosophy and Dostoevsky's belief that philosophy and Christian faith are not mutually exclusive, but, on the contrary, are meant to be united altogether in a higher, organic form.

The man who had this intuition, although he did not follow it to its conclusions, is, according to Leroux, Rousseau, *the* modern philosopher who "*s'arrête pensif à contempler l'originalité de la Bible et de l'Évangile*"[814] and who brings the good news of the equality of all. If Rousseau's concept of equality is the capacity of reflection on the world, Leroux insists that one does not need to be a philosopher in the sense of one consecrated "*au culte austère de la pensée*" in order to be able to reflect on the world. It is worth quoting a passage from Leroux's characterization of the philosopher here:

> *Inspiré par le peuple, par les masses qui seules vivent, il ne sépare pas sa destinée de la leur. Il sait que l'ignorance du peuple fait l'ignorance des philosophes [...]. Homme de connaissance, il sait que la vie est une aspiration vers l'avenir. [...] Homme du sentiment, il se sent uni de sympathie avec tout ce qui souffre, tout ce qui est opprimé dans le monde*.[815]

That the philosopher is *inspired* by the people means, for Leroux, that philosophy is to be

[812] Pierre Leroux, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, p.33.
[813]Vincent Peillon, *Pierre Leroux et le socialism républicain*, pp.170-171.
[814] Pierre Leroux, *Du Christianisme et de son origine démocratique*, vol.I, p.32.
[815] Pierre Leroux, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, pp.251-252.

found among the people. The very fact that human beings live in the mystical body of Humanity spontaneously gives birth to universal questions which can be raised by everyone, questions such as: "*quelle est la fonction de l'homme, [...] qu'est-ce que la vie? comment se manifeste-t-elle? qu'est-elle en nous, qu'est-elle dans la nature, qu'est-elle dans l'Être universel?*"[816] And to these are added the eternal questions on suffering and on injustice, and on their relation to Universal Life, upon which anyone is called to reflect. Moreover, from Leroux's viewpoint, it is the proletariat, the poor, the lowly, who raise, by their very existence, the issue of Justice. By attaching himself to all who suffer and are oppressed, the philosopher locates philosophy in daily life because it is here, believes Leroux, that are raised the universal, fundamental questions. In a certain sense, everyone is, then, "*homme de connaissance*" and "*homme de sentiment*" because everyone is called to reflect upon and to actively respond to the issues of injustice and suffering. But this does not make philosophy dependent on an absence. The issue of Justice, of the Good etc. will always be an issue present in our world as long as injustice and suffering exist. As this issue is the incarnation of Humanity in history, and as Humanity is another word to describe the manifestation of God in the world, we can say that philosophy has its origin in the infinite desire for Universal Life which, Leroux believes in a manner similar to the Christian thought (or at least a part of the Christian thought), is inexhaustible because its spring is God. This is, for Leroux, philosophy or what he calls the democratic religion of Humanity, terms which he uses inter-changeably.

But is any way whatsoever of raising the problem of Justice satisfactory? Leroux noted in the nineteenth-century France a competition for privileges: the bourgeoisie wanted to hold on to them, while the proletariat wanted them, so that there was a division of classes. This

[816] Ibidem, p.249.

way of raising the problem of Justice, believes Leroux, leads nowhere because it is grounded on competition for resources. In his opinion, this situation rarely invites to reflection. Leroux is inspired by Aristotle's conception of man's sociability and by his theory that individuals, as well as states, cannot be held together by justice alone. Justice, believes Leroux, is accomplished in solidarity and the latter is *philia* at work in the world. Leroux could agree with Thomas Aquinas that *philia*, as understood by Christianity, can be extended to people who belong to a social category opposed to us, through *agape*. But it would be difficult for him to say, like Aquinas, that *philia* is extended to such people "for God's sake" or because we love God, the Person who is the ultimate expression of Goodness, Virtue, Love etc., since God, for Leroux, cannot be known directly, but only indirectly, through his manifestations in the world. Although he makes efforts to preserve a reference to transcendence in his philosophy/religion, it is, finally, immanence that he affirms. And transcendence is translated simply as man's perpetual quest for the Good. He writes in *De l'Humanité*: "*C'est le Dieu immanent dans l'univers, dans l'humanité, et dans chaque homme, que j'adore*".[817] In *La Grève de Samarez* we read: "*Je crois en Dieu, l'être des êtres, et je crois à l'Humanité, la* lumière éclairant tout homme qui vient en ce monde",[818] and "*Nous sommes élevés à Dieu en nous élevant à l'Homme, c'est-à-dire à la nature idéale qui est en chacun de nous*".[819] It is faith in Man that Leroux confesses here, a faith which leaves little place for divine transcendence. Aquinas' phrase on *philia* could become in Leroux's mouth: we love also our fellow-men whom we dislike or who dislike us for the sake of Humanity, which, through Universal Life, connects us with God, and which represents also a

[817] Pierre Leroux, *De L'Humanité*, tome I, p.VI.
[818] Pierre Leroux, *La Grève de Samarez*, p.180.
[819] Ibidem, p.146.

mirror of what we, as the human species could ideally be.[820]

3.6.3. The role of primitive Christianity in Leroux's republican thought

God cannot be known directly, according to Leroux, but can be known indirectly through the human relation which is *philia*, a *horizontal* relation, *par excellence*. It is what Leroux calls the transcendence-immanence of Humanity (whose life comes from God) that manifests itself as *philia* in the world. Jack Bakunin is right to point out that Leroux claimed his conception of "the immanence of God in all men" to be inspired by "John's conception of the Word" which, according to Leroux, served as grounds for the "reconciliation of religion and philosophy".[821] *Philia*, according to Leroux, is exercised first in small social organizations, such as family, without by any means excluding the stranger. It can be exercised in the social sphere of close acquaintances through association on the grounds of common purposes. It becomes political action for the common decisions concerning *res publica*. *Philia* understood as political action is not a different field from, but an extension of *philia* in social sphere. It is worth mentioning Abensour's observation that, for Leroux, philosophy, confronted with the economic and political question, transforms it "*en question ontologique, puisqu'il s'agit par cette voie d'atteindre à une nouvelle conception de la vie*".[822] Philosophy includes and overcomes Christianity, as well as other religious traditions, and becomes the democratic religion of humanity. In this process takes place the

[820] To be noted that I did not use arbitrarily the term "dislike" instead of "hate", because never does Leroux tackle the problem of hatred or of sheer gratuitous evil, and this reveals some of the limitations of his humanist philosophy.

[821] Jack Bakunin, "Pierre Leroux: A Democratic Religion for the World", in *Church History*, vol. 44, No.1 (Mar., 1975), p.64.

[822] Miguel Abensour, "Philosophie politique et socialisme, Pierre Leroux ou du 'style barbare' en philosophie", p.20.

fundamental human act which is, as Abesnour says, "*la reconnaissance de l'autre comme mon semblable*".[823] As such, the humanitarian and republican philosophy of Leroux, argues Peillon, is not centered on the question of how to organize historical and political action, but rather on "*la conscience métaphysique ou ontologique de son axiome*".[824]

Leroux's great interest in primitive Christianity indicates that he sees in it the manifestation of authentic democracy.[825] Leroux's *Du Christianisme et de son origine démocratique* is fundamental for the understanding of his conception of the democratic religion of humanity and of the socio-political organization of society. Leroux argues that Christianity as it existed in the first four centuries manifests maybe the greatest democratic potential in the history of humanity. This democratic organization was not simply that of a religious community, but clearly of a community meant to be at the same time political. This is made obvious, in his opinion, by the fact that Christianity was a complete worldview that replaced the ancient one. The strength of the Christian community was coming from the fact that it was an alternative mode of life and of organizing the world.[826] The democratic character, believes Leroux, comes from the fact that the people elected the bishops whom they knew because the latter were an organic part of the Christian small communities. This made the bishops the organic representatives of the Christian people. Leroux argues: "*Les trois cent dix-huit évêques ou prêtres rassemblés de toutes les provinces de l'Empire, qui siégeaient à Nicée, furent une véritable Assemblée Constituante, une véritable Convention,*

[823] Miguel Abensour, "Comment une philosophie de l'humanité peut-elle être une philosophie politique moderne?", Postface in *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.300.
[824] Vincent Peillon, *Pierre Leroux et le socialisme républicain*, p.172.
[825] Jack Bakunin, "Pierre Leroux: A Democratic Religion for the World", pp.64-67; Jérôme Peignot, *Pierre Leroux, inventeur du socialisme*, pp.91-92.
[826] Pierre Leroux, *Du Christianisme* ..., vol.II, pp.54, 57.

que le Christianisme vainqueur envoya pour le représenter et lui faire des lois".[827] Things started to change slowly, beginning with the year 385, when Theodosius proclaimed Christianity the official religion of the Empire. It was not its new status of official religion which bothered Leroux, but the fact that it had lost a great part of its democratic character by virtue of which the Christian community was a spontaneous organic community. The Christian community was to be later under the rule of the Pope, and would experience what was for Leroux the tragic despotism of Caesaropapism. The latter was to deprive Christian Europe of the democratic potential, inscribed in the very essence of Christianity, and to strengthen the division between the two worlds.[828]

"*Détruire le régime des castes et constituer une société d'égaux*",[829] this is the basic aim of Christianity, according to Leroux. He was a great admirer of Saint Basil "who took up the monastic life in order to find a refuge from the decadence of the Roman world". His withdrawal from a world of injustice, and, at the same time, his active concern for the world – apparent in the foundation of the famous Basiliades – made him, in the eyes of Leroux, "an advocate of disciplined communal living and an opponent of the isolated existence".[830]

Being a progressist, Leroux could by no means propose a return to the era of primitive Christianity. As he likes to repeat in *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, the memories from childhood do not take one back to childhood, but are the source for organizing one's mature life. This is how primitive Christianity is to be taken: just like Christianity took what it

[827] Pierre Leroux, quoted by Jérôme Peignot, *Pierre Leroux, inventeur du socialisme*, p.91 (reference not given).

[828] As Jack Bakunin points out, Leroux believed that the demise of democracy within Christianity was essentially the result of objective conditions, namely, the barbarian invasions. Because "the barbarians were crude warriors who could not be trusted to run the church democratically", they were "declared Christians without their understanding the new religion and then ruled by a sacerdotal class which subjected them to regular confession in order to keep their violence within some bonds" (Jack Bakunin, "Pierre Leroux: A Democratic Religion for the World", p.66).

[829] Pierre Leroux, *Du Christianisme* ..., vol.II, p.91.

[830] Jack Bakunin, "Pierre Leroux: A Democratic Religion for the World", p.66.

considered good from ancient traditions and overcame them, so should the democratic religion of Humanity do now with Christianity. According to Leroux, to place man under the authority of a priest who absolves his sins means to state that man "draws his strength from outside sources", while, in his view, only an inward stable force can give man the strength to act on the world because he makes by himself an effort to think or to love and it is by this very effort that he is the equal of everyone else. This is why Leroux encourages a continual scrutiny of one's own life, of one's "weaknesses and imperfections", as well as a continual reflection on one's life of relation to others, which, together, inform a life of authenticity, manifested in solidarity.

What is valid for an individual is valid for society and for humanity as a whole: "*la vie reviendra pour la société quand elle se connaîtra bien elle-même, et que, sentant le mal qui est en elle, elle se repentira*".[831] Here we enter the sphere of Lerouxian utopia. "The vision of 'what should be' "[832] cannot be, in Leroux's opinion, independent either from the individual stance or from the actual condition of humanity, in the sense that a sole, isolated individual, irrespective of how willing he is, will not be capable to make social changes if the actual condition of humanity abolishes the life of relation, of communal living. In the same manner, the decision to make the actual condition of humanity into an artificial unity, irrespective of the individual's will, abolishes, too, the life of relation, or that public, common, space where individuals spontaneously relate to one another.[833] It is not sane, from

[831] Pierre Leroux, *Aux philosophes*, p.129.
[832] Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, p.7.
[833] Gilbert Vincent argues that, for Leroux, "*la relation est ontologiquement première*" and, as such, the distinction between the individual life and the social life is perilous: "*l'une magnifie l'individu – que Stirner définira comme l'Unique, détenteur du droit – au-delà de tout droit proprement dit – de transformer toute chose en sa 'propriété' […]; l'autre renoue avec l'image du Léviathan, gros animal social insatiable et exigeant de tous, traités comme ses 'membres', un dévouement total, jusqu'au sacrifice*" (Gilbert Vincent, "Pierre Leroux, penseur de la fraternité", in Gilbert Vincent (editor), *Hospitalité et solidarité: éthique et politique de la reconnaissance*, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, 2006, p.37).

the point of view of the life of relation, according to Leroux, that "the vision of 'what should be' " be *represented* – as in the Saint-Simonian case, where the Idea is represented as the model of the Good society to which the existing one needs to be adjusted through the right policy – because representation is seen by Leroux as idolatry. On the contrary, for him, this vision is something "actually *present*" in the form of the individual effort in the life of relation – and in this sense Leroux sustains that society is not simply the sum of individuals; it is more than that and can be identified to "*la relation générale de ces hommes entre eux*".[834] This raises the issue of how to harmonize freedom and equality, an issue central in the discussion about the Republic, in Leroux's thought.

The idea of the Republic can be discussed only in relation to *philia*. The history of Humanity is the history of *philia* which takes parts from different historical moments and overcomes them all. Such moments are freedom, brotherhood and equality. Freedom corresponds to Antiquity; it signifies the citizen's activity, manifestation in the city. But the Ancients did not recognize everyone's right to freedom. Brotherhood corresponds to Christianity which has revealed to Humanity that all human beings are brothers and encouraged people to devote to one another. Modernity, after the French Revolution, insisted on the last important principle, equality. In itself, none of these historical periods represents the truth, but all three together participate in the revelation of the truth, in *philia*. Freedom, brotherhood and equality do not represent only historical moments, they are also principles that define human nature and are the grounds of a society in conformity with human nature. Freedom means man's manifestation in the world; brotherhood means to recognize in the others the feelings born as a consequence of one's actions in the world and to ask that one's

[834] Pierre Leroux, "De la philosophie et du christianisme", in *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.210.

own feelings be recognized, too; equality means to reflect upon one's own and the others' manifestations in the world and upon the consequent feelings. Freedom, brotherhood and equality correspond to sensation, sentiment and reflection, the triad which represents human nature. Man is human in so far as he becomes the harmonious equilibrium of these three tenets and as he recognizes in and helps the others to reach this equilibrium. The historical representation of the triad is the Republic, another moment, thus, from the never-ending history of *philia* or Humanity. But it can never be completely achieved, since the three elements are in a permanent tension.

On the one hand, freedom is the first element in the Republic; it is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for human dignity. Even if one makes sure that he can manifest his freedom, he is not yet a dignified person if he does not recognize the same right to freedom to his fellows. When each wants to affirm his freedom, society is in danger to fall into anarchy and the opposite reaction occurs, that of homogenizing the entire society. In this latter case, equality is transformed from reflection on the differences manifested in society into a dogma that attempts to preserve the unity of society by eliminating the differences. On the other hand, the self is not easily reconcilable with the others. Brotherhood moderates the love of self: it encourages man to recognize in the others the feelings that he experiences, too, when he comes into contact with others. In other words, brotherhood encourages man to recognize the others as equally free, and, moreover, to recognize the others' freedom as the condition of his own freedom. According to Leroux, a society grounded on brotherhood and equality is not equivalent to a society where everyone performs the same functions:

> *Au contraire, tous rempliraient des fonctions différentes; il y aurait parmi eux des différences non seulement d'âge et de sexe, mais de fonctions. Il y aurait parmi ces frères une hiérarchie. En quel sens donc seraient-ils frères? En ce sens qu'ils se sentiraient solidaires les uns pour les autres, unis les uns aux autres, de telle façon*

que chacun contribuerait au bien ou au mal de tous.[835]

This explains why the tension between the self and the whole cannot disappear: the self has to be maintained as a singularity in order to contribute to the whole. There are, thus, two tensions in the triad: the one between freedom and equality and the one between individuality and brotherhood. It is this twofold "dynamic polarity" within the triad that defines the not-yet accomplished Republic and affirms "unity in multiplicity". The persistent tension between opposing elements makes, then, a utopia of the triad. *Philia*, or the perfect equilibrium between freedom, brotherhood and equality, affirms the recognition of one another as equally free brothers, by virtue of the fact that all are human. But in the Republic, the triad is "*compromise chaque fois que, dans un coin quelconque du monde, la dignité humaine est violée*".[836] *Philia*, as active utopia, then stimulates the permanent reflection on the distance between what is and what should be. Thus, the triad is in a dynamic polarity because the Republic is in a continual reflection upon itself, which stops it from falling either into individualism or into "absolute socialism".

According to Leroux, the necessary instrument which allows the dynamic polarity to exist, in the Republic, is representative government. He champions it first because the primitive Christian communities – which, for him, are an example of democracy – were organized according to the principle of representation. But Leroux also sustains it in response to the Saint-Simonians' argument that the representative government would be simply an instrument of transition to an era of greater unity. He contends that the representative government is, on the contrary, the "permanent and necessary instrument of

[835] Pierre Leroux, *Réfutation de l'éclectisme*, p.45.
[836] Pierre Leroux, *De l'Égalité*, p.63.

progress".[837] A year after his separation from the Saint-Simonians, Leroux was writing the following:

> *Pour nous qui ne croyons pas aux transformations subites et miraculeuses, mais à un progrès continu, nous ne pouvons recourir qu'au progrès successif de la législation. Il y a deux voies de progrès à parcourir simultanément. Perfectionner l'instrument de la législation, c'est-à-dire arriver, par voie de réforme parlementaire, à une représentation de plus en plus vraie du peuple ; et en même temps préparer, sous une multitude de rapports, les solutions législatives que la convention nationale […] aura à promulguer pour accomplir de plus en plus le but social … .*[838]

Freedom of debates, freedom of the press, freedom of elections are essential mechanisms for the good functioning of the representative government, according to Leroux. But he insists that the freedom of elections is by no means sufficient in itself. Most of the times, elections are a momentary action, after which everyone goes back to his own affairs.[839] Moreover, Leroux says, in the absence of authentic political debates and in the absence of the people's political knowledge, "*au moment de l'élection, les candidats se courberont pour briguer vos suffrages, mais une fois élus, vous les verrez redevenir insolents*".[840]

The fact that Leroux embraces representative government shows that he never totally parted from liberalism. But, unlike the liberal eclectic philosophers, for instance, he championed universal suffrage and argued that the first task of representative government was to find a proportional representation in Parliament of the bourgeoisie and of the proletariat, so that their representatives could negotiate and harmonize their interests with the

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[837] Pierre Leroux, "De la philosophie et de christianisme", in *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.171.

[838] Pierre Leroux, "Du progrès legislatif", *Revue encyclopédique*, novembre 1832, in Bruno Viard (ed.), *À la source perdue du socialisme français. Anthologie*, p.137.

[839] Pierre Leroux, *Projet d'une constitution démocratique et sociale* (présenté à l'Assemblée Nationale), Librairie Gustave Sandré, Paris, 1848, p.17. http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k49963b/f5.image.r=pierre+leroux+projet+d'une+constitution+democratique.langEN

[840] Armelle LeBras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.217.

purpose of reaching the principles of equality and association on the national level.[841] Elections in an unjust hierarchical system (where the division between the bourgeois and the proletarians remains accepted) only entertain the "illusion of democracy", believes Leroux, and deepen the division between the classes, so that "*la hiérarchie ne change pas de nature et d'essence quoique la source du pouvoir soit changée*".[842] Representative government is, thus, the necessary instrument that allows the manifestation of the dynamic polarity of the triad in the Republic. At the same time, the functioning of the instrument depends on the citizens' interest in sharing *res publica*.

3.6.4. The life of relation and the sovereignty of the people

Reflection, for Leroux, is not only reflection on a "more just" world and the human effort is not simply practiced with this purpose. Reflection becomes meaningful when it is reflection – accompanied by action – on the world of *philia* because, for Leroux, "more just" could have a utilitarian meaning: the greatest good for the greatest possible number, whereas the world of *philia* is, *par excellence*, openness towards otherness as otherness. Since *philia*, which is the triad freedom, brotherhood and equality, in equilibrium, supposes the recognition of each by each, it affirms the life of relation in the community, without excluding anyone. *Philia* is what Gilbert Vincent calls "*la loi symbolique constitutive*" of the Republic, a law which is both a given – since the relation, and hence, society understood as life of relation, is "*ontologiquement première*" – and subject to individual scrutiny. In the

[841] Pierre Leroux, "De la philosophie et du christianisme", *Aux philosophes, aux artistes, aux politiques*, p.175.

[842] Pierre Leroux, *Revue sociale*, juin-juillet 1847, p.142, in Armelle LeBras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.217.

light of this "constitutive symbolic law", the others appear to the self as fellow-men whose subjectivity, as Vincent writes, "*est travaillée par un quadruple rapport de proximité par rapport à soi et de distance par rapport à l'autre, de proximité par rapport à l'autre et de distance par rapport à soi*".[843]

Leroux attempts to translate his utopian vision on a social, concrete level, and here he anticipates Martin Buber. According to Buber, the capitalist society appears "as inherently poor in structure and growing visibly poorer everyday", structure being defined by Buber as the "social content or community-content" of society.[844] A structurally rich society, according to Buber, is "marked by the tendency to expand and extend" the small associations between individuals, to produce spontaneously "larger associations over and above individual unions". "At whatever point we examine the structure of such a society", writes Buber, "we find the cell-tissue 'Society' everywhere, i.e. a living and life-giving collaboration, an essentially autonomous consociation of human beings, shaping and re-shaping itself from within".[845] This could be said to characterize Leroux's conception of social organization. Within this conception, there is one concept essential for the understanding of his political thought: the sovereignty of the people, a concept inspired by Rousseau.

Rousseau is for Leroux, like for many others, an author of reference, by whom he was strongly influenced, and whom he also criticized. Rousseau, says Leroux, separates the sovereign from the legislator. Leroux writes in "Aux politiques" that the distinction Rousseau operates between the legislator and the sovereign (people), between "*l'initiateur et l'initié*" is so grand that Rousseau eventually arrives at affirming: "*Il faudrait des dieux pour*

[843] Gilbert Vincent, "Pierre Leroux, penseur de la fraternité", p.37.
[844] Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, p.13.
[845] Ibidem, p.14.

donner des lois aux hommes".[846] For Leroux, the work of legislation could only be the result of a popular effort. Nevertheless, Rousseau has the great merit, in Leroux's opinion, of having dissolved the old society of orders and Estates and having transformed it into a society of equal citizens. Rousseau operated theoretically the transfer of sovereignty from the monarch to the body of citizens. In "Aux politiques", still admiring greatly Rousseau, Leroux interprets Rousseau's theory of sovereignty as follows. There are three modern voices:

> 1. *La souveraineté est dans le peuple; le vrai législateur, c'est tous: Socialisme*; 2. *La souveraineté est dans la raison; le vrai législateur, c'est chacun: Individualisme*; 3. *La souveraineté est en Dieu; le vrai législateur, c'est quelqu'un ou quelques uns; ce n'est pas tous, ce n'est pas chacun: Révélation.*[847]

According to Leroux, while each of these voices, excluding the other two, is false, each, taking into consideration the other two, contains its part of truth. And the true formula, Leroux says, becomes: each human being is sovereign because the light of Humanity springing from God shines in each; at the same time, sovereignty is exercised by some, meaning that it is exercised through the press which objectively informs and educates the people – and this is why the freedom of the press is one of the most important things which Leroux championed – and, through the press, sovereignty can be exercised, at the same time, by everyone.[848] The importance of the freedom of the press comes from the fact that the press informs the public opinion. The opinion, at its turn, refers to the role of philosophy in the city. It is, thus, through the press, that people can understand the problems of their society and can consequently participate to *res publica*. Moreover, it is through the press that the voice of the people, who raise the issue of Justice, can be made known. Here Leroux

[846] Pierre Leroux, "Aux politiques", *Trois Discours*, p.115.
[847] Ibidem, p.121.
[848] Ibidem, p.122.

parts with Rousseau because he does not understand the sovereignty of all in the sense of a direct democracy.

From the very beginning, Leroux found problematic Rousseau's theory of the general will and of the political body which required that, if each was to preserve his independence from all others, each should make himself dependent on all. But, if in the era of "Aux politiques", Leroux considered that the violence during the French Revolution could not be imputed to Rousseau – at most it could be imputed to his abstract thought in this particular aspect –, already in 1847 he perceives a potential danger in Rousseau's theory of the sovereignty of the people itself. Leroux sustains, according to Le Bras-Chopard, that: "*sous le beau nom de volonté générale, on dissimule le despotisme exercé par la majorité au Corps législatif*".[849]

3.7. Organic togetherness in Dostoevsky's thought

I will begin this section with the analysis of Raskolnikov's attempt to make the way back to the people, which explains how Dostoevsky sees the Russian intellectual's "passing from one world into another". In order to analyze Dostoevsky's understanding of community, I will explain first the concepts of *tselnost* and *sobornost*, as they were used by the Slavophiles Ivan Kireevsky and Aleksey Khomiakov. Although Dostoevsky does not use the two terms, his idea of community is centered on them. I will further present Dostoevsky's refutation of the Western principles of social organization and his "Church-idea", that is, his theory that society should be transformed into the Church.

[849] Armelle LeBras-Chopard, *De l'Égalité dans la différence*, p.221.

3.7.1. Raskolnikov's way back to the Russian soil?

> When the senseless man who is driven by his passions is moved to anger and becomes troubled, he will be eager to flee foolishly from the brethren. The sensible man does the opposite […]. In time of anger he cuts off the causes of disorder and frees himself from grief toward the brethren.[850]

I was arguing in the first chapter that, living by the principles of individualism and rationalism, Raskolnikov eventually found himself trapped in an irrational world, from where he was feeling an "aching need" to escape, and to make the way back to the people. At the same time, we read in *Crime and Punishment* that Raskolnikov was craving for solitude: he cut himself off from the common world of the people, through his attempt to do justice on the premises of individualism and rationalism. This act, as in the maxim of the Confessor, has led him to further "flee foolishly from the brethren". But solitude disappoints his craving. It would always disclose to him a burdensome, uneasy, and annoying presence – the very presence he was avoiding while fleeing from the brethren – that of his conscience revolting against individualist rationalism.[851] This gave Raskolnikov the impulse "to return to the town, to mingle with the crowd, to enter restaurants and taverns".[852] But in the middle of the crowd, he feels "even more solitary" because he cannot recognize himself in the people nor the people in him. He is incapable of this recognition because he is first of all incapable to "free himself from grief toward the brethren", as in the Confessor's words, the grief coming from the fact that he does not understand how and why to "repent of the crime

[850] Maximus the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Chapters on Love*, First Century, § 51, p.40.

[851] Here the description of Raskolnikov's state of mind resembles to the description of Cain, on which Pierre Leroux insists in *De l'Humanité*. Leroux says that Cain, as the prototype of the one who takes an innocent life, is also the prototype of the fugitive on earth, who craves for solitude, trying to hide from God, present in the voice of his conscience.

[852] Feodor Dostoevsky, *C.P.*, p.606.

at all".[853]

Sonya, "*cet enfant de Dieu*", as Guardini calls her, shows him the modality – according to Dostoevsky, the only modality – to make the way back, that is, Christ. While Raskolnikov always tries to justify himself, Sonya accepts the undeserved destitution where the drunkenness of her father has brought her and her family and never attempts to justify the life which she has been driven to lead.[854] As Guardini says, she simply lives life and suffers it, knowing that any attempt of justification would transform life into something false and even demoniac.[855] Asked half mockingly, half seriously, by Raskolnikov what God – in whom she believes so – did for her, she answers: "What should I be without God? […] He does everything".[856] She affirms by her very being that God is, and that he fills her whole being with his presence. It is her strange being-in-the-world that drives Raskolnikov to ask her to read the story of Lazarus' rising from the dead. Sonya begins reading "out of breath" and "with trembling hands" the story of the man "named Lazarus, of Bethany", who had been dead for four days – "she put great emphasis on the word *four*" – when Jesus came to the tomb and ordered him to "come forth. And he that was dead came forth (she read loudly and exultingly, trembling and shivering feverishly, as though she was seeing it with her own eyes)."[857] This is a key-passage in the whole of Dostoevsky's thought, and represents his answer to Raskolnikov's attempt to do justice and to establish equality through communism. The cornerstone of justice and equality in the world is, according to Dostoevsky, the resurrected Christ, the only one capable to transfigure human beings and to transform their relations into agapic relations, in the absence of which justice is reduced to a contract

[853] Ibidem, p.745.
[854] Romano Guardini, *L'univers religieux de Dostoïevski*, p.54.
[855] Ibidem, p.63.
[856] Feodor Dostoevsky, *C.P.*, pp. 448, 449.
[857] Ibidem, pp.451, 454, 455.

between competitors.

On the grounds of her conviction of the resurrection and triumph of the God-Man (Christ) over the man-god, Sonya tells Raskolnikov, in a manner which resembles Zosima's way of speaking, to re-enter the common world of human beings through repentance and by asking forgiveness from all: "Go at once […], stand at the cross-roads, bow down, first kiss the earth which you have defiled and then bow down to all the world and say to all men aloud, 'I am a murderer!' Then God will send you life again."[858] As a symbol of his acceptance of suffering she gives him the cross that had belonged to Lizaveta – the innocent woman whom he murdered. And because Sonya is the bearer of love and also loves Raskolnikov not with pity, but with passion, she takes upon herself his suffering and goes with him to Siberia: "We will go to suffer together, and together we will bear our cross."[859] Raskolnikov fails to understand why he is guilty in front of all people. But when he began to "free himself from grief" – that is, to recognize to himself that he had committed a crime – and went to surrender himself, suddenly "everything in him softened […] and the tears started into his eyes. He fell to the earth on the spot. He knelt down in the middle of the square, bowed down to the earth, and kissed that filthy earth with bliss and rapture."[860]

But Raskolnikov's transformation is toilsome and marked by anxiety. Even after his arrival to Siberia, with Sonya following him, Raskolnikov is torn between his acceptance of suffering, for something he is only rationally convinced is a crime, and the tormenting thought that the "benefactors of mankind" are those who, despite their many crimes, "succeeded".[861] He feels his "conscience […] at rest" and concludes that he should be and is

[858] Ibidem, p.577.
[859] Ibidem, p.580.
[860] Ibidem, p.722.
[861] Ibidem, p.746.

punished "for the letter of the law", but he thinks that this only confirms that the "benefactors of mankind" "were right" because successful.[862] Dostoevsky does not leave his tormenting thoughts unanswered, and has recourse to the now-famous dream, by which the rebellion of Raskolnikov's conscience against individualist rationalism becomes evident: he dreamt that microbes "endowed with intelligence and will" "invaded" Europe.

> Men attacked by them became at once mad and furious. But never had men considered themselves so intellectual and so completely in possession of the truth as these sufferers, never had they considered their decisions, their scientific conclusions, their moral convictions so infallible. Whole villages, whole towns and peoples went mad from the infection. All were excited and did not understand one another […] All men and all things were involved in destruction.[863]

The dream represents, as Frank argues, "nothing less than the *universalization* of Raskolnikov's doctrine of the 'extraordinary people', the imaginary materialization of a world whose inhabitants all believe they are 'extraordinary' and in which *all* attempt to put this belief into practice".[864] According to Frank, by the recourse to the dream, Dostoevsky destroys the remainders of Raskolnikov's belief that "supreme egoism could be combined with socially benevolent consequences".[865]

Raskolnikov's "gradual regeneration", "his passing from one world into another" is ambiguous and, Dostoevsky says, the subject of a "new story".[866] Raskolnikov feels a "terrible and impossible gulf between him and the other" prisoners (men of the people), while at times he feels they look at him with less despise. He is depressed because of the gulf in his own soul between acceptance of suffering and individualist reason, while at the same time, he begins seeing in Sonya what even "coarse branded criminals" instantly recognized:

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[862] Ibidem, p.746.
[863] Ibidem, pp.749-750.
[864] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Miraculous Years*, p.145.
[865] Ibidem, p.145.
[866] Feodor Dostoevsky, *C.P.*, p.754.

the embodiment of the eternal features of the Russian people: love and humility. In her presence he experiences the simple feeling that "Life had stepped into the place of theory",[867] and when embracing Sonya's feet, it seems to him that "he was back in 'the age of Abraham and his flocks'." [868] "Dostoevsky knew very well", Frank argues, "that Raskolnikov could not become another Sonya or return to 'the age of Abraham'."[869] If he were to be transformed, his transformation would be into something quite different: "a highly educated and spiritually developed member of Russian society". [870] Whether Dostoevsky believes in the possibility of such a transformation of the educated déclassé gentry remains ambiguous. At the same time, this ambiguity testifies for Dostoevsky's respect for the human person: he does not want to impose any transformation on any of his characters.

3.7.2. **Tselnost** ***and*** **sobornost*****: two concepts developed by the Slavophiles***

But let us now see how Dostoevsky, as both a novelist and a publisher, views this "passing from one world into another" and what this "other world" looks like. As it can be noted, Dostoevsky is a fervent critic of individualist rationalism and his main argument is that reason by itself is an analytical tool that is not capable to answer for the plenitude and complexity of life. True knowledge is synthetic and not analytic.[871] This is exactly the argument of the Slavophiles, Kireevsky and Khomiakov. According to the Slavophiles and to Dostoevsky, reason, by itself, is the source of division: within man, between him and

[867] Ibidem, p.753.
[868] Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky. The Miraculous Years*, p.146.
[869] Ibidem, pp.146-147.
[870] Ibidem, p.147.
[871] Jean Drouilly, *La pensée politique et religieuse de F.M. Dostoïevski*, p.174.

nature, between him and his fellows. They propound, instead, an organic conception of the world as a harmonious whole, where reason and the religious feeling do not exclude each other but are united in a superior form. We find this form in the idea about the integral knowledge, a concept Dostoevsky does not use in particular but the meaning of which, borrowed from the Slavophiles, is present in his work. I will explain first the meaning of the concepts *tselnost* and *sobornost* as they appear in the Slavophiles Kireevsky and Khomiakov, before going back to Dostoevsky.

If in the early 1830s, Kireevsky had quite a nuanced vision of the Greco-Latin Antiquity, appreciated its major role in the formation of the Western European culture, and deplored the fact that Russia lacked such roots, in 1839, he identified the Greco-Latin Antiquity with the triumph of abstract reason. He wrote: "The ancient world of classical paganism in fact represents the triumph of human reason over the totality of man's inner and outward life; the triumph of naked and pure reason relying on itself alone and recognizing nothing above or outside itself".[872] And Kireevsky concluded that the lack of such roots should be seen as a blessing rather than a deprivation.[873] His attacks were directed especially against ancient Rome, which had developed abstract reason, on the grounds of which the Romans established "the realm of law", "characterized by the pernicious rationalization and formalization of vital bonds".[874] He was more sympathetic to "the patriarchal Greece of Homer and to Byzantium as the centre of Byzantine Christianity, contrasted with Roman Christianity".[875] The latter, he believed, took over ancient Rome's ideal, *i.e.*, the construction

[872] Ivan Kireevsky, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1911, vol.i, III, in Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy. History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought*, translated by Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975, p.135.
[873] Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, p.135.
[874] Ibidem, p.135.
[875] Ibidem, p.136.

of a universal state, before or irrespective of the existence of a spiritual bond between people.[876] It was no wonder, Kireevsky believed, that the Western European medieval structure, invoked nostalgically by Catholic counter-revolutionaries, by some neo-Catholics and some socialists, fell apart and turned into the atomistic social contract. The social contract was, in his opinion, only the logical consequence of an artificial unity grounded on law and formalism rather than on a spiritual bond.

Through the development of abstract reason, "man loses the capacity for direct knowledge of the truth".[877] The inner man is divided between different and "unconnected faculties, each of which lays claim to autonomy".[878] Moreover, abstract reason, Kireevsky believes, is the source of artificiality. The Roman ideal of a universal state was artificial and even the Latin language, the very language of law, was artificial. The social contract grounded on the "sacred rights to property" was artificial, too, for it was the logical development of the universal state ideal. It was, thus, impossible, in his view, that the Roman ideal of a universal state or the social contract could create a spontaneous community grounded on self-giving. Kireevsky contrasts rationalism with that which forms a whole within man and consists in "thought directed by faith" or the spiritual principle whose centre is not the intellect but the heart. Through this principle, "reason, will, feeling, and conscience, the beautiful and the true, are fused together into one living unity".[879] This is *tselnost* or the integrality of knowledge which affirms the wholeness of the human being who, in this way, has access to the absolute and to the total, not partial truths. Reason is enclosed within this spiritual principle of *tselnost*, but as a submissive, not as an autonomous

[876] Ibidem, p.137.
[877] Ibidem, p.151.
[878] Ibidem.
[879] Ibidem, p.152.

faculty. The term "integrality" was taken from the Greek Church Fathers, Isaac the Syrian and Maximus the Confessor. Both argued that the seat of wisdom was in the heart and that it was inscribed in human nature that man should know total, absolute truths, but that such knowledge could be possessed only when man struggled for inner wholeness.[880] Integrality of knowledge, Kireevsky thought, could be achieved only in the Church, understood as the community of believers, centered on Christ present in the sacraments. The Church, in its turn, was not from the world, but lived in the world and, consequently, irradiated a certain anthropological type, that is, the Christian Russian peasant, and a certain type of social bond. Russian ancient society which Kireevsky idealized, was grounded not on "sacred property rights", but on "small peasant communes (*obschina*), founded on collective land tenure [...] governed by the *mir*, an assembly of elders which settled controversial matters in accordance with time-honoured tradition and the principle of unanimity".[881] The *obschina* and the *mir* functioned, according to Kireevsky, because ancient Russia was, first and foremost, built on "a dense network of churches, monasteries, and hermits' cells from which identical notions of the relations governing public and private life radiated ceaselessly in all directions".[882]

On all these ideas was built the concept of *sobornost*, developed especially by Khomiakov, and having the meaning of "organic togetherness". This means that man's access to total, absolute truths is rendered possible only by his "participation in the community of love".[883] The concept, Walicki says, was taken from Old Church Slavonic which used it with exactly the same sense as the term "catholicity" from Greek, meaning unanimity. If Roman Catholicism defines the term as geographical universality of the

[880] Ibidem, p.153.
[881] Ibidem, p.143.
[882] Ibidem.
[883] Ibidem, p.158.

Church, Greek Orthodoxy defines it as the fullness of the truth, which is possessed by all the members of the Church. The Church, in this understanding, is a permanent communion and collaboration of all its members. It does not consist in the fusion of its members in a uniform whole; its unity is realized through the unanimous convergence of all its members. This is why the term has the sense of unanimity rather than of universality, in Orthodoxy.[884] The term was meant to describe the "voluntary and organic fellowship", whose essence was "unity in multiplicity".[885] *Sobornost*, as used by Khomiakov, finds its expression in the Church, understood "as an embodiment of the Holy Spirit", rather than as a formal institution. Khomiakov wrote that, in his view, the definition of the Church as an authority was unfortunate, "for God is not an authority, nor is Jesus Christ an authority, for authority is something external".[886] He distinguishes between union, grounded on the authority of the Pope, which is artificial because it rests on an external principle, and unity, grounded on "internalized tradition". Interestingly enough, in this conception, freedom "is not a function of the individual, but of the collective".[887] Individualist reason, paradoxically, does not make man free, in his conception; on the contrary, man is free when he is capable to understand himself as a whole and as part of a whole, and, implicitly, to grasp the absolute truths. This capacity, as said, is gained only within community, and, in this way, man is freed from the law of necessity, that formal and artificial law established by the Roman Empire and taken over by the authority of the Pope. Khomiakov writes about the relation between organic togetherness, freedom and love:

[884] Dumitru Staniloae, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, volume II, p.292.
[885] Ibidem, p.192.
[886] Aleksei Khomiakov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 4th edition, 1914, vol.ii, p.54, in Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, p.193.
[887] Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, p.198.

> Love cannot be attained in isolation; it demands, finds and produces responses and mutual relationships, and itself grows, becomes stronger and perfected in such responses and mutual relationships. Hence the community of love is not only useful, but absolutely essential to the attainment of truth [...]. The truth which is inaccessible to separate individuals is accessible only to a community of individuals bound together by love. [...] Whatever has been said about this supreme truth also applies to philosophy. Seemingly accessible to only a few, it is in fact created and shared by all.[888]

We see here a strong connection with Leroux: for the Slavophiles – and for Dostoevsky, too – as for the latter, religion and philosophy are not two separate entities, the first for the mass of people and the second for the elite. On the contrary, the people and the elite form but one whole, just as man is one whole, and the two are united in a superior form, superior because it is the expression of the wholeness of Life. Similarly to Leroux, the Slavophiles see an authentic democracy in the Orthodox Church which, believes Khomiakov, "rejects the division in the church between teachers and taught. The church in its totality is the teacher [...]; the repository of the truth is the body of believers as a whole. Within the church no one has authority".[889] But, unlike Leroux, Khomiakov adds: "the head of the church is Jesus Christ".

3.7.3. Dostoevsky: the incompatibility between freedom and unity in the West

The meaning of the two concepts of *tselnost* and *sobornost*, used by the Slavophiles has been taken over by Dostoevsky. On the footsteps of the Slavophiles, Dostoevsky argues that the modern Western European project failed because it originated in the individual will which entered the social contract by calculating its benefits. In this understanding, brotherhood has no place, and, as such, either freedom declares itself absolute, denying

[888] Khomiakov (1914), I, p.283, in Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, p.204.
[889] Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, p.195.

equality, as in the case of capitalism, or equality declares itself absolute denying freedom, as in the case of communism. The latter is not simply the reaction to the former, but also its consequence. Dostoevsky, as the Slavophiles, saw in ancient Rome and in its heritage of abstract reason the source of evil. The "formula" of ancient Rome, argues Dostoevsky in his *Diary*, that is, "the idea of the universal unity of men" put into practice "in the form of universal empire", fell before the Christian ideal.[890] This latter ideal, says Dostoevsky, is no less universal; its universality is grounded not on external authority, but instead on the inner spiritual principle: it is a universal "communion in Christ". The ancient "Christian communes – churches", formed underground, says Dostoevsky, represent a "hitherto unheard-of" ideal of humanitarian and brotherly love.[891] The history of humanity after Christ appears then as the battlefield between these "two diametrically opposed ideals": the universal empire versus the universal communion in Christ. But the universal ideal of primitive Christianity had a twofold evolution: one branch, that is Eastern Christianity, continued the "ideal of a purely spiritual communion of men", while the other branch, Western Christianity, succumbed to the temptation of the ideal of the universal Roman Empire, "headed not by the Emperor but by the Pope".[892] From his viewpoint, "having proclaimed the dogma that 'Christianity cannot survive on earth without the earthly power of the Pope' ",[893] Roman Catholicism betrayed the Church-idea and replaced it with the State-idea. It further declared that "first it is necessary to achieve firm state unity in the form of a universal empire, and only after that, perhaps spiritual fellowship under the rule of the Pope

[890] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, p.728.
[891] Ibidem, p.1005.
[892]Ibidem, p.728.
[893]Ibidem, vol.I, p.256.

as the potentate of this world".[894]

In partial similarity with Leroux, Dostoevsky believes that Protestantism was the logical – and even fortunate – reaction against papal authority, proclaiming "the freedom of inquiry" under "Luther's banner".[895] But despite its "thirst for faith", in its protest against the State-idea of Catholicism, argues Dostoevsky, Protestantism has gained freedom, but lost unity, being "divided into hundreds of sects".[896] Protestantism "contributed to further the segregation of Western people", so that the "two poles, freedom and unity, had become antithetical".[897] The political developments that followed in the West represent, for Dostoevsky, variations on the same theme: freedom versus unity. It is especially in France, in French republicanism and socialism, that Dostoevsky identifies *the* historical development of Roman Catholicism. French republicanism is, according to the Russian novelist, bourgeois *par excellence*. The French bourgeoisie, argues Dostoevsky, discovered that the "moral or religious idea" of their nation began to be "worn out" and it felt the "cowardly urge to unite for the purpose of […] 'saving its skin' from the fourth estate which tries to break into its door".[898] But, Dostoevsky comments, the idea of "unity for the purpose of 'saving skins'" "is the most impotent and lowest of all ideas uniting mankind".[899]

On these grounds, the fourth estate will rise, argues Dostoevsky, and will attempt to enlarge by force the bourgeois republican "unity", so that the fourth estate could, too, enjoy its elder brothers' privileges. But the French socialist ideal of brotherhood is doomed to failure because it is grounded on the individual personality and on its rights. The French

[894]Ibidem, vol.II, p.729.
[895]Ibidem, p.730.
[896]Ibidem, vol.I, p.264.
[897]Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.173.
[898] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, p.1002.
[899] Ibidem, p.1002.

socialist, writes Dostoevsky in *Winter Notes*, enters his imagined brotherly society by measuring the costs and benefits for the self: he "explains, teaches and tells people how much advantage each person will obtain out of this brotherhood; he determines the utility and cost of each individual".[900] The paradox is that, when the problem is put in terms of costs and benefits, rarely do individuals agree to give up the "tiny grain of [their] personal freedom for the sake of the common good".[901] And for the sake of the alleged full freedom, Dostoevsky says, in his attempt to avoid the choice between "*la fraternité ou la mort*",[902] the individual unconsciously chooses something close to the latter, for "when he is free, he is knocked about and refused work, he starves to death" and, consequently, "has no real freedom".[903]

Brotherhood is absent from French socialism, according to Dostoevsky, because it is grounded on voluntary self-sacrifice and on being with the fellow-men *gladly*. Since each member of society starts from the premise of individual rights, sacrifice could never be voluntary self-sacrifice, but only the sacrifice imposed by the group on particular individuals. In such a project of society, either the individual asserts his freedom against compulsory unity, and falls prey to the violence of the capitalist society, or unity asserts itself over freedom and founds a dreaded violent sacrificial ethics. Regarding France as the bourgeois country *par excellence*, Dostoevsky concludes that "though socialism is possible, it is possible anywhere but in France."[904] Specifically because the French socialist desperately proclaims "*Égalité, Liberté, Bonheur commun ou la mort*",[905] the bourgeoisie is

[900] Feodor Dostoevsky, *W.N.*, pp.63-64.
[901] Ibidem, p.64.
[902] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, p.1002.
[903] Feodor Dostoevsky, *W.N.*, p.64.
[904] Ibidem, p.65.
[905] Ibidem.

eventually triumphant because it sustains what it considers to be the realist and the humane slogan of *juste-milieu*.

Yet, Dostoevsky identifies one particular type of French socialism, totally different from that just described, and which – most importantly – represents for him the *only* true political form of organization. This is the socialism of George Sand, the life-friend of Pierre Leroux. Two of Dostoevsky's favorite novels of Sand were *Jeanne* and *Spiridon*, both of which had been written under the direct influence of Leroux. The novel *Jeanne*, about which Dostoevsky expresses his appreciation in his *Diary*, is the literary translation of Leroux's book, *De la Ploutocratie*. Here, as I said in the first chapter, Leroux criticizes both the too large property, that engenders the relation master-slave, and the too small property, that creates poor, isolated peasants.[906] Sand's novel sustains the association, about which Leroux talked, and an ethics grounded on "sacrificial and heroic deeds",[907] all of which impressed Dostoevsky. The Russian novelist appreciates the utopian views of George Sand which reveal, according to him, the faith in "a happy future awaiting mankind". Dostoevsky perceives in Sand's utopian faith that authentic realism which the bourgeois *juste-milieu* fails to grasp. It is a faith rooted in the fact that "all her life she believed absolutely in human personality […] and thereby she concurred in thought and feeling with one of the basic ideas of Christianity, *i.e.*, the recognition of human personality and its freedom (consequently, also of its responsibility)."[908] Dostoevsky interprets Sand's utopian socialism as "only an undeveloped Christian humanism", from which he preserved three essential themes, all of which are to be found in Leroux: "*le rêve de révéler ou de créer une époque 'organique', le rejet de l'autorité en tant que principe 'abstrait', le retour de l'homme à la plénitude, à une*

[906] Jacques Viard, *Pierre Leroux, Charles Péguy, Charles de Gaulle et l'Europe*, p.77.
[907] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.I, p.348.
[908] Ibidem, pp.349-350.

vie intégrale".[909]

3.7.4. Russian soil and universalism

These three themes are present both in Dostoevsky's novels and in his articles, and he centers them on the two concepts inherited from the Slavophiles, *tselnost* and *sobornost*, as well as on one other concept which is, too, present in the Slavophiles but on which Dostoevsky insists more than them, *pochva*, meaning "soil". In the 1860s, a few intellectuals formed in Russia a group known as "the *pochvenniki* group – ideologists of a 'return to the soil' ", whose "press organ was the journal *Time* (*Vremja*) published by Dostoevsky [...] from the beginning of 1861".[910] For Dostoevsky, the uprooting from the soil does not have a negative effect altogether, but bears in a germinal form the possibility of a positive outcome. This positive outcome consists, as Walicki puts it, in the "chance to create a new 'universal man' free from the burden of the past and from natural prejudices."[911] And here we recognize the very ideas expressed by Versilov concerning the universalism embodied by the Russian.

More specifically, Dostoevsky's goal is a synthesis between the cosmopolitanism of the intelligentsia and the national tradition of the people, a synthesis which is at the same time a synthesis between instinct and consciousness. Like the Slavophiles, Dostoevsky believes that the answer to the crisis of the modern world is to be found in the living Christian tradition of the Russian people. But both Dostoevsky and the Slavophiles reject a narrow form of

[909]Georges Florovsky, *Les voies de la théologie russe*, translated by Jean-Louis Palierne, L'Âge d'homme, Lausanne, 2001 p.291.
[910] Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, p.531.
[911] Ibidem, p.553.

nationalist conservatism and the ideal of a closed society. Instead, they regard as Russia's mission to generously share this national experience with Europe and the whole world, for the sake of liberating Europe from its inner contradictions. This national mission could be achieved only through the action of the cosmopolitan elite, which is called to represent the bridge between Russia and Europe. Thus, Dostoevsky argues that the cosmopolitan elite has to return to the people, but not in order to be completely absorbed by the latter. On the contrary, it has to learn from the living example of the people, while at the same time sharing to the people all the accomplishments of the Western civilization. The people, at its turn, should not reject anything that is noble and praiseworthy in the aspirations of the cosmopolitan elite and of the modern world. It does not have the right to reject the Western civilization but has to embrace it. Finally, it does not have the right to reject the intellectual reflection of the cosmopolitan elite, but has to harmoniously unite it with its religious life. This is the reason why Dostoevsky supported the universal access to education.

Thus, the people should teach and be taught at the same time. And the elite should learn from and educate the people at the same time. The elite has to introduce the West to the people and the people to the West, for the crisis of the modern West could be solved only when the modern West would make acquaintance with the Russian people's living example of brotherhood. Finally, Dostoevsky believes that this reconciliation between the traditional local culture and the universal modern culture is not only feasible, but also that it corresponds to the most intimate aspirations of the Russian people. According to Dostoevsky, what defines the national character of the Russian nation is precisely its striving for universality, for the unification of all men in a brotherly community which would render international, so to speak, the Russian national experience. As a consequence, Dostoevsky

argues that, in its ultimate essence, and despite its servile imitation of the West and its brutal disregard for Russia's tradition, Peter's Europeanization of the Russian society nevertheless corresponded to the Russian popular aspirations towards universality. Identification with humanity and overcoming the narrow boundaries defined by nationality, in a striving for universal brotherhood, distinguish the Russians from other nations. And from this point of view, Peter's Europeanization of the Russian society, and the subsequent uprooting from the soil of the Russian upper classes, represented a necessary historical moment in the process of the accomplishment of Russia's universal mission.

Russian universalism comes, according to Dostoevsky, from the fact that the Russian people have preserved the purity of Christianity – defiled in the West by the political ideal (the State-idea) – so deeply inscribed in their soul, that it is manifest even in uprooted intellectuals. And Christianity, in its pure form, believes Dostoevsky, puts forward the universal figure of man, whose prototype is the God-Man, Christ. As such, precisely because they are the most Christian nation in the world, Russians are capable to see the universal humanity in any man and to recognize themselves in Germans, French, Englishmen etc. As bearers of the universal, they recognize themselves in all fellow-men. But despite its innate capacity for universalism, the uprooted intelligentsia is not fully able to come in front of the world with a powerful universalist discourse, for this universalist ideal, in its present form, is not incarnate. Let us remember that Versilov was saying that, although he felt an overwhelming love for humanity, he could hardly love his neighbour. Thus, for Versilov, as for the Western civilization in general, brotherly love remains only an ideal, a dream of the uprooted, which is not incarnate through active love. It is only in the midst of the people that this ideal can manifest itself in its living purity, as love for humanity which does not replace

the concrete love for the neighbour, but which becomes real precisely because it is accomplished in and through the love for the man "near at hand". It is only by a return to the people that "love in dreams" becomes "active love", and thus, *the ideal of brotherhood* would be converted into *the reality of brotherhood*. Because only in the middle of the people reunited in *sobornost* is Christ actively present. This is why "Dostoevsky, called on those 'thousand wanderers' to return home".[912] Only by returning to the people, which bears "an unquenchable attachment to life" and unconsciously embodies the purity of Christianity, will the Russian intellectual be ready to come in front of his Western brothers, Dostoevsky believes, with the love which transforms the world into a world of inter-personal relations. Finally, returning to its roots, and finding there, embodied in the life of the people, the ideal of universal brotherhood, the uprooted intelligentsia would understand that their capacity to identify themselves with all other nationalities is due precisely to the fact that they are and will always be Russians. They would understand that the national specificity of Russia is the striving for universality. Returning home, the uprooted intelligentsia will find themselves; their true self. And thus, the national and the universal, life and consciousness, the real and the ideal will be finally reconciled.

The one who proves the realism of this idea, Dostoevsky argues, is Pushkin, whose "greatness" comes from that he knew how to "worship […] the Russian people's truth".[913] He brings proof, says Dostoevsky, that "every nobleman, especially one who is human and Europeanly enlightened, is fully capable of loving the people".[914] And the love for the people, Dostoevsky continues, does not consist in the pity for their suffering, but in loving them, like Pushkin did, "for their own sake". Dostoevsky emphasizes here an idea he put in

[912] Ibidem.
[913] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, pp.939-940.
[914] Ibidem, p.940.

Zosima's mouth, that love and respect for one are inseparable. Thus, to love the people means, he argues, to love what they love, *i.e.*, Christ. This is how the concepts of *tselnost* (integrality of knowledge), *sobornost* (togetherness) and *pochva* (soil) are developed by Dostoevsky. According to him, Pushkin could embody the universal poet – he was "a Spaniard (*Don Juan*), an Arab (*Imitations of the Koran*), an Englishman (*A Feast during the Plague*), or an ancient Roman (*Egyptian Nights*) – while still remaining" a Russian.[915]

Dostoevsky believes that one of the greatest accomplishments of the West lies in the development of critical reason and the "freedom of inquiry". But on their own, these principles cannot participate to the accomplishment of humanity, because, being analytical, they perpetrate division. Submitted to the spiritual principle, critical reason becomes part of the synthetic integral knowledge. In this case, man no longer has an unconscious attachment to the Christian truth, as Makar Dolgoruki has, but he integrates himself within his tradition through a reflective process, like Alyosha does. For Dostoevsky, too, Christianity and philosophy become one, but, unlike in Leroux's case, philosophy is integrated to Christianity which is, according to Dostoevsky, the true philosophy.

3.7.5. The Church-idea or Dostoevsky's Christian utopian socialism

Being the Christian people, *par excellence*, the Russian people, in Dostoevsky's opinion, represents, as Guardini points out, "*le fonds primitif, fortement raciné, de l'humanité*".[916] The people suffers and is exploited. But because it accepts its suffering, it "vibrates with the immense universal harmony", and this places the Russian people in the vicinity of ultimate,

[915] Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, p.555.
[916] Romano Guardini, *L'univers religieux de Dostoïevski*, p.25.

fundamental truths and, thus, close to God.[917] On the footsteps of the Slavophiles, Dostoevsky believes that *sobornost* is the expression of the informal Church, where people are gathered together voluntarily and lovingly for Christ's sake. But unlike the Slavophiles, Dostoevsky never developed an ecclesiological theory. And in his works, the Church appears to be the people. By presenting Zosima's living connection with the people, Dostoevsky echoes the Slavophile theory about ancient Russia's network of monasteries in the middle of the people which radiated a certain type of relations. *Sobornost* finds its best expression in Zosima's idea of the "responsibility of all for all". How *sobornost* works in daily life is shown both in theory and in practice by the elder Zosima:

> There is but one salvation […]: take yourself and make yourself a respondent for all human sin. Friend, this is indeed truly so, for no sooner do you sincerely make yourself the respondent of all creatures and all things than you will immediately see that it is in reality thus and that it is you who are guilty[918] for all creatures and all things. But by foisting your own laziness and helplessness on to other people, you will end by partaking of satanic pride and by murmuring against God.[919]

As said by Bakhtin, the whole of Dostoevsky's polyphonic world converges toward the Church and reveals his social ideal according to which it is not the Church that should be transformed into State, as it was the case of Roman Catholicism, but it is society that should become Church. Boyce Gibson perfectly summarizes this conception, arguing that, in Dostoevsky's opinion, "you can be together with people as at the moment of worship if you pull down your walls and so humble yourself that your help and availability will humiliate nobody".[920] Dostoevsky's major concern is in how to give oneself to the community without humiliating oneself and others – wounded pride leads to atomization and eventually to

[917] Ibidem, pp.25-26.
[918] The term "guilty" is used with exactly the same sense as "responsibility". The quotation expresses the same idea repeated by Zosima, that "all are responsible for all".
[919] Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *B.K.*, p.414.
[920] A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p.48.

destruction. And Dostoevsky's final answer to this problem lies in Zosima's words quoted above.

This is Dostoevsky's Church-idea which, unlike Roman Catholicism that starts, in his opinion, from "firm state unity", affirms "first spiritual communion of mankind in Christ, and thereafter, in consequence of the spiritual unity of all men in Christ and as an unchallenged deduction therefrom, a just state and social communion".[921] In the Church-idea, according to Dostoevsky, there are met both the requirement for freedom and the requirement for unity, by placing as a balance between them brotherhood, understood in the form of the advice of Zosima: "strive to love thy neighbor as thyself". According to Dostoevsky, only by loving Christ who offers his love and life to everybody and everything, can one love everybody and everything, meaning what Christ loves. As Ward argues, "Zosima's appeal to the image of Christ is an appeal to the Christ who overcomes the world and its suffering in the resurrection".[922] Because the resurrected Christ or the God-Man is the "ultimate bridge between this world and the other world", he restores to people "the spiritual principle of their being",[923] *i.e.*, the possibility that reason could guide the person's mind to her heart, the possibility of *tselnost*. The Church-idea, then, "grounds the capacity for goodness in the *common possession* of the spiritual principle"[924], rather than in the possessive individualism and abstract reason. The people, according to Dostoevsky, reach unanimity through freedom and, thus, in *sobornost*, they are at the same time free and united, by virtue of being aware of their natural brotherhood.

Dostoevsky refers to his alternative to the Western formula as to "Christian socialism",

[921]Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, p.729.
[922]Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.155.
[923]Ibidem, p.154.
[924]Ibidem, p.159. My italics.

founding it on "the unofficial Christianity of the Russian monk and the Russian peasant".[925] "Christian socialism", as Dostoevsky conceives it, is not a political project, but a *way of being* which depends not on an earthly authority to establish it, but on its inward, profound acceptance by each person: "I am speaking of the unquenchable, inherent thirst in the Russian people for great, universal brotherly fellowship in the name of Christ".[926] Boyce Gibson notes that, "because his [Dostoevsky's] religion was so 'populist' and his 'populism' so religious, he carried the conception of *sobornost* over into politics".[927] "The socialism of the Russian people", this "unifying 'Church' idea", is expressed, says Dostoevsky, "not in communism, not in mechanical forms", but in the fact that the Russian people "believe that they shall be finally saved through the universal communion in the name of Christ".[928]

S*obornost*, in Dostoevsky's, as well as in the Slavophile, understanding, is meant to become a brotherly fellowship of the whole of humanity, and herein lies the role of Russia, conceived, as already mentioned, as the Christian people *par excellence*, the bearer of Truth. The socio-political form of Dostoevsky's utopia appears in *Winter Notes*, where he states that such a community begins with voluntary self-sacrifice which is possible only when man realizes that "the need for brotherly fellowship [has] its being in the nature of man".[929] Each individual gives himself willingly and lovingly to the community, without demanding his rights, while the community, at its turn, Dostoevsky says, "does not demand too great a sacrifice" of the individual and guarantees the support and the safety of the individual.[930] Whenever he talks of the community, Dostoevsky never refers to it as to an impersonal

[925]Ibidem, p.175.
[926]Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, p.1029.
[927] A. Boyce Gibson, *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, p.187.
[928]Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, p.1029.
[929] Feodor Dostoevsky, *W.N.*, p.62. Love (*agape*) and brotherhood (*philia*) represent human nature as it was created by God, before the Fall. After the Fall, man lost the loving unity with God and with his fellows. In human nature, after the Fall, the desire for love and brotherhood coexists with the inclination towards evil.
[930] Ibidem, pp.62-63.

body, but equates community with "each and all together". His project resembles, indeed, to a great extent Rousseau's project. Only that Dostoevsky centers this community on Christ. While Rousseau says that, in his version of the social contract, each individual gives himself to all and by this he gives himself to no one, Dostoevsky sustains that, in his Christian version of society, for Christ's sake, the individual gives himself to each and to all. Because, through Christ, he loves particular human beings and not an abstract humanity – and the same happens with every member of the community – the individual is not crushed under the tyranny of the majority. Moreover, the individual does not lose his individuality, as the Western man fears, according to Dostoevsky, because in giving love to others, one's love and one's individuality are not diminished, but grow stronger.[931] Community, for Dostoevsky, as for Leroux, does not involve absolute equality; on the contrary, it involves, as in Leroux's words, that "*tous rempliraient des fonctions différentes*", depending on their capacities.

Dostoevsky believes that the idea of *sobornost* and of universal humanity can be accomplished not by the people alone, but through the efforts of the people and of the intellectuals. As already mentioned, Dostoevsky is much more sympathetic towards the intellectuals of 1840s than towards their "offspring" of 1860s. Stepan Trofimovitch, in *The Possessed*, is not described exclusively as a ridiculous bourgeois. In the end of the novel, Stepan passes from the stage of lofty bourgeois ideals to a stage of half-madness which, on the one hand, intensifies his ridiculousness, while, on the other hand, reveals the remainders of the Russian roots of the intellectuals of the 1840s. First of all, he realizes that his bourgeois life-style has been spurious because centered on himself: "I've been telling lies all my life. Even when I told the truth I never spoke for the sake of the truth, but always for my

[931] Ibidem, p.61.

own sake."[932] Although even when speaking of Russia, he is incapable to express himself only in Russian, but combines Russian and French, which shows the degree of his alienation, Stepan Trofimovitch finally declares his faith in Russia and in her mission. And "*une comparaison*" – as he puts it – comes to his mind: that between the event in the Gospel where Jesus heals a lunatic possessed by devils who are allowed to enter into the swine and the actual state of Russia. Russia, he says, is the lunatic possessed by devils, that is, by the ideas spread by him and his "offspring", "Petrusha and *les autres avec lui*": "and we shall all be drowned – and a good thing too, for that is all we are fit for. But the sick man will be healed and 'will sit at the feet of Jesus' and all will look upon him with astonishment".[933] But Stepan Trofimovitch does not mention the end of that story which Dostoevsky, as an intellectual of the '40s himself, believes that it represents the very role of Russia. At Christ's command, the healed lunatic "went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him" (Lk 8: 39).

Ward notes that "the final object of Dostoevsky's own 'practical Christianity' is" to inspire Russia "to appear in the West not with the sword, but with the word 'of the great general harmony, of the final brotherly communion of all nations in accordance with the law of the gospel of Christ'."[934] "Russia", writes Dostoevsky in his *Diary*, "with her people headed by the Czar, is tacitly cognizant of the fact that she is the bearer of the idea of Christ".[935] Dostoevsky believes that, once the two branches of Christianity bifurcated, the Eastern one (and in particular the Russian) preserved, as said, the purity of Christianity, but in an unconscious form. The Western one developed abstract reason, and, at the same time,

[932] Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*, p.593.
[933] Ibidem, p.596.
[934]Bruce Ward, *Dostoevsky's Critique of the West*, p.182.
[935] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, p.906.

developed Christian ideas which took the form of humanism, of ideals of justice and equality, whose value Dostoevsky clearly recognizes. But he also argues that abstract reason and the subsequent ideal of universal State have emptied these ideas of their life-giving Christian content and transformed them into efficient institutions. His universalism supposes that the West should return home, and regain the rich Christian content of these ideas, while the East would gain the cultural achievements of the West.

Dostoevsky fully agrees with Khomiakov's belief that the Church is not an authority, nor is Christ an authority, because authority is something external. While talking about *sobornost*, and its authentic democratic social organization, Dostoevsky, like the Slavophiles, expresses his attachment to the Tsar. Dostoevsky did criticize Peter the Great, the one with whom the uprooting phenomenon began. However, even in Peter's reforms he did not see mere utilitarianism, but "the desire to extend the frontiers of nationality to a genuine 'universalist humanity'." [936] This desire is part of Dostoevsky's political "expansionist" – we could say – project where he defines Russia's role to free the Slavs from the "oppressive Mahommedan rule", to take Constantinople under its possession, and to "guard the freedom of all Slavs and of *all Eastern* peoples without drawing a line between them and the Slavs".[937] This has given birth to the suspicion that, on the one hand, the Tsar himself might come to represent a no lesser authority (on the contrary, maybe a greater one) than the Pope, whom he criticizes, and, on the other hand, that Russia herself might force her "protection" on the Eastern peoples, so that the ideal of brotherly universal community might degenerate into imposed unity. Dostoevsky does not write much about the Tsar, and it is clear that his universalist political project relies first and foremost on the hopes which he

[936] Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, p.555.
[937] Feodor Dostoevsky, *D.W.*, vol.II, p.905.

puts in the people. However, the relation between the people and the Tsar is described as one defined by harmony and is perfectly compatible with the ideal of *sobornost*. According to Dostoevsky, "the Czar to the people is not an extrinsic force such as that of some conqueror, but a national, all unifying force, which the people themselves desired... They are true, loyal children of the Czar, and he is their father".[938] Such formulations may be very well qualified as wishful or ideological thinking. On the other hand, from Dostoevsky's criticism of Peter, it does not result clearly to what extent Dostoevsky would support the political contestation of a Tsar whose policies go against the aspirations of the people,[939] as it was the case with Peter's reforms, good in themselves but applied with superficiality, brutality and disdain for the people. What is clear though is that Dostoevsky fully supported Alexander II, the "Liberator Tsar", whose legitimacy was proven by the fact that he put an end to the injustice of serfdom, satisfying thus the most profound aspirations of the people. Dostoevsky cherished, on the one hand, the Christian resignation with which the people had endured the injustices done to them by the ruling elite, and, on the other hand, saw in Alexander II a perfectly legitimate Tsar. Moreover, in the manner in which the liberation was made – without violence but through free consent based on the Tsar's conviction – Dostoevsky saw the manifestation of the superiority of the Russian civilization over a Western world divided by class struggle, stemming from the omnipresence, in all social categories, of a materialist, this-worldly and anti-Christian culture.[940]

[938]Ibidem, p.1032.

[939] In section 2.2. of chapter two, I discussed the idea of the "Tsar in hiding", which the nihilists of the 1860s wanted to exploit, seeing in it a revolutionary potential. I do not believe that there are grounds to argue that Dostoevsky would adopt either the fantasy of the people – who would rebel against the existing Tsar, being convinced that their action would bring to the throne the "good" Tsar – or the nihilist will to exploit the revolutionary potential of the people.

[940]It is worth recalling that Leroux saw France as the country which was the very expression of synthesis and, like Dostoevsky believed about Russia's role, he believed that France had the capacity to unite at least Western Europe within a Union of Nations which would, in time, transform by itself, into the universal

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In conclusion, it is interesting to note that there is, in Dostoevsky's literary work, a certain disinterest in daily life. Dostoevsky brings forth, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, the idea of *sobornost*, of an organic community rooted in the Christian tradition and, one would say, such a community should be implicitly grounded on the primary realities which give oneself the sense of rooting, that is, the family and the private or collective property. But never does the family – in its positive aspect – appear in Dostoevsky's novels and the only successful couple that we could think of are Sonya and Raskolnikov, but their "success" is the subject of a different, never-written story. Likewise, man's relation to property is never presented as that relation by which man transforms and transfigures the things in his property. Dostoevsky believes that "Russia's salvation lies in the people",[941] however, his relation to the life of the people seems to be minimal; rarely does he depict the daily life of the people and the people's labour. Moreover, we never know how his characters earn their living, they appear to be totally disinterested in this aspect and interested solely in the realm of ultimate truths. This is so even if Dostoevsky says that the Church is "*l'Église de tous, pas seulement des êtres exceptionnels; l'Église des heures quotidiennes, pas seulement des heures héroïques*". [942] While Leroux's theory suffers from ambiguities concerning the essence of the difference between the democratic religion of humanity and Christianity, he

communion of humankind or "*la solidarité mutuelle des hommes*". His ideas can, too, give birth to the suspicion that this Union might bear the germ of what Paul Bénichou calls "*une autorité globale, anonyme, théoriquement fondée sur le suffrage et contrôlable par lui, susceptible en fait d'autoriser un pouvoir sans limites*" (Paul Bénichou, *Le temps des prophètes*, p.345).

[941] Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy*, p.551.

[942] Romano Guardini, *L'univers religieux de Dostoïevski*, p.17.

insists on the structure of socio-economic-political organization of associations and shows concern about the daily life of associations. This, from a social point of view, gives his theory a plus of coherence, in comparison to Dostoevsky's ideas of social organization.

According to Dostoevsky, political institutions are the result of Christianity's failure to live according to the spiritual principle which, as a consequence, was replaced with the law. Good as it might be, the law is an artificial creation and, most importantly, regulates the balance of power in society and assures survival. Especially after Christianity's failure, individuals are left with the impression that the law is enough for their peaceful co-existence. Nevertheless, "unlike Tolstoy, Dostoevsky did not reject governmental institutions or the punitive, coercive measures they employ". Apparently paradoxically, but in fact profoundly Christian, Dostoevsky's utopianism co-exists with his realistic understanding of the human condition. Dostoevsky was aware that "not all individuals […] will shun evil voluntarily, and for that reason some restraints are necessary to protect individuals from each other".[943] Because he recognizes the reality of the Fall and its implications, Dostoevsky by no means rejects the law (on the contrary, he sees its necessity), but, as a Christian, sustains that the law cannot be taken as the finality, cannot have the final word, because, in the absence of love, the world cannot last. Herein lies Dostoevsky's utopian character: while seeing in human nature a great potential for evil, and, consequently, rejecting Tolstoy's pacifism and anarchism, he believes that nothing final can be uttered about a person and the world as a whole, as long as they are alive, because everything is in the future and because the Christian God is the God of the future, who transfigures the past and the present, and implicitly, human nature.

The fundamental thing which unites the two utopias, of Leroux and of Dostoevsky,

[943] James Scanlan, *Dostoevsky the Thinker*, p.233.

despite their differences, is that brotherly fellowship assures not only survival, but is grounded upon reciprocal love defined as life-giving or, in other words, as a perpetual "desire for life". When the "desire for life" is transformed into individual "gluttonizing for the pleasure of taste"[944], then "participation in nourishment" is reduced to mere survival which situates everyone, as Hobbes brilliantly noted, in the immediacy of violent death, which political institutions administer.

[944]Christos Yannaras, *Variations on the Song of Songs*, p.59.

Conclusion

A Contest between Life and Death

According to Pierre Leroux and Feodor Dostoevsky, the socio-political organization of the world brings to light not simply the question of how to organize the social and political institutions in order to better accommodate man in the world. It brings to light in the first place the ontological issue of the contest between life and death. The analysis of this contest, as it appears in the works of Leroux and of Dostoevsky, has represented the general interest of this thesis. My purpose has been to bring close and to compare Leroux's republican socialism with Dostoevsky's Christian socialism, and to explore to what extent the two authors give similar answers to a common problem.

In order to explore this issue, I began with their analysis of individualism and capitalism, or of nominalist materialism, which they identified as the core problem of modern society. After having manifested his interest in liberalism, Leroux reached the conclusion that liberalism, grounded on the right to self-preservation, ultimately affirms the right of the stronger. According to him, the final expression of liberalism is Malthusianism whose essence consists in refusing, through a "philosophy of Indifferentism", to certain categories of people the fundamental right to manifest themselves in the world as dignified human beings. Dostoyevsky makes a similar analysis of the Western modern civilization, and argues that the right to self-preservation (the fundamental right in the bourgeois society) necessarily leads to the domination of the poor by the rich and, through this, to the human degradation of both the poor and the rich. If Leroux identifies Malthusianism as the final expression of the bourgeois society, Dostoevsky considers that nihilism, as the desire to

manifest one's absolute freedom, is the last form the desire for self-preservation takes.

Both agree that the absence of any coherent limitation to freedom brings about the opposite reaction of annulling freedom and homogenizing society. For Leroux and for Dostoevsky, this reaction is, at the same time, the logical development of the bourgeois principle of the right to self-preservation. It is, in fact, the manifestation of the right of the stronger which attempts to do justice at any price, through communism. The Saint-Simonians and the Grand Inquisitor declare the desire for freedom (understood as anarchy) and the desire for unity (which can be only compulsory) as incompatible. In order to prevent society from falling into anarchy, they choose compulsory unity. Their utopias consist in eliminating the perpetual distance between the world-as-it-is and the ideal and in adjusting, here and now, the world to the ideal and vice-versa. While the Saint-Simonians believe with sincere optimism that their system eliminates injustice, the Grand Inquisitor combines nihilism – understood by Dostoevsky as the manifestation of the will-to-power – and communism. Freedom, for the Grand Inquisitor, means the affirmation of the self, beyond good and evil, an affirmation which only the Overman is capable to endure. For the great majority of the people, the affirmation of freedom means to fall into absolute anarchy. As such, only the Overman can ease the burden of freedom for the great majority, by imposing a despotic unity. As part of the nihilist elite, the Grand Inquisitor pretends that injustice is eliminated, while he is fully conscious that this will always be a lie. Dostoevsky then points to the demonic character of the Grand Inquisitor's system which starts from the premise that God created the world in a wrong manner and proposes to correct it through nihilism (will-to-power) and communism. As for Leroux, he criticizes the Saint-Simonians for annulling man's freedom, that is, his fundamental right to manifest himself in the world, and for

imposing on men a unity foreign to human nature.

In response to both bourgeois individualism and communism, Leroux and Dostoevsky put forward their own utopias which can be identified with their ideas of community. Leroux's idea of community rests on the triad freedom, brotherhood, equality. The triad represents human nature, that is, the love of self, the love for others, and the desire for unity. The harmonization and the perfect equilibrium between these three elements represent the ideal, that is, Humanity, which is not only the sum of individuals, but also appears as the relations between them. The equilibrium presupposes the life of relation, in a community, and, in this sense, the triad is *philia*. Thus, Humanity and *philia* overlap. The history of Humanity is composed of periods and moments which point to *philia*. The Aristotelian *philia* and the Christian *agape* are such moments, from which *philia* takes parts and which it overcomes. *Philia* means that all people should love one another on the grounds of the fact that they are all human. The self recognizes its humanity in the others and the others recognize their humanity in the self. But *philia* is a utopia because the equilibrium between freedom, brotherhood and equality is never realized, is always in the future. The three elements or the self and the others are in tension, each tending to affirm itself upon the other. But the existence of the ideal of *philia* stimulates people to reflect upon their condition in the world and upon their natural desire for unity in multiplicity. This makes the three terms to be in a "dynamic polarity", so that the human relations of *philia* stop the triad from transforming either into individualism or into compulsory unity. This is the Republic, a historical moment, closest to *philia*, as utopia. The Republic can be called as such as long as it attempts to reconcile freedom and equality through brotherhood.

Dostoevsky's idea of community rests on the Christian *agape*, composed of two

elements: the divine love and the brotherly love, by virtue of the fact that Christ revealed that all men are "in the image and likeness of God" and sons of the same God. For Dostoevsky, love is neither completely other-worldly nor completely this-worldly; it is not contemplation of the world, but action in the world, following Christ, who sacrificed and took upon himself the sufferings of all human beings. Active love manifests itself as desire to act upon the world, with the purpose of creating a loving union of wills. This founds a community of love where the self and the others are not in conflict because the self does not start from the right to self-preservation. Freedom means self-realization which is possible only in the loving relation with the others. It means, then, that freedom and unity are not contradictory, but each can be recognized in the other through love. Such a community is *sobornost*, meaning organic togetherness and "unity in multiplicity", where man is one with himself and with the others.

The conclusions of Leroux and of Dostoevsky share significant similarities. *Philia* and, respectively, *agape* represent human nature, as it is meant to be. The fundamental difference is that the community of *agape*, in Dostoevsky's case, exists in so far as people accept Christ, the God-Man, as the cornerstone of this community, while the community of *philia*, in Leroux's case, depends on the recognition of each man by each other as human. For Leroux, the fact that *philia* or Humanity is not accomplished and that evil exists happens simply because of the ignorance of people. And the never-ending history of *philia* is Humanity's history of coming from the ignorance to the knowledge of the ideal of Humanity. Leroux, then, regards evil as a historical reality which could be, in principle, overcome, and which remains, ultimately, a product of human ignorance. The more Humanity advances in time, the more it becomes aware of itself. On the other hand,

Dostoevsky is fully conscious that the desire for *agape* coexists, in fallen human nature, with the attraction for gratuitous evil. In his opinion, this state can be overcome only through Christ. Dostoevsky's ideal of *sobornost* grounded on Christ derives from the fact that Dostoevsky is a Christian thinker, for whom the original sin is a concrete reality. In this sense, he believes that human nature needs God's grace and that, irrespective of the historical progress, man remains, in the absence of grace, torn between good and evil. Moreover, Dostoevsky argues that, even if there were a historical progress which effaced injustice (a possibility in which he does not believe), the revolting problem of past evil would still remain unanswered. In his opinion, the only justification of evil can be identified in God's answer to Job's question. It would be worth writing a comparative study between Leroux's and Dostoevsky's approaches to evil, but such a comparison makes the subject of a different thesis.

The similar and yet different ideas of community of Leroux and of Dostoevsky invite us to reflect upon our world, in which both capitalism and communism left their trace, from the perspective of ultimate questions. Their reflections reveal that the predominant ideas of an epoch are the expression of a predominant human type. They identified the predominant ideas of their time with the bourgeois desire of self-confirmation and possession of the world. Leroux and Dostoevsky reveal that, in its desire to assert freedom, the bourgeois social order – which starts from the right to self-preservation – sabotages, in fact, freedom. For both of them, freedom is the necessary condition for human dignity, but it is truly manifested in the life of relation. Thus, human dignity, too, is manifested only in the life of relation in community. The bourgeois mode of being in the world produced uprooted individuals – uprooted from the soil, in Dostoevsky's case, or from the objective reality of

property, family, city, in Leroux's case. Leroux and Dostoevsky share the belief that this uprooting is, in fact, the individual's uprooting from his own human nature, in the sense of the individual's denying his own human nature. This is the cause which produces "absolute socialism", as Leroux says, or communism, as we know it and as Dostoevsky fully anticipated it. They do not judge the realities of capitalism or of communism in moralistic terms of right or wrong, but refer to them as a triumph of death over life.

In the end, I would like to put forward a fragment taken from Mircea Eliade's novel, *Forêt interdite* which I believe could bring a refreshing perspective on the two forms of utopia of Leroux and of Dostoevsky. The fragment is part of a story the main character, Stéphane, tells to his son, about king Anisie. Eliade's novel is not related to this understanding of utopia and the story character, king Anisie, reflects a certain understanding of history and of myth – presupposing a myth-creating, and not a history-creating humanity – which neither Leroux nor Dostoevsky share. But I want to take a fragment from this story out of the context of Eliade's novel and to put it in the context of utopia, as it appears in Leroux and Dostoevsky. In this story, the mysterious character king Anisie meets God and wants to accompany Him in His way to a mysterious sheepfold on the top of a mountain. God agrees, but on their way, he turns out to be an old and sick man who can hardly climb the mountain:

> *'Qu'est-ce que vous avez, mon Dieu?' demande le roi Anisie. 'Je suis malade, ô roi, je suis malade', dit Dieu. […] Dieu demande: 'On aperçoit la bergerie? Moi qui suis vieux, je ne vois rien. – On l'aperçoit, Seigneur! On l'aperçoit!' dit le roi Anisie. […] Sur le seuil de la bergerie, Dieu se met tout à coup à rire. 'Comment est-ce possible, ô roi, demande-t-il, as-tu vraiment pensé que j'étais malade, que j'étais fatigué et que je ne voyais pas la bergerie? – Je l'ai cru, Seigneur, répond le roi Anisie. – J'ai fait semblant, c'est tout, j'ai fait semblant pour te mettre à l'épreuve, dit Dieu. Mais ma puissance est sans limites. Viens, regarde!...' Et de son petit doigt, Dieu soulève la bergerie et la lance au plus haut des cieux. […] Le roi Anisie lève les yeux vers le ciel. 'Je ne la vois plus, dit-il.' […] Le bon Dieu lui a frappé l'épaule en*

lui disant: 'Demain, tu trouveras la bergerie ici, comme avant, sur le sommet de la montagne. Elle ne reste là-haut, dans le ciel, que pendant la nuit. Je la mets là-haut, à l'abri des hommes'.[945]

Humanity – that could be represented by king Anisie – is always, in the understanding of Leroux and of Dostoevsky, in the quest for the transcendence, for the Good, and this state of aspiration finds its expression in utopia. Humanity, like king Anisie, is, especially in the case of Dostoevsky, in the vicinity of the divine mystery. In contrast to the Saint-Simonian utopia, the one shared by Leroux and Dostoevsky appears as weak. It seems not to be able to see the end of its journey, like God, in Eliade's story. In fact, like in God's case, the power of utopia resides specifically in its apparent weakness. Through its dialogical character, through its irony which points to universal questions, utopia puts people to test, so that it prevents them from reaching the state where they believe that they believe in their project. In the daylight, utopia seems to have a place which is, nevertheless, always at the same distance from Humanity, whichever point Humanity might reach. The divine mystery, in the presence of which Humanity/king Anisie journeys, gives man the feeling that the Good is infinite and always transcends him. In Leroux's case, for instance, God is incomprehensible and cannot be represented. However, man is in a continual aspiration towards the Good which emanates from God. It is worth noting that Leroux repeatedly makes the analogy between the Good, Life and Light. And Dostoevsky's novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, is rich in references to light, to the fact that man's relation to God places him in the light of the Resurrection. These references reveal the strong relation between utopia and light. But when man wants to transform the infinite Good into a finite one, like the Saint-Simonians do, utopia loses its meaning and disappears from what seemed to be its place. Leroux and Dostoevsky address

[945] Mircea Eliade, *Forêt interdite*, translated from Romanian by Alain Guillermou, Gallimard, 1955, pp.338-340.

to the Saint-Simonians and, respectively, to the Grand Inquisitor the critique that, when utopia is transformed into a political program, it is emptied of life. Utopia, nevertheless, only seems to vanish after the attempts to correct it and to put it into practice. Authentic utopia reveals itself to be at the same distance from Humanity, and relates with irony to the attempts of putting it into practice. Irony or God's laughter discloses utopia as "*lieu de nulle part*". Instead of theorizing the attempt of taking into possession the place of utopia, Leroux and Dostoevsky re-define utopia as the quest for the Good and, moreover, affirm the impossibility to discern between the daily means and the purpose. Utopia, as the quest for the Good, is, thus, the journey itself which king Anisie makes together with God to the "sheepfold".

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