

Rethinking Dostoevskii: Literature, Philosophy, Narrative

BILAL SIDDIQI and SARAH J. YOUNG

THE articles in this cluster marking F. M. Dostoevskii's bicentenary year all originated in papers at the 'Revolutionary Dostoevskii: Rethinking Radicalism' conference held at UCL in 2017. In the context of Dostoevskii's own transformation from youthful radical to mature reactionary, and his long-standing reputation as a 'prophet' of the Russian revolution, the conference sought to explore the author's profound and original representations of transgression and the revolutionary psyche, and of extremes of beliefs, emotions, behaviour and action, as well as the role these themes played in shaping his innovations in novelistic form. It is undoubtedly the extraordinary range of Dostoevskii's novels, and their author's willingness to confront the pressing — or 'accursed' (*proklyatye*), as he put it — questions of the age of upheaval he lived in, that lends his *oeuvre* naturally to comparative research. The articles in this cluster make use of material from the disciplines of sociology, politics, history, theology, psychology and philosophy, and more, in their interpretations. Their primary purpose is to illuminate Dostoevskii's novels, but implicitly, they also illustrate the idea that Dostoevskii's novels draw out truths that are meaningful beyond the confines of the texts themselves.

Revealing the truth about reality is traditionally assumed to be the provenance of philosophy. Poets, producing narrative works that rely on their author's imaginative capacities, are not expected to provide access to truths about the real world. This question of the relation between the poets and the philosophers is sometimes called 'The Ancient Quarrel'.¹ It refers

Bilal Siddiqi is a postgraduate researcher at UCL SSEES, studying the role of 'existential phenomenology' in Dostoevskii's post-Siberian fiction, and Sarah J. Young is Associate Professor of Russian at UCL SSEES.

¹ Patrick Hayes and Jan Wilm (eds), *Beyond the Ancient Quarrel: Literature, Philosophy, and J. M. Coetzee*, Oxford, 2017; Stephen Mulhall, *The Wounded Animal: J. M. Coetzee & the Difficulty of Reality in Literature & Philosophy*, Princeton, NJ, 2009, p. 1; Anthony J. Cascardi, *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and Philosophy*, Cambridge and New York, 2014, p. 11.

to Plato's original exclusion of the poets from his perfectly just city in *The Republic*. The argument states that poets are best defined as imitators of the truth; poets make forgeries, artificial copies, mere reflections of the visible world. Yet the visible world is itself an imitation of an ideal world of forms. Thus the poet creates imitations of imitations, and is far removed from the truth of things.² As Hayes and Wilm explain, 'Unlike philosophy, Socrates argued, literary representation is misleading: it is a third remove from the forms, a representation of a reality that is already itself a representation, and it is therefore condemned to the realm of mere opinion, rather than truth'.³ Literature, therefore, tends toward deception, fantasy and artificiality. It appears destined to function only as an instrument of aesthetic pleasure or, perhaps, as a tool for moral persuasion.⁴

If 'truth' is taken as a historical process — as the deconstruction and transformation of what we take to be true over the course of human history — then, indeed, philosophy plays a critical role in its interrogation and reevaluation. As Richard Rorty states, 'Philosophy occupies an important place in culture only when things seem to be falling apart — when long-held and widely cherished beliefs are threatened. At such periods, intellectuals reinterpret the past in terms of an imagined future'.⁵ He cites a variety of examples. When cynicisms arose about 'prayer and priestcraft', 'Plato and Aristotle found ways for us to hold on to the idea that human beings, unlike the beasts that perish, have a special relation to the ruling powers of the universe'.⁶ He refers to Copernicus and Galileo as supplanting Aquinas and Dante, as well as Spinoza and Kant turning Europe's 'love of God' into a 'love of Truth'. Rorty also mentions Marx and Mill in the context of democratic revolution and industrialization. When old intellectual certainties about the world or human nature die, and new ideas are required to replace them, philosophy plays its part.

Vadim Shkolnikov would perhaps assert that literature too is capable of disclosing new socio-historical truths when old certainties are negated, or, as Shkolnikov puts it, in 'moments of crisis, dysfunction, within the community'.⁷ He suggests that Dostoevskii's fiction played a part in

² Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John Cooper, Indianapolis, IN and Cambridge, 1997, p. 1202.

³ Patrick Hayes and Jan Wilm, 'Ancient Quarrels, Modern Contexts: An Introduction', in *Beyond the Ancient Quarrel*, pp. 1–16 (p. 9).

⁴ Cascardi, *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and Philosophy*, p. 11.

⁵ Richard Rorty, *Philosophy as Cultural Politics: Philosophical Papers*, Cambridge, 2007, p. 73.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁷ Vadim Shkolnikov, 'Dostoevskii and the Birth of the Conscientious Terrorist: From the Underground Man to *Underground Russia*', p. 139.

articulating ‘the expression of a critical logical moment’⁸ within Hegel’s socio-historical phenomenology of self-consciousness — namely, the ‘moment’ or problematic of conscience (*Gewissen*) and the ‘beautiful soul’. In a richly contextualized article, Shkolnikov traces the influence of Hegelian ideas on the Russian intelligentsia and makes a detailed case for the existence of a ‘variant on Hegel’s notion of the conscientious community’⁹ in Russian intellectual thinking at the time. Specifically, Shkolnikov is interested in how the moral-aesthetic values represented in *Notes from Underground* (*Zapiski iz podpol’ia*, 1864) give expression to and embody ‘conscience’ — a particular socio-historical configuration, or ‘moment’ in the history of the development of Russian, and more broadly, the modern European tradition of conscientiousness. Shkolnikov demonstrates how Dostoevskii’s representation of this logical strata in the socio-historical development of Russian conscientiousness eventually helps advance the socialist revolutionary movement and provides the conceptual underpinning for Russian terrorism, as a form of conscientious violence. The author ultimately puts forward Vera Zasulich’s attempted assassination of General Trepov in 1878 as a historical event manifesting the resolution of the crisis of conscientiousness encoded in *Notes from Underground*. Shkolnikov’s article thus implies that literary form — despite its artificiality — is capable of producing ‘truths’ about reality that can give expression to and shape intellectual and sociological history.

Lynn Patyk, too, writes about Dostoevskii against the backdrop of ‘the swell and clash of competing social movements and ideologies [that form] the historical precondition for the polyphony of the Dostoevskian novel’.¹⁰ Whereas Shkolnikov used Hegelian philosophy to analyse Dostoevskii’s contribution to the intellectual development of Russian socio-historical ‘conscientiousness’, Patyk uses German sociologist Rainer Paris’s theorization of the concept of provocation — ‘a key tactic of social movements to contest and discredit established authority’¹¹ — to read Dostoevskii. Paris’s ‘communicative paradigm’ — borrowed by Patyk from sociology and thus originally referring to the real-life socio-political use of provocation, rather than its fictional representation — can, nonetheless, lead us to a deeper understanding of the nature of dialogic interaction

⁸ Ibid., p. 125.

⁹ Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁰ Lynn Ellen Patyk, ‘The Dark Side of Dialogue: Dostoevskian Provocation and the Provocateurs Karamazov’, p. 42.

¹¹ Ibid.

involved in the ‘poetics of conflict’¹² that underlies Dostoevskii’s prose. Thus sociology is used here, ultimately, to better understand Dostoevskii’s fiction, in particular, the idea that ‘provocation is the dominant mode’ or ‘key artistic lever’ propelling narrative movement in his work.¹³ However, Patyk recognizes the broader potential in this idea. Even though she uses Rainer’s paradigm to directly interpret certain provocative scenes in *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Brat’ia Karamazovy*, 1879), she suggests that ‘provocation for Dostoevskii’ stretches beyond the limits of the text, and serves to exemplify ‘the dual narrative purpose of truth construction/destruction [...] without which there would be no consciousness, self-consciousness, or truth’.¹⁴ Fiction, again, collides with life. Dostoevskii’s art embeds psychologically intricate and historically contextualized provocative scenes in the fictional, embodied worlds of his literary works. As Patyk’s article shows, applying a real-world dynamic of adversarial provocation to the scenes in Dostoevskii’s fiction can shed new light on ‘provocation’ as a dominant structuring human interaction in his works, and perhaps beyond them.

Both Lynn Patyk and Denis Zhernokleyev are critical of Mikhail Bakhtin’s Dostoevskii. Bakhtin also takes Dostoevskii to be capable of representing existential truths about reality in his fiction; he finds various necessary conditions for human life — such as the interpenetration of self and other in discourse and, thus, meaning-construction — depicted in Dostoevskii’s poetics.¹⁵ Patyk’s critique of Bakhtin is not solely grounded in the, now widely disseminated,¹⁶ idea that Bakhtin’s benign representation of human dialogic relations glosses over or minimizes ‘conflict as the driving principle of Dostoevskii’s fictional worlds’.¹⁷ She also states that Bakhtin’s conception of ‘provocation’ in Dostoevskii

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁵ See Mikhail Bakhtin, for example, in ‘Towards a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book’, the introduction to the 1961 edition of *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*: ‘To be means to communicate. [...] To be means to be for another, and through the other, for oneself. A person has no internal sovereign territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary; looking inside himself, he looks *into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another*.’ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson, Minneapolis, MN, 1984, p. 287.

¹⁶ Malcolm Jones, *Dostoyevsky After Bakhtin: Readings In Dostoyevsky’s Fantastic Realism*, Cambridge, 1990, p. xiv; Caryl Emerson, ‘Russian Orthodoxy and the Early Bakhtin’, *Religion and Literature*, 22, 1990, pp. 109–31 (p. 116); Yuri Corrigan, *Dostoevsky and the Riddle of the Self*, Evanston, IL, 2017, pp. 24–25.

¹⁷ Patyk, ‘The Dark Side of Dialogue’, p. 46.

suggests for it a role predominantly concerned with ‘morally positive truth-telling [...] pertain[ing] to false received ideas, rather than to individual actors themselves whose ideas and identity are humiliatingly exposed and delegitimized by a hostile opponent’.¹⁸ In other words, in a rather Bakhtinian move, Patyk critiques Bakhtin’s broad conceptualization of ‘provocation’, not simply because it is inadequate to Dostoevskii’s poetics, but also because it does not measure up to the embodied reality of the provocative act. Paris’s paradigm, on the other hand, applied to Dostoevskii’s fiction, does not help us to assess the ‘content’ of provocative ideas, but instead allows us to perceive how the provocateur’s words are, in fact, deeds which, rather than simply putting forward impersonal ‘ideas’ for the purposes of dialectical interrogation, go deeper, targeting ‘the opponent’s truth, identity and being, all of which are inseparably intertwined’.¹⁹ The narrative form of literature, in this case, has an advantage over philosophy insofar as stories can embed and embody ideas in the lives of characters and thus represent the responses such ideas evoke in characters’ sense of ‘truth, identity and being’, for example.

Denis Zhernokleyev would probably agree with Plato: literature is imitative of reality, and reality is itself imitative of essential forms. The epistemological consequence of this is that human reality is itself distorted — fundamentally given to seduction and fascination. Reality, ‘perpetuates distortion [and] turns all communication into an unending cycle of violence’.²⁰ Thus Zhernokleyev presents Dostoevskii as fundamentally sceptical about literature’s ability to overcome reality’s fundamental ‘propensity towards fascination that jeopardizes all forms of communication, from self-communication to social interaction’.²¹ Nonetheless, he sees this truth — about reality’s tendency to distort the truth — given expression in the author’s fiction. Dostoevskii’s articulation of the violent power-dynamics implicit in the disordered and decomposing social reality depicted in his fictional worlds apophatically points towards that which lies beyond the distortions of human communication.

In his article, Zhernokleyev specifically discusses the influence of the *feuilleton* on Dostoevskii’s art. He states that Dostoevskii’s use of this genre, rather than serving a formalistic purpose, is primarily interesting to the author for epistemological reasons: ‘The very existence of the genre, and especially its tendency to take the form of a confessional outpouring,

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*.

²⁰ Denis Zhernokleyev, ‘Dostoevskii, the *Feuilleton* and the Confession’, p. 96.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

is important to Dostoevskii first and foremost as a manifestation of the fundamental nature of our perception of reality'.²² Such a conclusion may point to another way in which literature is capable of representing truths of reality. Cora Diamond recognizes that some literature is capable of stimulating a response in some readers that helps them imagine truths that lie beyond direct articulation in formal argument: 'the phenomena with which I am concerned, experiences in which we take something in reality to be resistant to our thinking it, or possibly to be painful in its inexplicability, difficult in that way, or perhaps awesome and astonishing in its inexplicability.'²³ Perhaps what the epistemological insights that Zhernokleyev finds encoded into Dostoevskii's novels point towards is this type of truth. Needless to say, Zhernokleyev, too, deems Dostoevskii capable of manifesting 'the fundamental nature of our perception of reality' in fictional form.

These comparative approaches suggest that although there are extraordinary and varied interpretations connecting Dostoevskii's novels to the real-world insights of psychology, philosophy, theology and politics, amongst other disciplines, it is worth explicitly recognizing how studies on Dostoevskii often presume that to understand the author's fiction is to understand truths about our shared reality encoded in them.

The question of *how* literature is able to articulate truths about reality remains a pressing one within Dostoevskii studies. The author's reference in a letter of 1876 to Fedor Tiutchev's famous line from his 1829 poem 'Silentium!', 'The thought uttered is a lie' ('Mysl' izrechennaia est' lozh') has been seen as an apt formulation of the central problem Dostoevskii confronts in his fiction,²⁴ related to the author's tendency to indirect expression, and his emphasis — not least within his plots, and his depictions of relations between characters — as much on what is missing as what is said. As Malcolm Jones puts it, absence becomes a 'major organizing principle' of Dostoevskii's novels.²⁵ At the same time,

²² Ibid.

²³ Cora Diamond, 'The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy', *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, 1, 2003, pp. 1–26 (pp. 2–3).

²⁴ Letter to Vsevolod Solov'ev, 16 (28) July 1876, in F. M. Dostoevskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 30 vols, Moscow and Leningrad, 1972–90 (hereafter, *PSS*), 29, 2, p. 102; F. I. Tiutchev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem*, 6 vols, Moscow, 2002, 1, p. 123. For use of the Tiutchev quotation as the basis for an apophatic reading of Dostoevskii, see, for example, Carol Apollonio, *Dostoevsky's Secrets: Reading Against the Grain*, Evanston, IL, 2009, p. 11.

²⁵ Malcolm Jones, *Dostoevsky and the Dynamics of Religious Experience*, London, 2005, p. 140. Jason Cieply, 'The Silent Side of Polyphony: On the Disappearances of "Silentium!" from the Drafts of Dostoevskii and Bakhtin', *Slavic Review*, 75, 2016, 3, pp. 678–701, gives

the ease with which Tiutchev's dictum is subject to reversal — apparent in the propensity for the buffoons and liars that populate Dostoevskii's novels to be revealed as sources of truth, divine and otherwise²⁶ — points to Dostoevskii's ability to identify ideas, beliefs and feelings with their opposite. Thus, for example, the religious sensibility governing his works necessarily encompasses not only faith, but doubt and loss of faith.

Both sides of this equation — the significance of what is missing and the process of reversal — come into focus in Muireann Maguire's article which, through its exploration of the motif of 'lost' babies, as a narrative technique (or mishap?) and a recurring theme in *The Adolescent* (*Podrostok*, 1875), articulates one way in which a poetics of absence underlies the paradoxical ethical and spiritual ideas in Dostoevskii's work. The silence surrounding the multiple missing infants in *The Adolescent* — whether stillborn in the drafts of the novel, accidentally miscarried in its published version's notoriously messy diegesis, or symbolically lost in its thematic development — itself becomes the space where ideas and feelings have the potential to turn into their opposite. In this case the desperate pain of the loss of a child, in the face of which nothing can be said and — as Dostoevskii himself knew from personal experience — there can be no comfort, may prove to be the source of spiritual renewal. Yet this is in no way a glib attempt to identify a message of hope where little exists. As Maguire comments, Dostoevskii's 'aporetic, or unfinalized, narratives (most poignantly including stories of infant mortality) constitute an intentional strategy of refusing his reader happy endings. His fiction deliberately resists generational continuity, family harmony and tidy narratives'.²⁷ Dostoevskii's love of children, the emphasis across his *oeuvre* on the innocence of children as a key to the moral life, and his sense of the cycle of birth, life and death underpinning his spiritual values, are all well known. Maguire's conclusion of the affinity of both this novel, and Dostoevskii's work more generally, with the ideas of the religious philosopher Nikolai Fedorov, may therefore come as a surprise. Yet the identification of parallels in *The Adolescent* with Fedorov's rejection of the 'progress' entailed by the appearance of new generations, and ultimately of the propagation of new life per se, in favour of revering, indeed resurrecting, the ancestors, nevertheless rings

a sustained analysis of how Tiutchev's poem is itself subjected to silence in Dostoevskii's works.

²⁶ See Deborah A. Martinsen, *Surprised by Shame: Dostoevsky's Liars and Narrative Exposure*, Columbus, OH, 2003.

²⁷ Muireann Maguire, 'Dostoevskii's Forgotten Children: Lost Babies and Baby Loss in *The Adolescent*', pp. 99–100.

true: 'We cannot find redemption through others' lives, including the lives of children; but apparently we can still redeem ourselves by reinventing the life we already have.'²⁸ For all the permutations we see in the novel of generational conflict, poor parenting and 'accidental families', the image that stands out amidst the chaos as the lasting source of value to emulate is that of the spiritual father, Makar Dolgorukii.

That sense of work on the self as the essential moral action in Dostoevskii's fictional universe is also apparent in Shkolnikov's analysis of conscience and the search for the ideal in *Notes from Underground*. The central problem faced by the Underground Man originates in the fact that 'the moral self is defined and experienced without any need for interaction with the outside world: love is not directed towards anything external'.²⁹ The attempts by the Underground Man — and other antiheroes in Dostoevskii's repertoire — to do without (or, in his subsequent novels, do away with) the other is the inevitable result of the author's 'poetics of conflict'. The intersubjective, dialogic framework underlying the construction of the self in his novels becomes most apparent not in any sense of mutuality, harmony, integrity or fulfilment that Bakhtin's overly optimistic interpretation might suggest, but rather in distortion, failure and incompleteness. The self's fundamental need of the other points to perhaps the originary absence within Dostoevskii's fictional world: the idea that identity itself is very frequently, and always potentially, incomplete.

The significance of Dostoevskian intersubjective selfhood for the incompleteness of identity has been most persuasively articulated in recent criticism by Yuri Corrigan. In his examination of the early story, 'A Weak Heart' ('Slaboe serdtse', 1848), the boundaries of the self are all too porous, leading to one identity taking over the other: 'in Vasya and Arkady we see an overwhelming need for the other as a completion of one's own unfinished personality, a personality that degenerates as it becomes gradually subsumed and supplanted by its loving but overpowering counterpart'.³⁰ Yet elsewhere in Dostoevskii's *oeuvre*, we see a model of interrelations that implies the exact opposite: the other becomes completely impenetrable. In *The Idiot* (*Idiot*, 1868), Prince Myshkin's acceptance of the limitations of people's ability to know the other, 'Only God knows what is

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

²⁹ Shkolnikov, 'Dostoevskii and the Birth of the Conscientious Terrorist', pp. 136–37.

³⁰ Yuri Corrigan, 'Interiority and Intersubjectivity in Dostoevsky: The Vasya Shumkov Paradigm', in Svetlana Evdokimova and Vladimir Golstein (eds), *Dostoevsky beyond Dostoevsky: Science, Religion, Philosophy*, Boston, MA, 2016, pp. 249–65 (p. 253).

concealed in those weak and drunken hearts',³¹ becomes a maxim for the impossibility of human judgement.

The impossibility of knowing the other also has profound implications for the possibility of narration. The collapse of some characters into another's consciousness notwithstanding, Dostoevskii's embodied first-person narrators, from the unnamed heroine of his unfinished *bildungsroman*, *Netochka Nezvanova* (1849), to the author's avatar Gorianchikov in *Notes from the House of the Dead* (*Zapiski iz mertvogo doma*, 1861), frequently struggle to gain even the slightest access into the minds and hearts of those around them.³² In the absence of knowledge of the other, speculation and projection take over as modes of story-construction, leading to the question of which (or whose) story is being told, and how it can be known. And if the (narrating) self's perception of the other is limited and distorted, effectively becoming a fictional construct within a fiction, where does this leave the truth Dostoevskii sought, and the truths literature might reveal to us?

What, then, does this mean for the self? Is the desired or necessary realization of the self in the other affected by the inability to know them? How might that change our understanding of Dostoevskian self-consciousness? Certainly, the remoteness of the self from the other is an underlying theme in many of the articles in this cluster. Arkadii's abandonment by Versilov, in Maguire's account, is the origin of his search for selfhood that underlies his entire narrative. His persistent — and largely unsuccessful — attempts to understand his absent, distant father and form a family lead Arkadii 'to re-create shared memories and therefore, by association, shared identity and even a common moral code'.³³ Yet Versilov's apparent incapacity for anything other than abandoning his offspring, and his other responsibilities, makes it impossible for Arkadii to move his narrative beyond incomplete stories of child abandonment, or to epitomise anything other than abandonment and incompleteness

³¹ Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 8, p. 183; Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, trans. Alan Myers, Oxford, 2008, p. 231.

³² On the narrator's lack of knowledge in the former work, see Sarah J. Young, 'Hesitation, Projection and Desire: The Fictionalizing "as if..." in Dostoevskii's Early Works', *Modern Languages Open*, 1, 2018, 15, pp. 1–22 (pp. 4–10) <<https://doi.org/10.3828/mlo.voio.183>>; on the latter, see Sarah J. Young, 'Knowing Russia's Convicts: The Other in Narratives of Imprisonment and Exile of the Late Imperial Era', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65, 2013, 9, pp. 1700–15 (pp. 1705–07) <<https://doi-org.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/10.1080/09668136.2013.844509>>.

³³ Maguire, 'Dostoevskii's Forgotten Children', p. 114.

in its form. 'I've long seen that you know nothing about anything',³⁴ his sister observes tellingly, in relation to the paternity of Lydiia Akhmakova's baby that provides much of *The Adolescent's* plot complications. Arkadii's inability to know Versilov ultimately causes the breakdown of the entire text. In Shkolnikov's model, the circular logic of the underground man's 'beautiful soul' tends towards exclusive affirmation of his own 'inner' intuitions purely because they are his own. He presumes his 'heightened consciousness' to be its own justification, and claims for himself 'absolutely free self-determination'.³⁵ The underground man thus seeks to renounce the scrutinizing gaze of the other. Inertly trapped by his absolute affirmation of his inner self, he is unable to move towards genuine recognition from the other. His logic manifests a kind of solipsism, which prevents any reconciliation between self and other within the pages of the novella. In Zhernokleyev's article, we also find that the self does not seek to 'know' the other, per se. Due to the objectifying nature of perception and communication in Dostoevskii's fictional world, dialogic relations are distorted, marked with violence and tending towards decomposition. The relation between self and other, in this frame, is undermined by characters' inability to transcend the epistemological limits of their perception and grotesque communicative impulses. They are caught in the grips of a seductive fascination that facilitates distraction, and evasion of the truth of their shared fallen state. Lynn Patyk recognizes that provocative acts aimed at 'unmasking' the other play a central role in Dostoevskii's 'poetics of conflict'. Such provocative acts appear to imply knowledge of the other — for how can one 'unmask' what one does not know? Yet, closer inspection reveals this to be false. The provocateur, in fact, finalizes an image of the other in their own minds — he/she 'objectifies' the other — and then unmasks the image of the other that they have themselves produced: 'the provocateur believes that he already knows what the truth of the other is, and he provokes him until the other actually conforms to what he believes him to be.'³⁶ The epistemological problem of acquiring true knowledge of the other in Dostoevskii still stands. Perhaps another way to understand many of the articles in this cluster is to see them as presenting the difficulty of this question: how can one find oneself in the other, if the genuinely other remains radically beyond one's own understanding?

³⁴ Dostoevskii, *PSS*, 13, p. 133. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Adolescent*, trans. Dora O'Brien, Richmond, 2016, p. 175.

³⁵ Shkolnikov, 'Dostoevskii and the Birth of the Conscientious Terrorist', p. 153.

³⁶ Patyk, 'The Dark Side of Dialogue', p. 59.