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“Tearing the Root of Evil from the Structure of the World”: Religious Logics in the Works of Alexander Dugin

Dmitry Uzlaner

uzlanerda@gmail.com

Freie Universität Berlin

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Abstract

This article examines the figure of Alexander Dugin (b. 1962) as a religious thinker and actor. This examination is embedded in a broader discussion of the influence of religion on politics – the author proposes studying this influence through an analysis of specific religious logics and their manifestations in the political field. Accordingly, in the first part of the work, the author explains his conceptual framework – he defines religious logics and explains the main ones. In the second part of the work, the author demonstrates how these logics manifest in the ideological legacy of Alexander Dugin – specifically, the logic of the superhuman determination, the logic of the numinous, the logic of salvation, and the logic of world-making and meaning-making. The study then demonstrates how these logics are embodied in Dugin’s specific political projects – in his idea of a conservative revolution as the attainment of Paradise, as well as a global uprising against the global liberal order. Dugin’s ideas on the restructuring of Russia are examined separately.

Keywords: Alexander Dugin, religion in Russia, religion and politics, traditionalism, religious logics, conservative revolution.

> “We are so deep within the night that we do not realize it is night. We are so deep underground that we do not notice”.
>
> Alexander Dugin, *Noomachia* (2014: 402)

In 2023, the volume *The Great Russian Rectification of Names*, devoted to a philosophical interpretation of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, published Alexander Dugin’s essay “Ukraine as the Territory of Armageddon.” There he wrote:

> The Special Military Operation (SMO) is the beginning of an eschatological battle between sacred tradition and the modern world, which has reached its most sinister, toxic, and radical expression precisely in the form of liberal ideology and globalist politics. That is why we increasingly speak of Armageddon, the final decisive battle between the armies of God and Satan. (Dugin 2023c: 35).

Dugin then insists that he means Armageddon literally:

> This time we are not speaking of a metaphor of the kind that the opposing sides in the conflict have at times applied to one another. Now it is something more. Never before, not even in the modern era, has Western civilization come so close to the direct and overt embodiment of the kingdom of the Antichrist (Dugin 2023c: 35).

What has to be in someone’s head for them to write this? What other thoughts inhabit that head? How serious is all of this? I know these are not standard research questions. They were, however, the questions that prompted this article. I want to grasp the religious and metaphysical foundations of Dugin’s work, the ground from which such claims grow.

Alexander Dugin (b. 1962) has attracted extensive scholarly attention (see, for example, the special issue of *Studies in East European Thought* no. 1-2 [2026]). He is regarded not only as a central intellectual figure of "late Putinism" in Russia (Dugin 2014), as an ideologue of the war against Ukraine (Dugin 2015a) and confrontation with the West, but also, internationally, as a leading representative of intellectual currents now treated as a threat to the contemporary liberal order (Laruelle 2019; see also Millerman 2023). He is most often classified as a political philosopher, a geopolitical theorist, an ideologue. His best-known books remain *The Foundations of Geopolitics* (Dugin 1997) and *The Fourth Political Theory* (Dugin 2024 [2009]). For a long time, his significance was systematically downplayed – at least in Russia; it is now widely treated as dangerous, and a substantial critical literature has followed (see the essays by Yuri Pushchaev on *Russkaia Istina*; Sidorin 2025).

What remains least examined is Dugin as a religious thinker and actor. This is the perspective adopted in this article. Reading him in these terms does not impose an artificial framework on his thought; it offers, I argue, the most accurate characterization of his project. Dugin's other roles – as a political philosopher, sociologist, geopolitical theorist, and ideologue – rest on this religious foundation. His religious ideas form the "base" of the entire intellectual edifice, while his writings on geopolitics, society, liberalism, and the war in Ukraine constitute a "superstructure" built upon it. Behind his best-known political and ideological ideas lies a much broader realm of metaphysical constructions, experiences, and visions.

One can agree with Marlene Laruelle, who describes Dugin as "a chameleon thinker" (Laruelle 2019, p. 158). But this "chameleon-like" aspect of Dugin is merely a strategy and tactic; it is Dugin as a politician in the realm of ideas, who – in order to popularize his vision – is willing to engage with different audiences and various intellectual currents (in fact, he speaks openly about this – see Dugin 2025a: 150–168). Yet across his major theoretical works, Dugin maintains a consistent line of thought: although his conceptual framework may evolve in its details, its core principles and ideas remain unchanged. From these core metaphysical and religious principles spring political radicalism, "postmodernist" mockery of the surrounding reality, hatred of liberalism, the glorification of war (Dugin 2015b; Dugin 2024d 143-144), and other recognizable features of Dugin's style.

Dugin and his ideas form part of a broader process in which religion is reasserting its presence in political life. In Dugin's writings, one encounters ideas and themes that are unconventional yet also circulate widely in political life, independently of Dugin himself and his work. For example, Dugin seriously considers the figure of the Antichrist in the political context (Dugin 2023). This resonates with similar themes expressed by such diverse yet prominent figures as Peter Thiel (Wandinger 2025) or J. D. Vance (FitzGerald 2026). This article therefore examines not only Dugin's thought but also the broader question of the influence of religion on politics. I conceptualize this influence in terms of specific "religious logics" that shape the actions of actors. Accordingly, I will examine Dugin's work through the lens of the religious logics underlying his activities.

This dual focus informs the structure of the article. The first part develops the conceptual framework: I explain what I mean by "religious logics" and identify the specific logics encompassed by this approach. The second part examines the religious dimensions of Dugin's work, showing how these logics are expressed in his thought and translated into concrete political projects.

I. Religion and Politics: The Logics of Religious Action

a) The Influence of Religion on Politics

Since I am interested in Alexander Dugin and his religious views in the context of the broader question of religion's influence on politics, I would like to begin by outlining the basic premises of my analysis.

First, I agree that for an adequate analysis of religion's influence on politics, religion must be clearly defined. In other words, examining religion's social and political significance requires us to address the question of what religion is. In this sense, I disagree with those authors who simply gloss over this fundamental question and move straight to specific topics. For example, James Beckford put it explicitly: "I doubt whether it is helpful to theorize about 'religion'" (2003: 16). Another scholar, Samuel L. Perry, author of works on Christian nationalism, in his recent book *Religion for Realists: Why We All Need the Scientific Study of Religion*, calls on us to study religion, but paradoxically avoids any examination of its specific characteristics, essentially contenting himself with pointing out that religion is everything that people consider "religious" – whatever they may mean by that word (2024: 9).

Second, I agree that not every mention of religion in a political context is evidence of its influence. Cases involving "visibility" (Hjelm 2015), instrumentalization (Huang 2020; Giorgi 2022), or hijacking of religion (Marzouki et al. 2016), as well as the substitution of religion with ideology, are very real. However, I disagree with attempts to completely downplay the significance of the religious factor. It is important to distinguish between cases of the instrumentalization of religion or its hijacking and cases where religion exerts a genuine influence on political and social processes.

Accordingly, I first define what I mean by "religion" and then examine its influence on politics through the case of Alexander Dugin. My approach centers on two key concepts – "religious logic" and "logic of religious action" – which I discuss in the following section.

b) What Are Religious Logics and Logics of Religious Action

My key concept is that of religious logics. In using the word "logics," I draw inspiration from Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the logic of practice (2006, see also 1991) and Roger Friedland's (2024) works on institutional logics, while developing the concept in a different direction. By "logics" I mean an internal organizing principle – the inner meaning – that gives a phenomenon or process its characteristic structure and coherence.

How can we identify the fundamental religious logics? I do so by identifying the key concepts through which religion has been defined in twentieth- and twenty-first-century religious studies. I then associate each of these concepts with corresponding logics.

Following Martin Riesebrodt, the most basic definition of religion is as follows: "Religion is a complex of practices based on the premise of the existence of

superhuman powers – whether personal or impersonal – that are generally invisible" (2009: 74–75; for a more extended definition, see 71–91). Accordingly, the most fundamental concept connected to religion is "superhuman" and relations with superhuman powers. This is what Riesebrodt calls "the religious premise" (2009: 75)[1].

It is important to clarify here that "the religious premise" is best captured not by a single concept, but by a series of similar concepts, each of which is appropriate in its own way, yet also has its limitations (see debates on defining religion, for example, Hughes & McCutcheon 2021). Here is that series: "supernatural" / "transcendent" / "superhuman" / "superempirical" (Schilbrack 2013: 293) / "infinite" / "unconditional" / "ultimate," etc. I shall use the term "superhuman," but by this I mean the entire series of concepts.

In addition to "superhuman" – which can be called the basic religious concept – one can identify a whole range of other major concepts. These include the concepts of "sacred" (Émile Durkheim), "sacralization" (Hans Mol), "salvation" (Max Weber, Martin Riesebrodt), "numinous" (Rudolf Otto), "world-making," and "meaning-making" (Peter Berger, Clifford Geertz).

I view religion as part of meaningful human activity; therefore, behind every specific concept that defines religion lies a logic associated with it, which I call religious. Religious logics, in turn, determine the intrinsic meaning of religious actions performed by religious actors. Religious action is an action determined by religious logics. An action may outwardly take any form; what makes it religious is that it is constituted by a religious logic.

In the table below, I list the main concepts that define religion and the logics associated with them. The proposed framework is open-ended and may be expanded by incorporating additional concepts, provided there are sound theoretical grounds for doing so. Space constraints prevent me from discussing many of the nuances and debates here.

Specific religious concepts	*Associated religious logics*
Superhuman (in the broad sense—the entire sequence of concepts: supernatural / transcendent / superhuman / superempirical / infinite / unconditional / ultimate)	The logic of maintaining proper relations with superhuman powers (the most basic religious logic) The logic of superhuman determination (see below)
Sacred	The logic of endowing certain "things" with the special status of vessels of a superhuman force The logic of organizing community life around these special "things" The logic of protecting special "things" from contamination by the profane world

[1] One might also call it faith in superhuman forces: to refer to some popular definitions of religion – Edward Burnett Tylor, James George Frazer; though "faith" is only part of these relations.

Sacralization	The logic of overcoming contingency (Niklas Luhmann) through the union of the immanent and the transcendent, the temporal and the eternal
Salvation	The logic of overcoming evil, suffering, and human limitations; the attainment of wholeness
Numinous	The logic of domesticating and structuring the experience of "the Wholly Other" (*das ganz Andere*)
World-making and meaning-making	The logic of organizing and structuring the world, transforming "chaos" into "cosmos" The logic of endowing the world with meaning that is not purely a human invention (Peter Berger)

I view the "religious field" (another concept by Pierre Bourdieu) as organized by specific religious logics that underlie actions which can, on this basis, be considered religious. These actions may be directed inward, toward the religious field, or outward, beyond it. After all, the boundary separating the religious field from other fields is highly arbitrary and largely a modern construct (Strenski 2010). The influence of religion on politics manifests itself when religious logics extend beyond the religious field and operate within the political field[2].

Building on these premises, I examine Alexander Dugin as a case study of religion's influence on politics. I identify the religious logics expressed in his writings and trace how they translate into concrete political projects (I leave aside, however, the question of how influential Dugin's projects themselves are).

I do not have the opportunity here to examine all religious logics in detail, so I shall focus on those relevant to the case of Alexander Dugin. There are at least five of them – one that is the most basic (the logic of maintaining proper relations), and the others that are more specialized: the logic of world-making and meaning-making, the logic of superhuman determination, the logic of salvation and the logic of the numinous.

The logic of maintaining proper relations with superhuman powers is the most fundamental religious logic underpinning all other forms of logic and religious action (except, perhaps, for deliberate blasphemy and theomachy, or rebellion against God). This is the core inner meaning of religious action. If a person assumes that a superhuman power exists ("faith" being another substantial and frequently mentioned feature of religion), then it is logical for them to strive to maintain a proper relationship with it – to follow its commands when required, to worship it

[2] At the same time, I understand the relationship between religion and politics as reciprocal. The political context influences the religious field, where this influence is processed through fundamental religious logics. The resulting interpretations, in turn, shape religious actors' responses to the political context. Once can say that "religion strikes back": religious actors intervene in politics in accordance with their religious logics.

("ritual"), to align their life with its will (or course), to engage in dialogue with it in any form, and so on. The list of specific actions here could be endless.

The logic of superhuman determination concerns a specific dimension of relations with superhuman powers and can be understood as a sublogic within the broader logic of proper relations. Here, the emphasis is on a vector that runs not from the human being to these powers, but from these powers to the human being. Superhuman powers may want something from a person or community, and given that these powers have "control over dimensions of individual or social human life" (Riesebrodt 2009: 74–75), it is entirely natural for a person or community to try to give these forces what is required of them. Formulas for religious actions defined by this logic include: "I do what the transcendent demands"; "I bring the temporal into alignment with the eternal"; "I restore likeness to the eternal archetype".

The logic of world-making and meaning-making – this logic concerns organizing and structuring the world, transforming "chaos" into "cosmos," and endowing this cosmos with meaning. Key authors for understanding this logic are Clifford Geertz and Peter Berger. Religion involves the creation of a symbolic order in "fundamental questions" ("formulating conceptions of a general order of existence," Geertz 1993, 90) and making this "cosmos" rich with meaning that is not purely a human construction. As Berger put it: "Religion is the audacious attempt to conceive of the entire universe as being humanly significant" (Berger 2011: 38).

The logic of salvation – this logic concerns humanity's confrontation with the problem of evil, lack, and imperfection, both within oneself and in this world (the problem of theodicy as understood by Max Weber). Within this logic, a person strives to overcome this lack and attain salvation (in the sense of wholeness and happiness) – by appealing to superhuman powers. Actions driven by this logic can take on either a moderate character (magical rituals aimed at obtaining the desired benefits) or a radical one – asceticism and extreme forms of renunciation of the world (see Riesebrodt 2009).

The logic of the numinous – this logic concerns the experience of something beyond the natural and the everyday (Otto 1958; Orsi 2011). It is an encounter with what Rudolf Otto called *das ganz Andere* – "the Wholly Other" (1958: 22), which the person interprets as contact with a superhuman reality. The logic consists in the fact that this experience cannot be left as it is: it has to be domesticated, symbolized, given meaning, and taken back into a life whose wholeness has been broken. I understand the numinous in a broad sense, as any experience that a person interprets as an encounter with a superhuman reality. How the encounter is interpreted decides the form of action that follows, from peaceful to violent – this is what is meant by the "ambivalence of the sacred" (Appleby 2000: 30).

When I speak of the influence of religious logics on politics, I mean that these logics are embodied in specific actions that can, on this basis, be understood as religious. What makes an action religious is its meaning rather than its outward form. Religious action is determined by religious logics, regardless of the form it takes. Praying and issuing a political manifesto can therefore both constitute religious action.

At the same time, I understand action as "overdetermined" (a term borrowed from psychoanalysis): a single action may be shaped by several logics, only some of which are religious. A purely religious action is therefore an "ideal type." Concrete actions typically embody multiple logics, which may be religious, political, or economic. My

aim is thus not to characterize Dugin as an exclusively religious figure, but to analytically isolate the religious dimension of his thought and action.

II. Religious Logics in the Work of Alexander Dugin

I will examine Dugin as a religious thinker by identifying in his works the logics outlined above: the logic of the numinous, the logic of superhuman determination, the logic of world-making and meaning-making, and the logic of salvation. Of course, these are by no means the only religious logics that can be found in Dugin's work, but they can be considered the main ones.

One logic should be named at the outset, though it will not receive a section of its own: the logic of maintaining proper relations with superhuman powers. I take this to be the fundamental religious logic, because it underlies every action that can be counted as religious. In Dugin's case it is the organizing principle of his thought. If his work could be reduced to a single idea, it would be the restoration of a relation to the Absolute — not for the individual alone, but for the world as a whole[3]. That is why I treat him first of all as a religious thinker: this logic runs through the entire body of work and carries his political projects. The four logics discussed below are connected to this one.

Basic Information about Alexander Dugin

Alexander Gel'evich Dugin was born in Moscow on January 7, 1962. During the late Soviet period, he participated in traditionalist intellectual circles and, in the late 1980s, became affiliated with the nationalist organization *Pamyat* ("Memory"). Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, he co-founded the National Bolshevik Party with Eduard Limonov in 1993, leaving the party in 1998. In the early 2000s, he led the Eurasia movement and subsequently the International Eurasian Movement. From 2008 to 2014, he taught at Lomonosov Moscow State University. He currently directs the Ivan Ilyin Higher School of Politics, an educational and research center at the Russian State University for the Humanities (RSUH), and serves as honorary president and academic director of the *Tsargrad* Institute.

Dugin is best known for his writings on geopolitics and for *The Fourth Political Theory*, which critiques existing political ideologies and proposes an alternative. He is among the best-known living Russian philosophers, with works translated into numerous languages. Dugin is regarded as one of the leading thinkers of the radical right (Laruelle 2019).

Source Materials

The analysis draws on a selection of Dugin's major works published over the past thirty years. The scale of his output – nearly one hundred books[4], some running to 500 or even over 1,000 pages – makes careful source selection essential. I examined

[3] This is an important clarification, since the individual plays no significant role in Dugin's system of thought: he thinks in terms of collective and superhuman entities. His critique of liberalism, for example, is closely tied to this anti-individualism (see also the Conclusion).

[4] This figure refers to the time of writing this article (September 2026); the number of books may be considerably higher by the time the article is published.

his religious works, including *The Metaphysics of the Good News*, *The Foundations of Traditionalism*, *Antikeimenos*, and *The Tenth Intellect and the Physics of the Resurrection*, alongside his major metaphysical and theoretical works: *Noomachia*, *In Search of the Dark Logos*, *The Radical Subject and Its Double*, and *Post-Philosophy*. Given my focus on religion's influence on politics, I also examined his writings on political theory and contemporary political developments, including *Archeomodern*, *The Fourth Political Theory*, *Putin's New Formula*, and *Ukraine – My War*.

Religious Logics in Dugin's Work

Dugin's Conversion to Traditionalism: The Logic of the Numinous

Any discussion of Dugin as a religious thinker must begin with an episode that can be regarded as foundational to his subsequent development: his "conversion" when he "crossed some kind of barrier". This episode is crucial because it shows that his thought cannot be understood simply as an intellectual project in which a thinker, like a craftsman, pieces together ideas and traditions according to aesthetic preferences or pragmatic political considerations. Rather, Dugin's religious and metaphysical constructions respond to a profound existential experience of the world, from which his entire intellectual project emerges. Without understanding this experience, many of his statements – including the one quoted in this article's epigraph (about "night" and "underground") – remain incomprehensible.

This experience and the "conversion" associated with it can be interpreted through the logic of the numinous. In Dugin's case, it involves radical world rejection in the Weberian sense (Weber 1946): an experience of being in "hell" and a corresponding longing for something "other," for a way out of that "hell". Dugin's subsequent activity can be understood as an effort to symbolize and domesticate this experience, to give it a coherent explanation, and to develop a strategy for responding to it. Traditionalism offered him the necessary resources for symbolization and domestication.

This is how Dugin describes his state prior to his "conversion":

> I was a very Soviet person – that is, I had a Soviet family, Soviet parents, and I was born in Moscow. Yet all the while, I was deeply at odds with myself. Maybe it was some form of mental or psychological disorder; I don't know – it's hard to say. But I hated my sociological self, my sociological personality. I hated the entire community around me. I hated them deeply. For no reason at all! If I had been, for example, an Armenian, a Jew, or a German, I could have said, "I'm here in the Soviet Union temporarily; I came here to live." Well, like staying in a hotel. Or if I had been an aristocrat, for example, I could have said, "Hey, the Bolsheviks here burned down my family's palaces." Had I been Jewish or German, I could have sought a way to the Promised Land or to the West. That is, I would have had a reason to distance myself from my sociological self. But I didn't have that option, and I was outraged by myself; I felt a distance between myself and my sociological self. I wasn't satisfied with my apartment, my parents, my school, what I saw on TV, what I heard, read, or saw in the movies. I just saw that it was some kind of hell. Hell is hell (Dugin 2020: 59).

The key phrase here is "Hell is hell." Dugin would later repeatedly assert that we live in hell, using this or similar formulations ("the kingdom of the Antichrist") without further explanation.

He subsequently became involved in a circle of traditionalist thinkers, where he finally found answers to his questions:

> then I met people who saw the world the same way. Who, like me, were in some sort of absolute metaphysical opposition to everything. Just everything. It was hypernihilism. They weren't even dissidents, because dissidents usually had some positive agenda: they could go somewhere, pack up their things, emigrate, or shout slogans in the square. Many of those I met – most of them, actually – collaborated with the KGB. My acquaintances were not dissidents. Chiefly, I mean Yuri Mamleyev, Yevgeny Golovin, and Geydar Dzhemal. Mamleyev had already left for abroad by then, but Golovin and Dzhemal were still there. When I met them, I saw that they viewed the world around them the same way I did. It was almost instinctively that I found them.
>
> In this way, I began to bring order to my thoughts. I found an explanation for why I perceived my surroundings as hell while everyone else around me seemed to think it was just normal. I began to understand that my perspective was actually the reasonable one and that I had been taken to a madhouse, or to jail, or to hell. I understood that we are in Kali-Yuga, the dark age. If you think in a Christian context, this is the kingdom of the Antichrist – an age marked by the loss of the spiritual dimension, the Bolsheviks, their atrocities, and Western materialism. There was the explanation! (Dugin 2020: 59-60)

Elsewhere in the interview, he describes his "conversion" once again:

> I was completely dissatisfied with materialism and the idea that everything could be explained through economic processes. I needed more serious religious and metaphysical justifications, and I found them in right-wing criticism. Heraclitus has a saying, the essence of which is that at first I knew nothing until a certain point, and then I began to know everything. This is the moment I'm very clear about. It's 1981. I didn't know anything until 1981. Nothing. It's just that... And then, after 1981, I knew everything. Everything remained the same; I hadn't changed, nor had I even expanded my knowledge. I simply crossed some kind of barrier. Now I knew everything. And it has remained that way ever since – from 1981–1982 until now; I feel the same way (Dugin 2020: 61).

I regard this early experience of Dugin's – when he felt as though he was literally in hell, found existence unbearable, and disliked everything around him – as the key to his subsequent thought[5]. Traditionalism offered him an answer to this existential suffering, explaining why he experienced the world as he did. He went on to develop these intuitions and translate them into programs for practical political action.

For example, this passage from *The Fourth Political Theory* illustrates how Dugin's initial existential experience lives on in his theoretical writings, coloring his perception of the modern world:

> Traditionalism is that form of conservatism which asserts: it is not those individual fragments that provoke our rejection that are bad – in the modern world, in modernity, *everything is bad* (Dugin 2024d: 124).

One can understand Ronald Beiner's indignation when he quotes Dugin's "criticism" of liberalism in *The Fourth Political Theory*:

> that "liberalism is an absolute evil" that must be defeated by "tearing it out by its roots"; that it is "a fatal, incurable disease" that one must "erase from the face of the Earth"; that it represents not freedom but slavery because it rejects "the values of God and Tradition"; and that it is therefore imperative to wage a global "crusade against the West" (Beiner 2025, p. 238).

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[5] Yuri Mamleev's "metaphysical realism" is relevant here. In Mamleev's *Shatuny* (1966), the novel that influenced Dugin, reality is portrayed as so repulsive, so nauseating, that the reader's only impulse is to burn the whole world down with a flamethrower.

This “criticism” lacks any substantial argumentation – Dugin just takes this for granted. However, these statements will cease to seem like strange, baseless demagoguery if we trace them back to the fundamental sentiment that set Dugin on his path toward traditionalism.

I will not pursue further the numinous, experiential dimension of Dugin’s legacy, which thereafter unfolded chiefly through thought and practical action. It is worth noting, however, that traces of the numinous still surface in his writings. Some of his intellectual insights, for example, he himself traces to what he calls “metaphysical visions”:

> At some point while reflecting on these questions, I had, if you will, a metaphysical *vision* that determined the structure of my philosophy. The term “vision” seems the only adequate one here, because these were not thoughts. Thoughts are structured differently. This was a metaphysical *vision* (Dugin 2009: 277).

More broadly, dreams, visions, and other phenomena beyond the bounds of ordinary reason and common sense form an important part of Dugin’s work.

The Logic of World-Making and Meaning-Making

The logic of world-making and meaning-making concerns the syntactic and semantic ordering of the world – the transformation of “chaos” into a meaningful “cosmos” imbued with super- and transhuman meanings. Given Dugin’s philosophical orientation, this logic dominates his intellectual work. The world Dugin envisions is directly linked to the superhuman. He constructs a comprehensive system that accounts for the universe, from its ultimate foundations to contemporary political and social developments. Viewed through this logic, Dugin’s statements on current affairs emerge as the tip of a vast conceptual iceberg in which almost nothing is arbitrary.

The foundation of Dugin’s “sacred cosmos” is traditionalism, understood here as the philosophical and religious movement that emerged in the twentieth century and is associated with René Guénon. I agree with Mark Sedgwick’s assessment that “the Traditionalist positions first taken by Dugin in his 1990 *Ways of the Absolute*, his first full-length book, […] have remained central to his thought ever since” (Sedgwick 2026, p. 210). Marlène Laruelle makes a similar argument: “The influence of Traditionalism on Dugin seems to be fundamental: it constitutes his main intellectual reference point and the basis of his political attitudes—as well as his Eurasianism” (Laruelle 2006, p. 10). The question, then, concerns the extent to which Dugin adheres to traditionalism and the ways in which he departs from it (see Sedgwick 2026, pp. 213–217; Shekhovtsov and Umland 2009).

If we take his recent works, he continues to regard traditionalism as a “metalanguage”:

> What is traditionalism? It is not one of the traditions. It is the structural matrix, the paradigm, that is common to various traditions. If we compare them with Modern society, with the Modern Age, and with the secular paradigm of contemporary science, it turns out that all specific traditions and religions have something in

> common. The desire to describe, identify, and highlight this commonality leads to traditionalism (Dugin 2023b: 3)[6].

Drawing on the intellectual legacy of traditionalism, Dugin constructs his own symbolic universe – a world of metaphysical entities, higher meanings, spiritual conflicts ("cosmic wars", to use Mark Juergensmeyer's expression), and sacred events. Across a body of work comprising nearly 100 books, his understanding of this universe has evolved. His attitude toward Christianity, for example, has become increasingly positive (1996; 2023b)[7]. He has also introduced new terms and revised his accounts of different aspects of this universe. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify several fundamental features that have remained largely unchanged.

Dugin's world is an inverted one: he reverses the hierarchies taken for granted in modernity. This inversion appears to be a deliberate, almost "methodological" strategy. Where modernity accords primacy to the material, Dugin accords it to the ideal. Modernity treats the ideal as a reflection of the material; Dugin reverses this relationship, viewing the material as merely an imprint of the ideal and of the processes unfolding within it. Where modernity sees progress, Dugin sees regression – a movement away from Truth and the Absolute. For modernity, knowledge advances over time; for Dugin, the passage of time takes us ever further from the authentic knowledge possessed by people in the past. Where modernity privileges science, Dugin privileges sacred knowledge and approaches that modernity has rejected or discredited.

As Dugin writes in *The Fourth Political Theory*:

> Not only can the highest, super-rational symbols of Faith be taken up again, but also those irrational elements of cults, rituals, and legends that perplexed theologians in earlier stages. If we reject progress as an idea characteristic of the Modern era (which, as we can see, has come to an end), then everything ancient acquires value and persuasiveness for us simply because it is ancient. Ancient means good. And the more ancient, the better (Dugin 2024d: 38).

Dugin's rejection of modernity is so radical that he is prepared to tear down the entire edifice of modern science, which he regards as built on false foundations (Dugin 2022; 2025b):

> Modernity has catastrophically distorted our most fundamental conceptions of the world, nature, reality, being, and the laws governing matter, the cosmos, and their constituent elements (Dugin 2025b: 10).

Dugin's diachronic vision of the world is that of regression rather than progress. This downward trajectory begins with the unity with the Absolute, when contact with the sacred finds expression in sacred knowledge and institutions. It culminates in the Kali Yuga, an age of estrangement from the sacred, when knowledge and institutions no longer reflect the sacred and survive only in debased forms. The drama involves not only the realm of human beings but also the Absolute itself: a part of the Absolute breaks away from the whole and becomes estranged from it. Rather than understanding itself as a manifestation of the Absolute, as envisaged in Dugin's

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[6] His *Obshchestvoznanie* (Social Studies) textbook offers another example: the section on religion opens with an epigraph from Rene Guénon (Dugin 2007: 352-353). Dugin, for obvious reasons, cannot incorporate Guénon's ideas directly into a textbook intended for schools, so he uses the epigraph to make Guénon's thought loom over the entire section.

[7] The question of how Dugin reconciles his Christianity with traditionalism lies beyond the scope of this article.

"manifestationism", it regards itself as a separate entity, even going so far as to deny the very existence of that Absolute. This accounts for Dugin's criticism of both modern materialism and "creationism"[8] – as they separate the "created" from the "Creator".

Throughout his works, Dugin returns to the same narrative in different forms: a fall from the Absolute and a gradual descent into what he calls "hell". For him, this hell is embodied in the modern world, with its materialism, liberalism, and soulless science. In *Noomachia*, which he describes as his *magnum opus* and which can reasonably be regarded as the fullest articulation of his symbolic universe, Dugin presents this drama as a "war of minds" – a conflict among Logoi (Dugin 2024a). According to Dugin, there is not a single Logos but three Logoi, each giving rise to its own empire, understood as a comprehensive universe of meaning. The three Logos are

> three fundamental, irreducible root structures for the organization of ontological and epistemological paradigms. Each Logos constructs its own all-encompassing world, its own "whole", and its own "everything" (Dugin 2024a: 325).
>
> three basic and generalizing forms of "collective consciousness", three understandings of being, knowledge, the world, God, humanity, history, politics, society, culture, and religion (Dugin 2024a: 423).

The Light Logos is luminous and Apollonian, associated with verticality, eternity, light, and the primacy of the ideal principle. In philosophical terms, it corresponds to Platonism and the traditions that derive from it. Next comes the Dark Logos, the intermediate Dionysian principle. Unlike the Apollonian Logos, it does not view the world solely from above. For the Dark Logos, truth lies between heaven and earth: in living phenomena, in transformation, and in that which is born, perishes, and returns. Its philosophical expression is Aristotelianism.

The third Logos is the Black Logos of Cybele, a kind of "root structure" that severs all ties with the higher, luminous principle and immerses itself entirely in viscous, dark matter. It embodies the chthonic principle of the Great Mother, who castrates every impulse, every higher aspiration. The Cybelean Logos represents the rebellion of the lower against the higher, of darkness against light. It is dark, inert matter that, rather than serving as the medium for luminous ideas, rebels and seeks an autonomous existence – a kind of "reverse Platonism" (2024a: 358). In philosophical terms, it corresponds to the thought of Democritus and Epicurus, and the entire materialist tradition associated with them.

In essence, the Black Logos of Cybele is Dugin's version of the Gnostic myth of a lower realm of being that has severed itself from the Absolute and seeks an autonomous existence. The tragedy is that this lower realm manages to trap particles of divine light, borne by certain individuals known as "pneumatics". These individuals suffer and seek to escape the "hell" and "prison" of the Cybelean universe (one can see clear parallels with Dugin's personal experience).

The Light Logos, which occupies the highest position in Dugin's hierarchy, is not at war with the Dark Logos. The Light and Dark Logoi are allies in the struggle against the Cybelean Logos.

Modern civilization is, of course, a creation of the Cybelean Logos:

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[8] He gradually tempers his criticism of creationism, however, as he comes to embrace Christianity (Dugin 1996).

> We live in the bosom of the Black Logos, in the lair of Cybele. This simply means that we dwell in hell. Nothing personal. Such is the current moment of Noomachia (Dugin 2024a: 369).

Accordingly, Dugin interprets all the defining features of the modern world as different facets of the "Empire" of the Black Logos – "hell" on earth:

> Industrialization, production, mechanization, automation, capital, the development of world trade, the economy, socialism, technological progress, the predominance of quantity, the movement of the masses, the rise of the working class, political democracy, the elevation of individualism to the highest principle – or – the reduction of quantitative units to mechanically predetermined classes, revolutions, reforms, and forms of government, globalization and the clash of national armies, world wars of extermination, and the fanatical acceleration of the circulation of information that is becoming increasingly meaningless, hysterical attention to the flesh, pleasures, food, and perversions – these are not something new, "modern," or unprecedented; on the contrary, it is a return to infinite antiquity, a descent into the depths of the earth, an entrenchment in the cosmic silt at the bottom, a restoration of the old, decrepit way of being (Dugin 2024a: 406).

All of this is Mother Cybele, who

> strives to produce dark, heavy masses, to smelt ores, to pile up the ungainly, cyclopean structures of mechanical cities, to erect dams and embankments, and to set in motion an endless cycle of mechanical labor driven by a dark, relentless will. (Dugin 2024a: 406).

The Black Logos has triumphed to such an extent that it has distorted human perception itself. As a result, we perceive a thing's materiality before we grasp its "idea":

> In our natural state, we inhabit the ontological and epistemological domain of the Logos of Cybele. What makes us spontaneously perceive the material as that which exists is a fundamental intuition of matter of which we are unaware—the heart's apprehension of the black, invisible rays emanating from mass as such (Dugin 2024a: 402).

This intuitive materialism prevents us from recognizing that a radically different, non-materialist mode of perception is possible:

> Perception, under the dominant influence of the Logos of Apollo, functions radically differently: it does not recognize the formless mass of presence as that which is; only the *eidos* of a thing – its form, its belonging to one class or another – possesses being. If, however, this belonging is not defined or evident, then Apollonian consciousness does not perceive such existence as existence at all; to be means to have meaning: that which is meaningless – either entirely devoid of *eidos* or possessing only a vague *eidos* – does not exist (Dugin 2024a: 401)[9].

The practical implication of this religious world-making is that it allows Dugin to interpret current events through the overarching metaphysical framework. What is striking is the way Dugin connects the most abstract metaphysical debates with contemporary politics, seeing "metaphysical realism" at work everywhere – for example, in wars ("war" – "the father of all", Dugin 2024a: 10). As he himself writes:

[9] That is why Dugin's inversion of modernity's common sense can be called "methodological" – in the fallen world one can't trust even his or her senses.

> Wars among humans, including the most brutal and bloody ones, are merely pale copies of the wars in which gods, titans, giants, the elements, demons, and angels take part (Dugin 2024a: 11).

Quite literally, even the most mundane historical events are incorporated into this metaphysics and imbued with immense significance[10].

A further practical consequence of this metaphysical framework is the imperative to fight against the modern world, understood as the embodiment of the dark Cybelean Logos.

The Logic of Superhuman Determination

The logic of superhuman determination starts from a simple premise: a superhuman power makes a claim on the person or the collective, and that claim must be fulfilled. This claim includes the obedience to certain rules (for example, religious law), but it also encompasses the idea of a higher calling: an individual or a community is destined to play a special role in relation to these powers – the idea of mission or covenant.

This logic is particularly prominent in Dugin's work: his project involves not only constructing a comprehensive metaphysical picture of reality but also actively participating in the transformation of the world. Dugin is not merely a chronicler of the war among the Logoi that he describes; he is also an active participant in it – in his view, a true philosopher is someone who actively engages with the world[11].

The logic of *superhuman* determination comes into direct conflict with the liberal logic of *human* self-determination. Dugin's objection to liberalism is an objection not simply to liberalism as an ideology, but to the fundamental logic on which its entire edifice rests. Liberalism places the individual at the center and makes that individual "the measure of all things". For Dugin, this involves a twofold error. First, the "measure of all things" is not the human being understood as the modern individual. Second, his basic unit of thought is the collective or community. Dugin's goal is therefore not liberal democracy, with its emphasis on individual rights and freedoms; what he wants instead is a community aligned with a sacred order – though the fourth political theory names that order more than specifies it. To some extent Dugin can be considered as a kind of "prophet", proclaiming that "liberalism will be destroyed!" – and with it, the entire edifice of the modern world. Even though he cannot fully foresee what might follow – one can say, for example, that this sacred order would be hierarchical with philosopher-kings at the top of it (see Dugin 2015b).

The logic of superhuman determination in Dugin takes a more extreme form. In *The Radical Subject* he talks about the so-called "post-sacred will". Through an act of will one must break through toward the Absolute – even against the course of time, and even when Tradition itself is no longer at hand (this is why it is "post-sacred"). Dugin believes that this act of will is part of some providential plan. He traces these insights

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[10] A clear parallel emerges here with Hegel, who likewise saw his philosophical ideas reflected in contemporary events – as in his description of Napoleon as the "world-soul" on horseback. It is perhaps no coincidence that one of Dugin's recent books is devoted to Hegel (Dugin 2025c).

[11] He says this in a documentary on his daughter Daria Dugina: *Dasha. A Film in Memory of Daria Dugina* [Conservator, 2023. 68 min. https://rutube.ru/video/a18a865aeb8f27362cd1a88bbe152331/].

to a "metaphysical vision" (Dugin 2009, 277). According to this vision the very descent into matter appears to be necessary:

> What I saw was this: in addition to its negative content, the process of descent has a certain positive teleology, a higher purpose. In this vision, that higher purpose revealed itself as a trial (Dugin 2009: 277).

This is

> the project of the Radical Subject, who awaits the desacralization of the world in order to affirm himself in the purity of an unyielding, self-identical, and absolutely all-conquering spirit. This, then, is a spirit that likes materialism, that likes matter, because he challenges matter (Dugin 2009: 282).
>
> The spirit seeks the ultimate and most terrifying trial in the very depths of the material, infernal waters. (Dugin 2009: 282).

Overcoming matter is the decisive act of the Radical Subject, who, out of nothing and by will alone, tears the world out of darkness.

Dugin does not leave this cosmic drama to contemplation: he calls for direct participation in it. As he writes:

> it is precisely this unusual, unexpected metaphysics that lies at the heart of our spiritual endeavor. This is that inner and sacred, post-sacred (*postsakralnaya*) dimension, which is even deeper than our traditionalism and our struggle against the modern and postmodern world (Dugin 2009: 284).

He presents his project as both impossible and inevitable. He literally writes:

> This is indeed entirely absent from the logic of the cycle, and precisely for that reason it must come to pass – not thanks to anything, but in spite of everything – absolutely everything (Dugin 2009: 283).
>
> Impossible reality is not an upheaval; it is something fundamentally different: a metaphysical dimension absent from traditional accounts of the development – or pulsation – of being (Dugin 2009: 283-284).

This paradox also informs his reflections on the "conservative revolution" and the role that conservative revolutionaries are destined to play:

> It is hard to believe that we – a group of people with such extravagant, radical, nonconformist views – are actually beginning to triumph and create our own world. This, too, was practically impossible to imagine before. But I was always certain that this is how it would be. In spite of everything, and not thanks to anything (Dugin 2009: 285; see also below).

The point is not to accept the given order of ages, but to tear the world out of its fall by a "post-sacred" will. Superhuman determination thus encompasses both the harmonization of existence with the Higher Principles and the special mission entrusted to a particular subject – Dugin himself and the "conservative revolutionaries" – in bringing about that harmony.

The theme of tearing the world from the grip of evil leads us directly to the question of salvation.

The Logic of Salvation

The drive to break through to the Absolute brings us to another key logic: the logic of salvation. Salvation in the broad sense is about overcoming the defect – not only in

human nature but in the universe itself. Salvation is a return to Paradise, a restoration of lost wholeness, a reunion with the Absolute. This is an important aspect of Dugin's work – although he conceives salvation as a collective task.

Dugin's religious quest aims at nothing less than a return to Paradise – an aspiration that underlies his radicalism (see also Shekhovtsov 2008). He makes this goal explicit:

> Paradise is the most ancient of all creations. The adherents of the Fourth Political Theory must strive toward its rediscovery in the future (Dugin 2024d: 38).

The phrase I have taken as the title of this article emphasizes precisely the same: "to tear the root of evil from the structure of the world" (2024d: 131-132). There is a clear millenarian strain here, of the revolutionary kind that already marked Russia's political history in the twentieth century (Slezkine 2017).

Dugin's hope for salvation is inseparable from his profound rejection of existence in its present form. Max Weber discussed salvation in relation to religious rejection of the world (see Weber 1946); in Dugin's case, this rejection takes an extreme form. This brings us back to his conversion and the foundational existential experience of the world as Hell – as something unbearable. Suffering naturally leads to the quest for salvation.

These are not the only religious logics found in Dugin's work. Indeed, the breadth of his thought is such that virtually all religious logics are represented within it. This is another reason why I regard Dugin as fundamentally a religious figure: the religious dimension forms the "base" of his work, while the other dimensions – which receive the bulk of scholarly attention – constitute its "superstructure".

The Influence of Religious Logics: Dugin's Political Vision

What sets Dugin apart is the close intertwining of religious metaphysics and politics in his thought and practice. He combines the roles of theorist and practitioner: Dugin develops a comprehensive account of the world while working to put his ideas into practice. To draw an analogy with left-wing thought, he is Marx and Lenin rolled into one.

Mark Sedgwick notes that for René Guénon, "the intellectual and the spiritual were primary, and the behavior of states and governments merely reflected this" (Sedgwick 2026, p. 216). Whereas Guénon himself avoided politics, Dugin translates this Guénonian premise into political practice: he does not merely construct a religious-metaphysical system but turns it into a program of radical political action. I do not seek to assess the influence of Dugin's ideas on politics, a question addressed by other scholars (Laruelle and Bozalka 2026; Laruelle and Cuenca 2026; Laruelle and Liu 2026; Guerra 2024). My concern is how his own religious and metaphysical convictions are translated into concrete political projects.

Dugin offers a striking illustration of how seemingly abstract metaphysical questions can have concrete practical political implications. If the modern world results from the Absolute's separation from itself, the self-enclosure of its lower part, and the growing power of the inferior "black" Logos, then the practical conclusion follows: this world must be ruthlessly destroyed. If that which has fallen away – the human spirit – seeks to return to its source and restore the lost harmony, then the practical

conclusion follows: conservative revolutionaries must undertake a decisive revolutionary effort to return humanity to its lost Paradise. If the very principles of modern science suggest that the existence of Paradise is scarcely possible within this space-time continuum, then the practical conclusion follows: the entire edifice of modern science must be demolished and rebuilt (Dugin 2022, 2025b).

No single article could cover the full range of Dugin's practical activities driven by religious logics (for example, his different Eurasian projects, see Laruelle 2001, 2004; Kipp 2002; his ideas on Katechon and the Orthodox empire, see Shnirelman 2022; Dugin 2024e). I limit my discussion to few examples.

First, Dugin's aspiration to collective salvation and the feeling of superhuman-determination is manifested in his project of the conservative revolution. This conservative revolution is a literal blueprint for the building of Paradise and realizing the will of the Absolute. He is very open about it:

> conservative revolutionaries seek not only to halt the passage of time (like liberal conservatives) or return to the past (like traditionalists), but to tear the root of evil from the structure of the world, to abolish time as a destructive property of reality, thereby fulfilling some secret, parallel, and non-obvious plan of the Deity Himself (Dugin 2024d: 131–132).

Dugin sets forth in detail the principles and tactics for carrying out the conservative revolution (see also the section on Russia below). In *Archaeomodern*, for example, he meticulously sets out a concrete plan of action and various strategies (Dugin 2025a: 150–168, see below). The breakthrough to Paradise is thus transformed from an abstract metaphysical imperative into a step-by-step program.

Second, Dugin's vision is not limited to Russia or any other single state and even continent. He envisions the global revolution and the overthrow of the liberal order, which for him embodies the quintessence of the modern world he so detests. This is the imperative of the destruction of the fallen world.

Once again, one must emphasize his literally pathological hatred of liberalism – a hatred that extends to the physical destruction of parts of the world:

> This evil can be overcome only by uprooting it, and I do not rule out the possibility that such a victory will require wiping from the face of the earth the spiritual and physical realms in which the global heresy proclaiming that "man is the measure of things" originated. Only a worldwide Crusade against the United States, the West, globalization, and their political and ideological expression – liberalism – can constitute an adequate response (Dugin 2024d: 101).

In a later edition of *The Fourth Political Theory*, Dugin includes a manifesto entitled "The Global Revolutionary Alliance (Program, Principles, Strategy)":

> Against the existing order of things, perceived as an intolerable evil, as a pathology and a state of affairs inevitably leading to catastrophe and the destruction of humanity, it is necessary to put forward an alternative ideal, a norm, a project of what does not exist now but must be (Dugin 2024d: 649).
>
> The subject of the new world revolution must be the global counter-elite. This counter-elite is called upon to form the Global Revolutionary Alliance (GRA) as the crystallization of efforts toward planetary subversive, disruptive, and revolutionary activity aimed at dismantling the current global world system and overthrowing the power of the global oligarchy (Dugin 2024d: 662).

The target is almost invariably the same: the modern and postmodern West, the global liberal order, and the unipolar world. In essence, the aim is to destroy the

modern world as we know it. Once again, this is not merely an abstract metaphysical aspiration: Dugin sets out detailed strategies and tactics for achieving the goals he regards as imperative (Dugin 2024d: 638-671).

Dugin serves these two interconnected global projects – conservative revolution and the destruction of the world order as we know it – as an ideologue, educator, and political commentator. His books, lectures, and textbooks are, in essence, preparatory work for the formation of the revolutionary subject called upon to bring about these transformations. His sharp comments on social media help shape and fuel these processes (he is active on *Telegram*[12] and on *Twitter*[13]). These comments and notes are later published as his books (for example, Dugin 2015a).

Before turning to my concluding remarks, I would like to briefly examine the practical plan he proposes for Russia. This plan demonstrates the translation of religious logics into radical political projects.

"The Russian Field of Experiments": A Dive into the Archaic as a Political Program

For Russia Dugin longs for the dawn of the "magical age". His current diagnosis of the country is bleak: everything is wrong and out of place – its political institutions, its cities, even its philosophy (Dugin 2025a: 57-58). Dugin's theoretical analysis distinguishes between what he calls "kerygma" and "structure". Kerygma consists of surface institutions and forms of life shaped by reason. Structure comprises the underlying forces and elements, including myths, structures of the collective unconscious, the "archaic" etc. (Dugin 2025a: 16). Russia's problem, in his account, is that its kerygma, borrowed from the West, does not correspond to its structure. This is the condition of "archaeomodern": a modern kerygma conflicts with an archaic structure. Russian institutions do not correspond to the deep structures of Russian Dasein (he borrows this term from Martin Heidegger, see Dugin 2011: 171-229). This is why there is no happiness in Russia – Russia is an "unhappy society" (Dugin 2025a: 57).

Dugin's bleak diagnosis calls for a radical therapy: the existing kerygma must be uprooted. His plan entails the destruction of Russia in its present form and a search for radically different foundations. It is no coincidence that his social studies textbook bears the subtitle "For Citizens of New Russia" (Dugin 2007).

The search for "another beginning" involves, among other things, a plunge into the structures of the Russian collective unconscious. He literally proposes that we sacrifice reason for the sake of immersion in the archaic – that we go a little mad: "By choosing structure, we affirm <…> the supreme act of reason – its conscious self-sacrifice" (Dugin 2025a: 162).

The "conservative revolutionaries" called upon to bring transformations must immerse themselves in the realm of myth[14]:

> <…> we will need to make a difficult, fundamental gesture: to plunge, to dive into the realm of the archaic, to immerse ourselves in its deepest layers and discover *whether*

[12] https://t.me/Agdchan Aimed at Russian audience (in Russian).

[13] https://x.com/AGDugin Aimed at an international audience (in English).

[14] "In and out. 20-minute adventure," – as the heroes of *Rick and Morty* used to say. The phrase after which everything began to go wrong, and not where it was meant to.

> *our autonomous Russian archaic world contains the beginnings of a destiny that will draw us toward some as yet unclear goal – a Russian "telos"* (Dugin 2025a: 111).
>
> Perhaps *the realm of Russian myth is dark, but only from it can the Russian Logos emerge*. The prospect of overcoming archaeomodern lies in reaching the Russian Logos, breaking through to Russian truth, and entering into Russian destiny (Dugin 2025a: 113).

Dugin's willingness to undertake such dangerous experiments rests on the belief that, beneath the layers of myth and the archaic, one can reach the most fundamental level – that of Tradition, which he also calls the "Hyperborean layer" (on this aspect of Dugin's legacy, see Dugin 2008):

> The Hyperborean dream is probably truly universal, rather than unique to the Russian people. It is a shared dream whose structure coincides with the primordial Tradition (Dugin 2025a: 140).

Dugin does not actually know how the Paradise is to come about or what form it will take. It is supposed to emerge somehow, provided that the right sequence of revolutionary and radical actions is carried out. His plan of action looks like this:

> PLAN OF ACTION:
>
> • a descent into the national unconscious down to its deepest layers – without losing consciousness – that is, psychoanalysis of the Russian people;
>
> • the creation of a map of dreams, an atlas of Russian dreams;
>
> • the cataloging of the layers of the Russian structure and the demarcation of their boundaries;
>
> • developing rational kerygmatic models that reflect and accurately represent unconscious structures;
>
> • conducting ongoing experiments on oneself and others to test how a particular kerygmatic hypothesis affects these structures, while refining methodology and language;
>
> • surgical removal and isolation of the most pathogenic foci (elites) that actively hinder therapy;
>
> • the creation and institutionalization of Russian science, based on the ongoing filtering – through the lens of the Russian unconscious – of rational-kerygmatic models borrowed from the West, with their neutralization at the point of entry into Russian society;
>
> • a reassessment of historical knowledge about Russia, particularly in the humanities, from the perspective of Russian psychotherapy [recovery – *D.U.*] (the Slavophiles, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, the Eurasianists, the Silver Age, National Bolshevism), that is, the development of a new Russian episteme;
>
> • research into intellectual authors critical of the West (including Western ones), even the most marginal ones, and granting them the status of figures of global significance;
>
> • the seizure of power in Russia by the Russian people as they recover;
>
> • the dawn of the "magical age" (Dugin 2025a: 167-168).

This plan is not a joke. This is literally the quintessence of Dugin's voluminous works on Russia – *Archaeomodern* (Dugin 2024a), *Sociology of Russian Society* (Dugin 2024c), and so on. There is even an elaborated strategy for action – how to deal with fellow travelers, how to deal with the uninformed masses, and how to deal with

opponents (Dugin 2025a: 150–168). For example, Dugin advocates drawing on postmodernity's critical potential to destroy the values and ideals of modernity (for a more detailed account of the tripartite scheme Tradition, Modernity and Postmodernity, see Dugin 2024b). Through postmodern mockery, the foundations of modernity are undermined, this prepares the ground for the hoped-for conservative revolution. While everyone is laughing, the conservative revolutionaries will take the stage – and it will no longer be a laughing matter. Dugin illustrates this scenario by invoking the terrorist attack during a performance of the musical *Nord-Ost* in Moscow in October 2002:

> For example, "Nord-Ost" <…> a performance attended by a boisterous Moscow audience. Then Chechen terrorists appear, and at first people think it's part of the production. Only later do they realize with horror that something is wrong on stage, and a nightmarish, real-life tragedy unfolds.
>
> This is roughly what conservative revolutionaries imagine: let the postmodern farce run its course; let it erode certain paradigms – the ego, the superego, logos – let rhizomes, schizomasses, and fragmented consciousness take over; let nothing swallow up the entire content of the world – only then will secret doors open, and ancient, eternal ontological archetypes will rise to the surface and put a terrifying end to *the game* (Dugin 2024d: 96–97).

Taken in isolation, Dugin's plan for Russia looks like a cruel joke. Viewed in the context of his religious metaphysics, however, it is a logical extension of this metaphysics into political practice.

Concluding Remarks

Reflecting on Dugin, one author asked a pertinent question:

> either he's fundamentally in the business of engaging with the social world via genuinely philosophical reflection, or he's really in the business of ideological agitation (and wearing the mask of a philosopher because it facilitates his ideological rabble-rousing) (Beiner 2025: 226).

The answer is paradoxical – both. Alexander Dugin is a rare figure: a religious thinker who builds a comprehensive system spanning multiple disciplines and, at the same time, a practitioner – a politician of ideas who can shift registers and address different audiences without abandoning his core ideas. In this sense he is Marx and Lenin at once.

To return to the question of religion's influence on politics: Dugin's case is not one of the instrumentalization or "hijacking" of religion. In his worldview, politics, like everything else, derives from the spiritual realm. He thinks in myth and through myth. His perspective is reversed: metaphysical events are what is nearest to him, while empirical events are their reflections. For example, in *Politica Aeterna* (Dugin 2021) he states this very clearly: politics is neither autonomous nor reducible to the struggle for power or the management of society; every political system expresses an underlying ontology and metaphysics. In the Platonic orientation, political order is constructed from the top down – from the eternal, the Logos, and the Forms to an earthly society shaped by a transcendent model. In the modern materialist orientation, matter detaches itself from any higher principle and moves toward the autonomy. Dugin calls for the restoration of the Platonic perspective, in which the proper political order is the earthly expression of a transcendent order of being.

Dugin's analysis of current events follows from this perspective: he interprets individual events as parts of a larger metaphysical whole. This approach gives rise to interpretations of the war in Ukraine such as the following:

> The final battle of Rus' is only now beginning. Everything that came before was a preface, a historical prelude to the present moment. Only now is everything at stake. Not merely our fate – the fate of Spirit.
>
> The battle for Ukraine is not politics, nor even geopolitics. It is a sacred war, a war of the End of History. It is fought on all levels at once, but its essence is the final confrontation between the forces of light and darkness. Russians are the bearers of Christ, the Son of God, the Light. Their opponents are the devil's hordes.
>
> So many grand words have been spoken before that today it is difficult to believe that it has fallen to us to be the final chord of world history (Dugin 2015a).

Notably, these lines were written long before the war escalated into a full-scale conflict in 2022.

There are frequent attempts to categorize Dugin as belonging to something familiar – for example, fascism. In this sense, I agree with the general sentiment of *The Fourth Political Theory*: our tendency to pigeonhole everything into familiar, standard categories prevents us from seeing the new things emerging right before our eyes (Millerman 2023). Dugin represents something new; however, that does not mean it is something good or any less dangerous.

I do not view Dugin as a cynical ideologue. Dugin is a systematic thinker – or, at any rate, a lack of systematic structure or coherence is the least of the problems with his work. I view him as a fanatical religious figure whose experiences have led him to radical and dangerous ideas, to which Dugin is utterly devoted and which he is determined to put into practice. His different guises are strategic and tactical maneuvers designed to bring the cherished ideals to life. In this respect, I disagree with scholars who portray Dugin as someone who "exploits" metaphysical ideas for political purposes (Shekhovtsov 2008: 498). In my reading, the relationship runs in the opposite direction: his political projects derive from his metaphysical commitments.

Dugin's radical project calls for the destruction of everything in the name of something "radically different" (Dugin 2024a, p. 324) – something as yet unknown that might somehow emerge. This is a religious rejection of the existing world taken to its extreme. The reverse side of his commitment to the sacred Tradition is total nihilism: measured against that Tradition, nothing that now exists has any right to be preserved. This is coupled with a willingness to embark on the most reckless experiments at the collective level and a complete disregard for the individual human being. The individual has no place in this conceptual framework: Dugin thinks in terms of states, civilizations, continents, and epochs. He lacks the microscope through which a particular individual might even come into view.

The real problem with Dugin is not that he combines contradictory ideas or misinterprets Martin Heidegger or Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel – things he is often criticized for by professional philosophers. The real problem lies in the practical conclusions to which his thought and experience lead him. And in the energy and zeal with which he works to see these conclusions put into practice.

Dugin seeks to destroy everything that *is* in the belief that something ultimately good will emerge in its place. The practical problem with his thought can be summed up in this single proposition.

I'd like to conclude with one observation. During a recent interview Dugin was asked how his daughter's tragic death – in 2022 – had affected his thinking[15]. He answered this question with the utmost seriousness:

> My attitude to people changed. <…> in my theory, what was very important – and remains important now – is the people as a whole. So to say, everyone, but not a particular human being. That is, I believed that we must serve the people as a whole, that we must renounce ourselves, overcome ourselves. And with respect to myself – I have not changed this principle: "the individual is insignificant to me". But I am beginning to understand that the individual is insignificant to me only in my own case. I did not understand this before. Whereas other individuals – other persons – cannot be like that; they constitute worlds. And, of course, this has changed me very profoundly. Because I – to be honest – have realized how important the human being is. How important Dasha is, how important – the human being in general, the human being as such. And formally, everyone acknowledges this, but when something like this happens, you begin to understand – that a cosmos has perished. That is – a whole universe has been extinguished. That is – this cannot be reduced to anything; it cannot be reduced at all. It cannot be compensated for by anything; it cannot be balanced by anything. It is futile. Revenge – or retribution, or some kind of recompense – that is not what this is about at all. That is absolutely not what this is about. It is about the importance of the human being – the human being in general. Death has become personal to me – very personal – and very close, and very, very – well, you know – very acutely present – constantly. I see her [death] in everyone. And it's not that I feel pity for people. It simply seems to me that, in fact, each person is so, so important; they are so important for – for everything – for reality as a whole[16].

Indeed, this admission alone – that a particular human being is important – amounts to an almost complete revision of Dugin's philosophy, which is built on the denial of the individual in the name of the collective (or superhuman). It is precisely this complete disregard for the individual that makes his philosophy so profoundly anti-human.

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[15] His daughter, Darya Dugina, was killed by a bomb in a car in 2022.

[16] Interview with Ksenia Sobchak, 1:31:00, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PjsKOMUS7Q

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