

Zeteo's Rolling 14-year Plan

The work of *Zeteo's* editors, contributors, and designers is guided by a rolling fourteen-year plan, which is itself guided by the following five observances and observations:

1. Every year success is put off another year. It is always fourteen years in the future.
2. "Success" is not defined. As with pornography and the Supreme Court, we might well know it when we see it, and, indeed, in the course of any given year, there are moments when we feel successful. But this is, above all, a feeling, an intuition, and it is not converted into principles, beyond those articulated here.¹
3. We once knew a man, a teacher, who, having the summers off, used a great deal of this time, from early in the morning to early in the evening, to build an extravagant garden and orchard adjacent to his family's summer house. It may well have been about fourteen years that he worked on this, and he even, at some expense, had a second small house built adjacent to his garden and orchard, to increase the possibility of its enjoyment. All this work more or less complete, he decided to divorce his wife, and he never saw this land and its structures again. So much for success.
4. To date we have been resolutely non-commercial. We have a sense that this makes us seem strange, out of it; a "real" publication would attract and feature advertisers, fully embrace commerce, in several senses of this word (exchanging not only products and services, but also ideas). One of our great hopes is that alienation gives us a perspective on our times and its forces, a perspective that would otherwise be lost to us, and thus to our readers.
5. Zeteo-ites tend to be drawn to solitary activities—often enjoyably solitary activities such as reading, writing, and reflecting. And thus we have a great, if nuanced appreciation of the value of sociability—of face-to-face conversation and of community. Indeed, in one of our very first years, it dawned on us that sharing in the activity of producing *Zeteo*, and in the "conversation" (largely via e-mail) that goes along with the activity—herein might lie the greatest pleasure and the greatest value of the work.

February 2016

¹ Cf., Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*, chapter IX (as translated by Constance Garnett):

I agree that man is pre-eminently a creative animal, predestined to strive consciously for an object and to engage in engineering—that is, incessantly and eternally to make new roads, WHEREVER THEY MAY LEAD. But the reason why he wants sometimes to go off at a tangent may just be that he is PREDESTINED to make the road, and perhaps, too, that however stupid the "direct" practical man may be, the thought sometimes will occur to him that the road almost always does lead SOMEWHERE, and that the destination it leads to is less important than the process of making it, . . .