# GOD AND THE DEVIL ARE FIGHTING:

# THE SCANDAL OF EVIL IN DOSTOYEVSKY

# AND CAMUS

by

STEPHEN M. O'BRIEN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Comparative Literature in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York

2008

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Graduate Faculty in Comparative Literature in satisfaction of the
dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

GOD AND THE DEVIL ARE FIGHTING: THE SCANDAL OF EVIL IN DOSTOYEVSKY AND CAMUS

by

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By comparing the ways in which Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Albert Camus address the scandalous problem of evil, and by following an interdisciplinary approach adducing arguments based on Western philosophical and theological classics, this study highlights the novelists' exceptional bond. Although both view evil as a primordial issue and reject the solution proposed by the Catholic Church, their own answers clash. While Dostoyevsky accepts Russian Orthodoxy's teachings on God, the Incarnation, the Redemption, contrition, forgiveness, reparation, immortality, and the resurrection, Camus first embraces full-fledged absurdism and then atheistic humanism, and hence considers the human condition ultimately meaningless.

The dissertation's central contention is that each writer fails to ground his philosophical position on evil adequately. Because he largely neglects arguments from apologetics--arguments which this dissertation sketches--Dostoyevsky fails in his self-professed intention of refuting Ivan's atheistic discourse in the "Rebellion" chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoyevsky also destroys his own polemic against Catholicism in "The Grand Inquisitor" by undermining Russian Orthodoxy, since, like

Catholicism, it, too, incorporates miracle, mystery, and authority. Camus ignores apologetics and assumes the truth of atheism, thus begging the question.

The deficits in the authors' arguments are analyzed in chapters that consider the following topics: the foregrounding of the suffering and death of children, child molestation and capital punishment viewed as paradigmatic evils, mortality seen as a monumental evil, the tragedy of suicide, Ivan Karamazov's dictum "Everything is lawful," and the hypothesis of Camus's possible movement at the end of his life toward the Catholic Faith. Dostoyevsky's failure to sharpen Ivan's polemic is examined in the context of the Old Testament's child-killing passages. The Catholic concept of limbo is clarified in response to Camus's attack on it.

The evidence for additional hypotheses is discussed: that the intertext for Philippe's death in Camus's *La Peste* is Mikhailov's death in Dostoyevsky's *The House of the Dead*, that psychopathology supports a reading of Liza's breakdown in *The Brothers Karamazov* as the outcome of Ivan's having seduced or raped her, and that Dostoyevsky's recurrent theme of adult sexual attraction to minors may reflect his encounters with prostitutes who may have been underage.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my deep appreciation to everyone who assisted me in any way with the completion of this dissertation, but, before thanking anyone else, I wish to thank the director of this dissertation: Professor Elizabeth Klosty Beaujour, who is on the faculty of the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature at the Graduate Center of The City University of New York (CUNY). Professor Beaujour, who is also on the faculty of the Division of Russian and Slavic Studies at Hunter College and is chair of the Thomas Hunter Honors Program, specializes, among other topics, in the interaction of French and Russian literatures.

It was Professor Beaujour who suggested that I undertake some kind of comparison of the works of Dostoyevsky and those of Camus. For this immensely helpful recommendation, and for the guidance and encouragement that she provided to me despite the burden of her teaching and administrative responsibilities, I owe her a debt of profound gratitude.

I equally value the kind assistance and support that I received from my other official readers: Professor André Aciman, Executive Officer of the CUNY Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature; Professor Antoinette Blum, who is on the faculty of the CUNY Ph.D. Program in French; and Professor Emerita Anne Barbeau Gardiner, who was formerly on the faculty of the English Department at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

I also wish to express my deep appreciation to Professor William E. Coleman, formerly Executive Officer of the CUNY Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature. It

was in Professor Coleman's dissertation prospectus seminar that I laid the groundwork for this study with his advice and encouragement.

I am also deeply thankful to Professor Amy Mandelker of the CUNY Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature. I greatly regret that Professor Mandelker's leave of absence made it impossible for her to serve on my dissertation committee, but I am enormously grateful for the comments that she made in response to my draft.

I am extremely grateful to Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J., who is the Laurence J. McGinley Professor of Religion and Society at Fordham University, for being kind enough to take the time to send me a positive reaction to my treatments of limbo and capital punishment in a draft of this dissertation.

In addition, I greatly appreciate the assistance of Barbara Posposil, Assistant Program Officer in the CUNY Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature.

I am also extremely thankful for having had the exceptional privilege of benefiting from a wide range of assistance from many other persons, whose names I am taking the liberty of listing in alphabetical order: James M. Bell, Alla Chechelnitskaya, Emma Dron, Brenda Gauvin, Professor Mary Gennuso of New York City College of Technology, Scott Johnston, Professor Lawrence LaMarca of Nassau Community College, Richard Liamero, Professor James Likoudis, Curtis Matthew, Jean Myers, Rubén Obregón, Beth Posner, Allan Rogg, Professor Denis Scrandis of St. John's University, Nancy Seda, Joseph R. Seidman, Jr., Esq., Thomas Smith, Mary Stea, Raymond Tesi, and Ronald A. Wencer.

The members of my dissertation committee and the other persons named above do not necessarily agree with everything in this dissertation. This caveat is especially

appropriate for this reason: in addition to engaging in thematic analysis based on the texts, I propose conjectures which I believe to be strongly supported while remaining conjectures. Even though no one named above is necessarily committed to everything that I have written in this study, everyone named above is the recipient of my heartfelt gratitude.

To the memory of my nephew

Luke Francis Stephen McKeon

(August 8, 1978-January 30, 1999)

Тут она остановилась опять, стыдливо предчувствуя, что дрогнет и порвется опять ее голос . . . «Иисус говорит ей: воскреснет брат твой. Марфа сказала ему: знаю, что воскреснет в воскресение, в последний день. Иисус сказал ей: *Я есть воскресение и жизнь* [. . .]».

She stopped again, anticipating with shame that her voice would again begin to quiver and break. 'Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. 'Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 'Jesus said unto her, *I am the resurrection and the life* [. . .].'

--Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment* (pt. 4, ch. 4; Coulson translation)

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καὶ ὃς ἐὰν δέξηται ἓν παιδίον τοιοῦτο ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐμὲ δέχεται. Ὃς δ᾽ ἂν σκανδαλίσῃ ἕνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ, συμφέρει αὐτῷ ἵνα κρεμασθῇ μύλος ὀνικὸς περὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ καταποντισθῇ ἐν τῷ πελάγει τῆς θαλάσσης. οὐαὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἀπὸ τῶν σκανδάλων· ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τὰ σκάνδαλα, πλὴν οὐαὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ δι᾽ οὗ τὸ σκάνδαλον ἔρχεται.

And whoever welcomes one child like this one in my name welcomes me. And if anyone scandalizes one of these little ones who believe in me, it is better that a millstone be hung around that person's neck and that he or she be drowned in the open sea. Alas for the world because of scandals, for it is a necessity that scandals happen, but alas for that person through whom the scandal happens.

--*Mt* 18:5-7 (my translation)

# CHAPTER 1

## GOD AND THE DEVIL ARE FIGHTING: THE SCANDAL OF EVIL PAIRS DOSTOYEVSKY WITH CAMUS, OVERWHELMING BOTH NOVELISTS

So strong is the literary bond linking Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky and Albert Camus that Camus says that he would be *nothing* without the Russian nineteenth century.[1] One of the most powerful analytical lenses that can be applied to the unique kinship between these representatives of the Russia-France literary axis is the ancient, but ever topical, problem of evil--a philosophical conundrum so agonizing that it must be called a scandal.

The appropriateness of invoking this philosophical problem as the perspective for the present comparative study is rooted in the fact that, for both authors, evil is a towering issue. Indeed, in *A Kingdom Not of This World: A Quest for a Christian Ethic of Revolution with Reference to the Thought of Dostoyevsky, Berdyaev, and Camus*, Garrett Green goes so far as to say that this issue is "the primary motivating force behind their thought" (2). Camus, responding to an interviewer who had asked whether the substance

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[1] Camus says this in his unpublished June 9, 1958, letter to Boris Pasternak: "I, who should be nothing without the Russian 19th century, I find in you the Russia which has nourished and fortified me. [*Moi qui ne serais rien sans le 19ème siècle russe, je retrouve en vous la Russie qui m'a nourri et fortifié*]" (my translation). Myrna Magnan-Shardt obtained access to this letter and cites it in her Université de Provence dissertation entitled *L'Oeuvre romanesque de Camus et Dostoïevski: Étude d'influence stylistique et technique* [*The Novelistic Works of Camus and Dostoyevsky: Study of Stylistic and Technical Influence*] (2).

Why use the spelling "Dostoyevsky," since most English-speaking scholars of Russian literature prefer "Dostoevsky"? The more phonetic transliteration "Dostoyevsky" is supported by the stylebook of the *New York Times* (110). Nevertheless, except for widely known Russian names such as Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and St. Petersburg, the practice of this dissertation will be to transliterate Russian proper names according to the Library of Congress transliteration system (without diacritics). Moreover, in quotations of published translations, the translator's transliteration will be unaltered. It is because of the Library of Congress system that the name of one of the sons in *The Brothers Karamazov* will be "Alesha" rather than "Alyosha"--even though "Alesha" should be pronounced as "Alyosha." For the same reason, Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* will be "Raskol'nikov," and Nastasya Filippovna in *The Idiot* will be "Nastas'ia Filippovna."

of his outlook was not the refusal to temporize with evil, answered by saying: "The insuperable obstacle seems to me indeed to be the problem of evil" (*Essais* 380).[2] For these reasons, it is puzzling that previous dissertation writers seem to have dealt with my focus only tangentially by subsuming it under other questions: *Dissertation Abstracts* lists no title whose central objective is to compare the ways in which Dostoyevsky and Camus treat the problem of evil.[3] Prior researchers have thus neglected an unparalleled opening for interdisciplinary and metatextual research and reflection.

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[2] "*L'obstacle infranchissable me paraît être en effet le problème du mal*" (interview published by Émile Simon in *La Revue du Caire* [*Cairo Review*] in 1948; my translation).

My practice in this dissertation will be to provide an English translation in the body of the text and the original-language text in a footnote. Unless I state that I have provided my own translation, translations will be taken from published, standard editions widely available.

In the case of Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Crime and Punishment*, I almost always quote from the Norton Critical Editions.

All Russian quotations from Dostoyevsky will be taken from the predominant scholarly edition known as *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* [*Complete Collection of Works in Thirty Volumes*], edited by V. G. Bazanov (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972-90). This edition will be cited as *PSS*. For the convenience of those who consult English translations of Dostoyevsky, references to his novels in this Russian edition will be followed, after a semi-colon, by part and chapter numbers. For *The Brothers Karamazov*, book numbers will also be cited.

Most French quotations of Camus (his *Carnets* [*Notebooks*] are exceptions) come from the Pléiade edition edited by Roger Quilliot and Louis Faucon and published by Gallimard in Paris; the two Pléiade volumes are entitled, respectively, *Théâtre, récits, nouvelles* [*Theatre, Novels, Short Stories*], published in 1962, and *Essais* [*Essays*], published in 1965.

If I provide my own translation for a quotation from Dostoyevsky or Camus, I may still cite the page number of a standard translation for the convenience of the reader.

Original-language quotations in French and Latin will be in italics to guide the eye of the reader away from these quotations should he or she not wish to read the version in the original language.

In the age of the Internet, students of Dostoyevsky should be aware of the following indispensable Web site, which makes available online versions of Dostoyevsky's works in Russian: Интернет-библиотека Алексея Комрова [*Internet-Library of Aleksei Komrov*]. Its URL is http://www.ilibrary.ru/author/dostoevski/index.html.

[3] To the best of my knowledge, the English-language dissertation that most closely approximates the goal of my dissertation is Gweneth Boge Schwab's *Theological Implications of Suffering Children in Teaching Four Novels by Dostoevsky, Camus, Golding, Greene*, which was completed at Illinois State University.

**Two Classic Texts on Evil**

Each of these two authors produced a text that can be called a *locus classicus* for the literary presentation of the problem of evil. For the Russian novelist, this text is the "Rebellion" chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov* (217-27),[4] the book that Sigmund Freud, writing about "Dostoevsky and Parricide," calls "the most magnificent novel ever written" (87). In this chapter, Ivan Karamazov defiantly rebels against the Christian account of the human condition, basing his impassioned revolt against God's goodness and providence on what he considers unanswerable outrages: the suffering and death that human malice inflicts on innocent, helpless children. In Camus, this major text on evil is the horrific, prolonged death agony of Judge Othon's young son, Philippe, in *La Peste*, which has been translated into English as *The Plague* (211-19).[5]

What welds the bond between these novelists even more strongly is the fact that Camus, in the "Rejection of Salvation" chapter of the first of his two long philosophical essays, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* [*The Myth of Sisyphus*], undertakes an extended exegesis of Ivan Karamazov's unsparing attack on faith. Note, too, that the very title of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* may have its genesis in Dostoyevsky's *The House of the Dead*. In the latter

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[4] *PSS* 14: 215-24; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4.

I ask the reader to note the format of my documentation of this segment from *The Brothers Karamazov*: it provides the model for all future citations from Dostoyevsky's works. The place indicators should be understood in the following manner: pages 217-27 in the Garnett-Matlaw English translation in the Norton Critical Edition of *The Brothers Karamazov*; volume 14, pages 215-24, in the Russian text of *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (*PSS*); and part 2, book 5, chapter 4, in any English translation of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

[5] *Théâtre* 1391-98.

This dissertation will follow the somewhat illogical, but widespread and understandable, convention of always referring to Dostoyevsky's works by their English titles, while often referring to Camus's works by their French titles. Note this: to avoid confusion, page citations and quotations of English translations of Camus's texts will refer to the English title. Accordingly, in the sentence to which this footnote is attached, the page numbers refer to Stuart Gilbert's English translation of *La Peste*, i.e., to *The Plague*.

work, an account of Dostoyevsky's Siberian imprisonment told through a putatively fictional narrator, the narrator speaks of what would happen if a convict, like the Greek mythological figure Sisyphus, were punished by being forced to do utterly meaningless repetitive work:

> But if, let us say, he were forced to pour water from one tub into another and back again, time after time, to pound sand, to carry a heap of soil from one spot to another and back again--I think that such a convict would hang himself within a few days or commit a thousand offences in order to die, to escape from such degradation, shame and torment. (43)[6]

Moreover, Camus highlights, also in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, the grotesque character Kirillov from Dostoyevsky's *The Devils*, and the French author associates himself even more directly with his Russian counterpart by writing a theatrical adaptation of *The Devils*, the French title of this 1959 play being *Les Possédés* [*The Possessed*].[7] It is on this Dostoyevskian text that Camus confers a singular encomium in his April 1959 statement entitled "Prière d'insérer" ["Insert"]: "*The Possessed* is one of the four or five works that I place above all others. For more than one reason, I can say that I have been

---

[6] "Но если б заставить его, например, переливать воду из одного ушата в другой, а из другого в первый, толочь песок, перетаскивать кучу земли с одного места на другое и обратно,--я думаю, арестант удавился бы через несколько дней или наделал бы тысячу преступлений, чтоб хоть умереть, да выйти из такого унижения, стыда и муки" (*PSS* 4: 20; pt. 1, ch. 2).

This passage shows that Camus may have read *The House of the Dead*--a point that will be crucial to a textual parallel that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Dostoyevsky biographer Joseph Frank quotes (*Dostoevsky: The Years of Ordeal, 1850-1859* 159 [footnote]) from an eyewitness account (by Eugene Heimler in *Mental Illness and Social Work*) in which prisoners in a German concentration camp were sadistically ordered to move sand back and forth between the two ends of a factory. Some prisoners broke down mentally and were shot while trying to escape, and some died by running into the electrified fence.

[7] The correct translation of the title of this novel is *The Devils*, but the title *The Possessed* has received wide currency because of Constance Garnett's decision to use this title for her translation. Camus uses the French equivalent of Garnett's title.

nourished by it and that I have been formed by it" (*Théâtre* 1886).[8] This enthusiastic commendation illuminates the exceptional nature of Camus's *rapport* with Dostoyevsky. It is especially fitting that an urgent performance of *Les Possédés* was presented at the Théâtre de Tourcoing on the evening of Camus's death; this is reported by Ray Davison in *Camus: The Challenge of Dostoevsky* (5).

There are additional links between our two authors. The title of Camus's second long philosophical essay--*L'Homme révolté* [*The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*]--may have come directly from the title of the "Rebellion" chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*. In any case, the title of *L'Homme révolté* shows that Camus, even at the time of its publication (the year 1951), is still, at least to some extent, a proponent of the philosophy of the absurd.[9] Furthermore, a work of Camus's maturity, *La Chute* [*The Fall*], is permeated with both the atmosphere and the concerns of Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground***,** both texts being idiosyncratic works in the genre of a confessional monologue.

But the Dostoyevskian inspiration in Camus's *La Chute* must not be understood to be limited to *Notes from Underground*. As Eva Beránková points out in her Sorbonne doctoral dissertation entitled *La Face cachée, dostoïevskienne d'Albert Camus* [*The Hidden, Dostoyevskian Face of Albert Camus*], the pivotal incident of *La Chute* mirrors a

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[8] "Les Possédés *sont une des quatre ou cinq oeuvres que je mets au-dessus de toutes les autres. À plus d'un titre, je peux dire que je m'en suis nourri et que je m'y suis formé*" (my translation).

[9] The differences between Camus's absurdism and Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism will be discussed in chapter 4. For the time being, however, it should be pointed out that Alesha in *The Brothers Karamazov* invokes the concept of the absurd. In the midst of his brother Ivan's exposition of the nihilism of the Grand Inquisitor, Alesha exclaims: "But . . . that's absurd! [--Но . . . это нелепость!] (241; *PSS* 14: 237; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5)." It is ironic that Alesha, Dostoyevsky's exponent of the theistic worldview of the Russian Orthodox Church, may have given Camus the name for the latter's atheistic philosophy.

climactic moment in the original text of *The Devils* (425-26):[10] just as Stavrogin fails to prevent the suicide of the eleven-year-old Matresha in St. Petersburg, so, too, Clamence culpably fails to try to prevent the suicide of the "slim young woman" (*Fall* 70)[11] who jumps from the Pont Royal in Paris. Of this woman, Clamence says: "The back of her neck, cool and damp between her dark hair and coat collar, stirred me" (*Fall* 70).[12] In both cases, then, a sexually predatory male is implicated in the death or possible death of a young female to whom he is attracted (Beránková 178-80). This Dostoyevskian echo, which, to the best of my knowledge, Beránková is the first to identify, is a significant tie between Dostoyevsky and Camus.

Another Dostoyevskian motif to be found in Camus is Raskol'nikov's disturbing dream, in the epilogue of *Crime and Punishment*, about a future worldwide pandemic (461-62).[13] There should be no doubt that this nightmare helped provide the premise for Camus's second published novel, *La Peste*. Although the plague in Camus's novel is restricted to one city--the Algerian coastal city of Oran--the author presents the catastrophe as having philosophical implications that affect all human beings. In this sense, Camus's plague is also worldwide.

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[10] *PSS* 11: 19; pt. 2, ch. 9, sect. 2, in Andrew MacAndrew's Signet Classic translation reprinted in 1991 under the title *The Possessed*.

[11] "*mince jeune femme*" (*Théâtre* 1511).

[12] "*Entre les cheveux sombres et le col du manteau, on voyait seulement une nuque, fraîche et mouillée, à laquelle je fus sensible*" (*Théâtre* 1511).

[13] *PSS* 6: 419-20; epilogue, ch. 2.

**Faith Versus Unbelief**

However close the relationship between Dostoyevsky and Camus, both authors resolutely diverge--better, flatly contradict each other--in the responses that they give to the problem of evil. Dostoyevsky, who died in St. Petersburg on January 28, 1881, after having received the sacraments from a priest of the Russian Orthodox Church,[14] offers as his solution the following Christian doctrines: the existence of the Triune God, the Incarnation, the Redemption of the human race by Christ's death on the Cross, man's participation in Christ's sufferings through accepting his own sufferings as an act of contrition and reparation for forgiven sin, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the human person in body and soul at the end of time, and--to cite a key passage in *The Brothers Karamazov*--the moral imperative of the "experience of active love" (48).[15] In his Christian response to the problem of evil, the dogma of the Incarnation is fundamental for Dostoyevsky, who declares in the notebooks for *The Devils*: "It isn't Christ's morality, or his teaching, that will save the world, but faith, and nothing else, faith in the

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[14] Frank notes Dostoyevsky's death in communion with the Russian Orthodox Church (*Dostoevsky: The Mantle of the Prophet, 1871-1881* 745). We know this fact from Dostoyevsky's very last published letter, which he dictated to his second wife on the day of his death (Frank and Goldstein 515 [footnote]). In this letter, addressed to Elizaveta Geiden, Dostoyevsky dictated to his wife Anna that "[b]y 12:15 A.M. Fyod[or] Mikh[ailovich] was fully convinced that he was dying; he confessed and took communion. [С ¼ <часа> Фед<ор> Мих<айлович> был в полном убеждении, что умрет; его исповедовали и причастили]" (Frank and Goldstein 515; *PSS* 30, pt. 1: 242-43).

Dostoyevsky's letters will generally be quoted in English from *Selected Letters of Fyodor Dostoyevsky*, edited by Joseph Frank and David I. Goldstein and translated by Andrew R. MacAndrew; consequently, they will be cited as being found in "Frank and Goldstein." This English translation is more widely available than that of David A. Lowe and Ronald Meyer; however, the Lowe and Meyer translation will be used for letters that Frank and Goldstein do not include. Dostoyevsky's letters will also be quoted in Russian from the same edition used for Russian quotations from Dostoyevsky's literary works: *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (*PSS*).

With respect to dates of Dostoyevsky's letters and to dates relating to him in general, including the date of his death, the following should be noted: except for dates relating to his visits outside Russia, all dates relating to Dostoyevsky in this dissertation will be based on Russia's pre-Soviet Julian calendar, which, in the nineteenth century, was twelve days behind our Gregorian calendar (Frank and Goldstein xx). This is the reason why some of Dostoyevsky's letters are identified with two dates.

[15] "--Опытом деятельной любви" (*PSS* 14: 52; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 4).

fact that the word was made flesh" (252-53).[16] Dostoyevsky presents the Incarnation and all those other Christian teachings from the perspective of Russian Orthodoxy, which he believes to be the religion revealed by Christ, thus contesting the rival claim of Catholicism to be the only true religion. In contrast, Camus, while agreeing with Dostoyevsky in rejecting Catholicism (at least in Camus's published works), attempts to deal with the scandal of evil by adopting an atheistic stance that can be described as absurdism, though it is heavily tinctured with both the Epicureanism and the Stoicism of the Greco-Roman world.[17]

Still, from the time of his participation in the French Resistance, and especially from the time of the publication of *L'Homme révolté*, Camus more or less--but never totally--withdraws from absurdism in favor of an atheistic humanism that finds vigorous expression in a burning artistic and political commitment.[18] To complicate matters even further, there are intriguing indications that Camus, before his early death in an automobile crash in the French town of Villeblevin on January 4, 1960, may have been edging toward the Catholicism that Dostoyevsky abhorred and assailed as the instrument of the Antichrist, to cite Prince Myshkin's heated accusation in Dostoyevsky's novel *The*

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[16] "Не мораль Христова, не учение Христа спасет мир, а именно вера в то, что слово плоть бысть [sic]" (*PSS* 11: 187-88).

I am taking this quotation from Edward Wasiolek's edition of *The Notebooks for* The Possessed. These words are ascribed to the "Prince." Dostoyevsky may have capitalized слово (*slovo* or "the Word").

[17] I agree with James Wood's statement in an article entitled "The Sickness Unto Life: Camus and Twentieth-Century Clarity": "The absurd spirit might be said to be tragic stoicism [. . .]" (94).

[18] I use the term "atheistic humanism" in the same sense in which Henri de Lubac understands it in his study entitled *Le Drame de l'humanisme athée* [*The Drama of Atheist Humanism*].

A reader thoroughly conversant with Camus's career may object: "But did not Camus deny that he was an atheist?" Yes, but that is not the end of the matter. I ask such a reader to exercise patience until I address this issue at length in chapter 6.

*Idiot* (525-31).[19] Camus's possible gravitation toward the Catholic Faith will be discussed in chapter 7.

**Rationale for the Dissertation's Title**

Let us now consider the rationale for the title of this dissertation: *God and the Devil Are Fighting: The Scandal of Evil in Dostoyevsky and Camus*. First, the quotation that forms the initial part of the title is a statement that Dmitrii Karamazov makes to his half brother Alesha during a conversation in the green gazebo early in *The Brothers Karamazov*:

> God and the devil are fighting there and the battlefield is the heart of man. (97)[20]

Every reader with a thorough knowledge of Dostoyevsky's works knows that a devil makes a cameo appearance in *The Brothers Karamazov* (601-17).[21] But less widely

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[19] *PSS* 8: 449-53; pt. 4. ch. 7.

[20] "Тут дьявол с богом [sic] борется, а поле битвы--сердца людей" (*PSS* 14: 100; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3).

For ideological reasons, the atheistic régime in power in the Soviet Union at the time of the publication of the 1972-90 edition of Dostoyevsky's complete works insisted that the word *Бог* (*Bog* or "God") be spelled with a lower-case *б* ("b"). This dissertation will not follow this Soviet communist practice (even though it is increasingly creeping into the English language). Every time the Soviet text uses the lower-case *б*, this solecism will be flagged with a "[sic]." In this respect, I am following Camus, who uses a lower-case *d* for the word *Dieu* ("God") only in reference to a merely putative "god," while capitalizing the word when he uses it to refer to the God of Christianity. See, for example, the following sentence in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*: "If God does not exist, Kirilov is god. [*Si Dieu n'existe pas, Kirilov est dieu*]" (*Myth* 106; *Essais* 183).

[21] *PSS* 15: 69-85; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 9.

I am not capitalizing the word naming Ivan's nocturnal visitor for this reason: Ivan later tells Alesha that this interlocutor was "a simple devil and not Satan, with scorched wings, in thunder and lightning [просто черт, а не сатана с опаленными крыльями, в громе и блеске]" (619; *PSS* 15: 86; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 10). Both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church believe in the existence of many fallen, evil angels, the leader of whom is Satan or *the* Devil. See Russian Orthodox Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev's treatment of this issue in *The Mystery of Faith* (46-49), and sections 391-95 and 414 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Of course, in Christian theology, every demon acts on behalf of Satan.

In what sense does the devil appear to Ivan Karamazov? Are we to think that the devil appears in his own person, or merely in a hallucination or nightmare, as a symbol for Ivan's guilty conscience or

known is the fact that Camus himself, though writing in a secularized atmosphere, does not hesitate to mention the leader of all the demons. In *L'Homme révolté*, he directly associates evil with Satan:

> Bakunin also gives a glimpse of the broader implications of an apparently political rebellion: "Evil is satanic rebellion against divine authority, a rebellion in which we see, nevertheless, the fruitful seed of every form of human emancipation." Like the Fraticelli of fourteenth-century Bohemia, revolutionary socialists today use this phrase as a password: "In the name of him to whom a great wrong has been done." (*Rebel* 158)[22]

One may ask: "Are not Dmitrii Karamazov's memorable words about the battleground on which God and Satan fight for the human soul more relevant to man's struggle against disordered sensuality than they are pertinent to the existence of evil *per*

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tormented subconscious? The title of the chapter is "The Devil. Ivan Fyodorovich's nightmare [Черт. Кошмар Ивана Федоровича]," but this cannot be dispositive for our question. In favor of a mere hallucination or nightmare is the fact that the glass that Ivan throws at the devil is still on the table at the end of the episode. In favor of the demon's reality is Ivan's realization that it is Alesha who is knocking on the window at the end of the chapter, and that Alesha is going to deliver some surprising news. This is the news that Smerdiakov hanged himself an hour before (617; *PSS* 15: 84-85; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 9). Unless the devil has previously divulged this information to Ivan, how does Ivan know that it is Alesha who is knocking, and that he has surprising news?

It seems that what we have here is deliberate authorial ambiguity--a concept which I shall invoke at another point in this dissertation when dealing with Ivan. True, Dostoyevsky writes that he obtained information from doctors on hallucinations and nightmares (August 10, 1880, letter to N. A. Liubimov; Frank and Goldstein 508; *PSS* 30, pt. 1: 205), but no one who believes in the existence of Satan and the other devils can deny them the ability to manifest themselves through hallucinations and nightmares.

It is interesting that Joyce Carol Oates, in a chapter entitled "Tragic and Comic Visions in *The Brothers Karamazov*," says of the devil that he "may or may not be Ivan's hallucination" (90). She also states: "That Ivan is driven mad is no necessary indication that his experience has been illusory; on the contrary, madness is often a sign in literature that the truth has blasted away all normality" (111).

[22] "*Bakounine laisse apercevoir aussi toute la profondeur d'une révolte apparemment politique. «Le Mal, c'est la révolte satanique contre l'autorité divine, révolte dans laquelle nous voyons au contraire le germe fécond de toutes les émancipations humaines[»]. Comme les Fraticelli de la Bohème au XIV^e^ siècle (?) [sic], les socialistes révolutionnaires se reconnaissent aujourd'hui par ces mots: «Au nom de celui à qui on a fait un grand tort»*" (*Essais* 564).

From Anthony Bower's translation, it appears that the Pléiade text of the above quotation omits a French-style quotation mark after "*émancipations humaines*." I have supplied this quotation mark in brackets. The question mark within parentheses after "*au XIV^e^ siècle*" occurs in the Pléiade text.

*se*?" Yes, the context justifies this observation. Shortly before the quotation that appears in the title of this dissertation, Dmitrii asks Alesha: "Is there beauty in Sodom? Believe me, that for the immense mass of mankind beauty is found in Sodom. Did you know that secret?" (97).[23] Nonetheless, from Dostoyevsky's Christian standpoint, the fight against the unruly hedonistic impulses of the human heart is, beyond its own importance, also an emblem of the entire philosophical issue of evil, for there would be no such war and no such field of battle if overall evil were not a monumental category of the human condition. In this sense, what Dmitrii declares to Alesha in one of the great sentences of Russian literature is an echo of what Plato wrote more than twenty-three centuries ago: "[. . .] to conquer oneself is, of all the victories, the first and the greatest [. . .]." (*Laws* 626E).[24] The aphorisms of both the Russian novelist and the Greek philosopher adumbrate the concept of original sin--a concept which will be discussed in chapter 6 to shed additional light on the scandal of evil.

It is especially appropriate that the title of this dissertation incorporates the concept of fighting, for Camus was a boxing fan. According to Herbert R. Lottman, writing in *Albert Camus: A Biography*, it was said that Camus would have preferred to be a "fighter" like his tough-guy Algerian buddy Pierre Galindo, "instead of a the pallid young man he was, who seldom stood sufficiently erect to show his true height" (185). In *L'Été* [*Summer*], it is to Galindo that Camus dedicates "Le Minotaure ou la halte d'Oran" ["The Minotaur, or Stopping in Oran"], in which he describes his attendance--

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[23] "В содоме [sic] ли красота? Верь, что в содоме-то [sic] она и сидит для огромного большинства людей,--знал ты эту тайну иль нет?" (*PSS* 14: 100; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3).

[24] "[. . .] τὸ νικᾷ̓ν [sic] ἀυτὸν ἀυτὸν πασῶν νικῶν πρώτη τε καὶ ἀρίστη [. . .]" (Loeb *Laws* 1: 8, 10; my translation).

Note that νικᾷ̓ν is an error for νικᾶν.

maybe in Galindo's company--at a boxing card in which the main bout is between a champion from the French navy and a hometown fighter (*Lyrical and Critical Essays* 118-23).[25] In his vivid narration, Camus connects pugilism to both the problem of evil and his interest in Catholicism, which he regards as a major opponent of his unbelieving worldview. He does not hesitate to compare the pumped-up, shouting fight fans to worshippers who receive Holy Communion, not at a Communion rail in front of the altar in a church, but around the roped-off boxing ring, and not from the hands of Christ's priest, but from the fists of the solitary gods Strength and Violence. Unlike the Catholic God, who makes Jesus's suffering and death on the Cross sacramentally present in the Mass, the martial gods Strength and Violence distribute their numinous presence and their miracles in punches. The whole passage deserves to be quoted as an example of Camus's fascination with Catholicism:

> The cohort of the faithful is now nothing more than a bunch of black and white shadows disappearing into the night. Strength and violence are lonely gods; they do not serve memory. They simply scatter their miraculous fistfuls in the present. They correspond to these people without a past who celebrate their communions around the boxing ring. (*Lyrical* 123)[26]

In the light of the above passage, it is no surprise that Camus has the lawyer Clamence say in *La Chute*: "I had dreamed--this was now clear--of being a complete man

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[25] *Essais* 820-24.

[26] "*La cohorte des fidèles n'est plus qu'une assemblée d'ombres noires et blanches qui disparaît dans la nuit. C'est que la force et la violence sont des dieux solitaires. Ils ne donnent rien au souvenir. Ils distribuent, au contraire, leurs miracles à pleines poignées dans le présent. Ils sont à la mesure de ce peuple sans passé qui célèbre ses communions autour des rings*" (*Essais* 824).

who managed to make himself respected in his person as well as in his profession. Half Cerdan, half de Gaulle, if you will" (*Fall* 54).[27] Readers unaware of boxing history may not know that fighter Marcel Cerdan, a *pied-noir* (someone of French descent but born in Algeria), was known as *le Bombardier Marocain* ("the Moroccan Bomber") and was the middleweight champion of the world from September 21, 1948, when he took the title from Tony Zale in Jersey City, to June 16, 1949, when he lost the championship to Jake LaMotta in Detroit. Cerdan's record was 119-4-0, with 61 K.O.'s.[28] Given these facts, every boxing enthusiast among proud Frenchmen and *pieds-noirs* must have adored Cerdan. The Moroccan Bomber had put France and Algeria on the map in the world of prizefighting. These points of pugilistic history are not utterly digressive, for they help show that Clamence's self-identification with Cerdan rebuts any claim that Clamence was not objectively guilty of the morally evil act of failing to *try* to save the life of the woman who jumped from the Pont Royal--but this issue, highly pertinent to the scope of this dissertation, will be addressed in greater detail in chapters 4 and 6.

In his controversy with Sartre and other French intellectuals who had attacked *L'Homme révolté*, an angry and frustrated Camus goes further than merely identifying Clamence--and, I maintain, himself--with Cerdan. Alluding to the street fights of the tough working class neighborhood of his youth, he tells Robert Jaussaud in a letter dated September 12, 1952: "I feel incapable of replying. What am I to do? Our Algerian method of dealing with such matters would be considered quite inappropriate here. And

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[27] "*J'avais rêvé, cela était clair maintenant, d'être un homme complet, qui se serait fait respecter dans sa personne comme dans son métier. Moitié Cerdan, moitié de Gaulle, si vous voulez*" (*Théâtre* 1503).

[28] Information on Cerdan can be found on *Site officiel Marcel Cerdan* [*Official Site of Marcel Cerdan*], which is maintained by the fighter's grandson, Nicolas Cerdan, at the following URL: http://www.marcelcerdan.com/Edito.aspx.

anyway with these pansies . . ." This is quoted in Patrick McCarthy's fascinating biography, entitled *Camus* (258-59).[29] Olivier Todd's equally fascinating biography, entitled *Albert Camus: Une Vie* [*Albert Camus: A Life*], reports that Camus, referring specifically to Sartre, tells Jeanne Terracini: "What do you want me to do? Go smash his mug in? He's too small!" (574).[30] We know from Camus's unfinished novel *Le Premier Homme* [*The First Man*] that "our Algerian method" was called in Algerian French a *donnade*, i.e., a fistfight: "A *donnade* was just a duel, with the fist taking the place of the sword, but obeying the same ceremonial rules, at least in spirit" (*The First Man* 153).[31] The title of this dissertation refers to a *donnade* between God and the Devil--one that takes place, not in the street or a vacant lot, but in man's heart.

But to return to the Oran fight card, Camus, somewhat amusingly, drags the problem of evil even into the boxing ring: "In this atmosphere, the announcement of a draw is badly received. It runs contrary to what, in the crowd, is an utterly Manichaean vision: there is good and evil, the winner and the loser" (*Lyrical* 123).[32] During this

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[29] McCarthy does not give the French for this outburst. I wonder what word Camus used for "pansies." Was it *poule mouillée* ("sissy"), or was it a stronger slang term, one referring to homosexuality, such as *pédé* or *tante*? Regardless of how rough Camus got in casting aspersions on the masculinity of his critics, the English word "pansy" does not necessarily have a sexual connotation, as dictionaries will confirm.

That Camus assailed the manhood of his opponents is not surprising given his comment on what he regards as Galileo Galilei's cowardice before the ecclesiastical authorities: "[. . .] from the point of view of virile behavior, this scholar's fragility may well make us smile. [ [. . .] *du point de vue de la conduite virile, la fragilité de ce savant peut prêter à sourire*]" (*Myth* 3; *Essais* 99, 1430-31 [endnote 4]). The comment on "virile behavior" occurs only as a variant in the Pléiade edition, which notes that it appeared in the editions published in 1942, 1948, and 1957, but is omitted from the one published in April 1962.

[30] "*Que veux-tu que je fasse? Que j'aille lui casser la gueule? Il est trop petit!* " (my translation).

[31] "*Les donnades étaient simplement des duels, où le poing remplaçait l'épée, mais qui obéissaient à un cérémonial identique, dans son esprit au moins*" (*Le Premier Homme* 144).

[32] "*Dans cette atmosphère, le match nul est mal accueilli. Il contrarie dans le public, en effet, une sensibilité toute manichéenne. Il y a le bien et le mal, le vainqueur et le vaincu*" (*Essais* 823-24).

Manichaeanism, which arose in third-century Persia, attempted to resolve the problem of evil with a dualism that ascribes all evil to an ultimate and eternal evil principle. John A. Hardon's *Modern Catholic Dictionary* has a concise explanation of this system: "[. . .] there are two ultimate sources of creation, the

dissertation's discussion of Camus's reaction to the scandal of evil, it will become increasingly clear that our philosophical boxing enthusiast, like the rowdy fans who end up slugging each other because they object to a draw, wants to join them in mixing it up: he wants to fight with the Catholic Church over the meaning of human existence and over the solution to the problem of evil. Hence, it is not surprising that he chooses images that evoke Catholicism. In his affinity for boxing, Camus is also hinting at the portrait of Camusian man: not only does a follower of the philosophy of absurdism man up to evil mute and alone, but he also does so with clenched fists and from a boxer's crouch.

Camus's boxing scene, it should be noted, has a Greco-Roman as well as a Catholic resonance: it stands firmly in the ancient tradition of literary descriptions of pugilism. The Greco-Roman precedents are the matches between Epeius and Euryalus in Homer's *Iliad* (bk. 23, lines 653-99)[33] and between Dares and Entellus in Vergil's *Aeneid* (bk. 5, lines 362-484),[34] and also the lesser known match between King Amycus of the Bebrycians and Polydeuces in Apollonius's *Argonautica* (bk. 2, lines 1-97).[35] The Amycus-Polydeuces bout is also covered in Valerius Flaccus's epic poem *Argonautica* (bk. 4, lines 99-343),[36] in which the issue of evil is brought graphically to the fore in a boxing context owing to the depiction of King Amycus as a pugilist who is also a

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one good and the other evil. God is the creator of all that is good, and Satan of all that is evil. Man's spirit is from God, his body is from the devil" (331). St. Augustine had been a Manichaean before he became a Catholic.

[33] Loeb 2: 542-47.

[34] Loeb 1: 470-77.

[35] Loeb 102-09.

[36] Loeb 192-211.

homicidal monster. If strangers arriving in his kingdom refuse Amycus's demand that they box with him, the king kills them.

**Scandal**

As for the notion of "scandal," one reason for using this term in the title of my dissertation is Camus's description of the reaction of Dr. Rieux and Tarrou to the excruciating suffering of the dying child in *La Peste*:

> And, to be sure, the suffering inflicted on these innocents had never stopped appearing to them as what it was in fact: a scandal. (*Théâtre* 1394)[37]

In *L'Homme révolté*, however, Camus goes much further, declaring that, for the rebel pursuing a metaphysical revolt, God himself is the "supreme scandal":

> The metaphysical rebel, then, is not assuredly atheistic, as one might believe, but he is by necessity blasphemous. He is simply blasphemous, first of all, in the name of order, denouncing in God the father of death and the supreme scandal. (*Essais* 436)[38]

In *L'Homme révolté*, Camus also uses the word "scandal" in the introduction, where he says of man's revolt: "It cries, it demands, it wills that the scandal cease [. . .]" (*Essais*

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[37] "*Et, bien entendu, la douleur infligée à ces innocents n'avait jamais cessé de leur paraître ce qu'elle était en vérité, c'est-à-dire un scandale*" (*Plague* 214; my translation).

I have translated this passage myself because Stuart Gilbert detracts from the force of the original by translating *scandale* as "an abominable thing." A translator should not hesitate to use a cognate when it is the best word for the context. For the same reason, I have also provided my own translations for the next two quotations from Camus.

[38] "*Le révolté métaphysique n'est donc pas sûrement athée, comme on pourrait le croire, mais il est forcément blasphémateur. Simplement, il blasphème d'abord au nom de l'ordre, dénonçant en Dieu le père de la mort et le suprême scandale*" (*Rebel* 24; my translation).

419).[39] The context makes clear that the scandal to which Camus adverts in the last of these three passages is the supreme injustice of a world in which man is harrowed by the evil of death.

The phrase "scandal of Evil" is used by Jean Onimus in *Albert Camus and Christianity* (52). It also reflects a subheading in section 309 of the 1992 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "Providence and the scandal of evil."[40] One may wonder whether the drafters of the new catechism, in a reaction against the atheistic humanism of which Camus is a major representative, derived this phrase at least partly from the Camusian passages quoted above.

In any case, to return to the other novelist with whom we are dealing, scandal is a category especially relevant to Dostoyevsky in view of his passion for bizarre, hyperdramatic scenes involving large groups of characters who, during the scenes, witness the occurrence of something shocking and scandalizing. All four of Dostoyevsky's major novels--*Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Devils*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*--have such scenes, perhaps the most spectacular of them occurring

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[39] "*Elle crie, elle exige, elle veut que le scandale cesse [. . .]*" (*Rebel* 10; my translation).

[40] "*La providence et le scandale du mal.*"

Quotations from the original text of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* will be in French rather than Latin because French was the language in which it was drafted, as George Weigel points out in *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (661). To comply with customary usage for such documents, only the number of the catechism section, not a page number, will be cited. Further, despite their great importance for those who study the catechism, I shall omit footnotes from these quotations; these footnotes are easily available online in both French and English.

The fact that the new catechism's drafting language was French reflects the special regard in which the Catholic Church holds France and her culture. This regard should be borne in mind later in this dissertation when I speculate concerning whether certain statements made by the Church in modern times are direct reactions to Camus, Sartre, and other representatives of French thought. Concerning one reaction, however, there is absolute certitude: Pope Pius XII rejects existentialism in the 1950 encyclical *Humani generis* (section 6).

during Nastas'ia Filippovna's unique name day[41] party in *The Idiot*. The culmination of this wild gathering is the moment when Nastas'ia throws Rogozhin's bribe of one hundred thousand paper rubles into her fireplace to show her contempt for his desire to buy her favors. This irrational, but electrifying, object lesson is combined with three other shocks: her abrupt announcement that she is refusing to fulfill her commitment to marry Gania, Prince Myshkin's counterproposal that Nastas'ia marry *him* instead (although Myshkin has only met her for the first time that very day!), and Nastas'ia's leaving her guests to run off in troikas with Rogozhin and the drunken gang that has just crashed her party. All these elements justify General Ivolgin's stupefied reaction to what may be called Russian literature's counterpart to the Mad Hatter's tea party in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (54-61): "This is Sodom--Sodom!" (163).[42] Underlying the surface scandal of this bedlam in Nastas'ia's St. Petersburg apartment is the real scandal--what we should call today the "elephant in the room"--and it is a scandal quite relevant to the focus of this dissertation. Despite all the comic elements of this mad scene, the crime that underpins everything becomes painfully evident when Nastas'ia denies having seriously entertained the childlike Myshkin's impetuous offer of marriage:

> "Did you really think I meant it?" laughed Nastasya Filippovna, jumping up from the sofa. "Ruin a child like that? That's more in Afanasy Ivanovitch's line: he is fond of children!" (163)[43]

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[41] In Russia, the name day is the feast day of the saint after whom one is named.

[42] "--Это содом [sic], содом! [sic]" (*PSS* 8: 143; pt. 1, ch. 16).

[43] "--А ты и впрямь думала?--хохоча вскочила с дивана Настасья Филипповна. --Этакого-то младенца сгубить? Да это Афанасию Иванычу в ту ж пору: это он младенцев любит!" (*PSS* 8: 142-43; pt. 1, ch. 16).

Translator Constance Garnett's "child" and "children" should be corrected to "infant" and "infants." *The Oxford Russian Dictionary* gives these meanings for младенец (*mladenets*): "baby, infant"

Afanasii Ivanovich Totskii, also present at this grotesque name day celebration, is a wealthy, now middle-aged, pillar of St. Petersburg society. When Nastas'ia was an orphan of only twelve or so, Totskii's experienced eye had caught her inchoately dazzling beauty, after which he immediately took the girl into his own house and surrounded her with luxuries. In a phrase that should perhaps be interpreted as dripping with *double-entendre* sarcasm, "[. . .] little Nastasya began to receive an education on the broadest lines" (38).[44] This is the background to her current degradation, which causes her to describe herself as "a shameless hussy" (163)[45] and Totskii's former "concubine" (163).[46] These are examples of Garnett's antique English; a contemporary translator might substitute "slut" and "bedmate." According to the innuendo in the text, it appears that Totskii may have begun sexually abusing the orphaned Nastas'ia when she was only around twelve--and, in a sense, despite Nastas'ia's having used her strong will to end the liaison, he is still doing so. Dostoyevsky biographers Frank (*Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865-1871* 322) and Avrahm Yarmolinsky (*Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* 258) both call Totskii Nastas'ia's "seducer." Codes of criminal law all over the world employ other words for what Totskii did to Nastas'ia. No wonder that Nastas'ia, during the uproar at her celebration, suddenly sinks a barb deeply into Totskii's flesh by exclaiming in front of all her guests that he "loves" infants. She herself had been one of those infants. Reflecting on this outlandish scene in *The Idiot* will be a good introduction

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(239). Had Nastas'ia Filippovna wished to say "children," she would have used детей (*detei*). In her eyes, Myshkin is like an infant.

[44] "[. . .] воспитание маленькой Настасьи приняло чрезвычайные размеры" (*PSS* 8: 35; pt. 1, ch. 4). I suggest this translation: "the upbringing of little Nastas'ia assumed exceptional dimensions."

[45] "бесстыдница" (*PSS* 8: 143; pt. 1, ch. 16).

[46] "наложницей" (*PSS* 8: 143; pt. 1, ch. 16).

to our eventual discussion (in chapter 3) of Dostoyevsky's treatment of the sexual abuse of children as the paradigmatic moral evil.

In her City University of New York doctoral dissertation entitled *Virtue and the Renunciation of Violence in the Fiction of Dostoevsky and His European Contemporaries*, Nora Teikmanis devotes two chapters (225-94) to the concept of scandal in Dostoyevsky. In this discussion (226, 261 [endnote 6]), she rightly draws attention to the Gospel verse in which Jesus, speaking to the Apostles at the Last Supper, calls himself a source of scandal: "You will all be scandalized this night because of me [. . .]" (*Mt* 26:31).[47] In reacting to this verse, we should note the etymology of our English word "scandal": according to Liddell and Scott's abridged Greek lexicon (637), a σκάνδαλον (*skandalon*) is a trap set by an enemy, or an obstacle or stumbling block lying in someone's path. In the context of the New Testament, the path in question is the way to Christian belief and the practice of virtue. In the moral theology of the Catholic Church, the word "scandal" has a precise, technical meaning:

> Scandal is an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil.
>
> (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 2284)[48]

Although Teikmanis cites *Mt* 26:31 in reference to her study of virtue in Dostoyevsky, the concept of the scandalous is also highly pertinent to Camus's treatment of the category of evil. Camus regards the crucifixion of Jesus--and this, by implication,

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[47] "Πάντες ὑμεῖς σκανδαλισθήσεσθε ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ [. . .]."

The English translation of this verse is taken from the 1941 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine translation of the New Testament. Unlike newer translations, the Confraternity version is strictly faithful to the Greek in this verse. Generally, however, biblical quotations in this dissertation are taken from the 1986 edition of the New American Bible (as presented in *The Catholic Study Bible*), and the abbreviations for the biblical books are all taken from the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The New American Bible is the version used in the daily Catholic liturgy in the United States.

[48] "*Le scandale est l'attitude ou le comportement qui portent autrui à faire le mal.*"

is one of the events to which Jesus is referring in *Mt* 26:31--as a cosmic scandal. For Camus, a religion founded on the moral and physical evil of the unjust execution of an innocent man is a prototypical scandal that cries out to all four corners of the universe. In the September 8, 1944, issue of *Combat* [*Combat*], he writes: "Christianity in its essence (and this is its paradoxical greatness) is a doctrine of injustice. It is founded on the sacrifice of the innocent one and the acceptance of this sacrifice" (*Essais* 271).[49] For the French novelist, the Crucifixion is thus a source of scandal, not only for the Apostles during the events of the Passion, but also for every human being throughout history. And Jesus's death, for Camus, reminds us of all the evils--injustice, suffering, and, above all, death--that constantly threaten us all:

> And, like him, each of us can be crucified and victimized--and is to a certain degree. (*Myth* 107)[50]

Camus's strong reaction to the Crucifixion is an example of the way in which the fact of evil is often cited as a reason for refusing faith. When the Second Vatican Council discusses contemporary atheism in its *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (known from its opening words in Latin as *Gaudium et spes*), it says in section 19: "Moreover, atheism results not rarely from a violent protest against the evil in this world [. . .]" (Walter M. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* 216).[51] Another way of saying this is that unbelievers, scandalized by the existence of evil, cite evil as a reason

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[49] "*Le christianisme dans son essence (et c'est sa paradoxale grandeur) est une doctrine de l'injustice. Il est fondé sur le sacrifice de l'innocent et l'acceptation de ce sacrifice*" (my translation).

[50] "*Et comme lui, chacun de nous peut être crucifié et dupé--l'est dans une certaine mesure*" (*Essais* 184).

[51] "*Atheismus praeterea non raro oritur sive ex violenta contra malum in mundo protesatione [. . .]*" (*Sacrosanctum Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum II, Constitutiones, Decreta, Declarationes* [*Sacred Ecumenical Council Vatican II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*] 705).

for refusing to believe. Evil is thus a scandal, or stumbling block, standing in the way of faith. The argument runs as follows: "If there is a good and omnipotent God, then how can he allow evil and suffering to exist?" It is unlikely that those who drafted the above sentence in *Gaudium et spes* were not thinking of Camus, among others.[52]

The momentous nature--and philosophical consequences--of the scandal that provides the angle of vision for this dissertation are reflected in one of the key passages of Camus's *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*:

> The problem of "freedom as such" has no meaning. For it is linked in quite a different way with the problem of God. Knowing whether or not man is free involves knowing whether he can have a master. The

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[52] To my knowledge, no one has pointed out that the very first sentence of the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* may be an echo of a sentence in one of Camus's essays. In *Gaudium et spes*, we read: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. [*Gaudium et spes, luctus et angor hominum huius temporis, pauperum praesertim et quorumvis afflictorum, gaudium sunt et spes, luctus at angor etiam Christi discipulorum, nihilque verum humanum invenitur, quod in corde eorum non resonet*]" (Abbott 199-200; *Sacrosanctum Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum II* 681). Compare that sentence with the following section of Camus's "L'Artiste et son temps" ["The Artist and His Time"]: "He [the artist] stands in the midst of all, in the same rank, neither higher nor lower, with all those who are working and struggling. His very vocation, in the face of oppression, is to open the prisons and to give a voice to the sorrows and joys of all. [*Il se tient au milieu de tous, au niveau exact, ni plus haut ni plus bas, de tous ceux qui travaillent et qui luttent. Sa vocation même, devant l'oppression, est d'ouvrir les prisons et de faire parler le malheur et le bonheur de tous*]" (*Myth* 212; *Essais* 804).

Since the opening sentence of Vatican II's *Gaudium et spes*, whether intentionally or not, is an echo of Camus's delineation of the committed artist in "L'Artiste et son temps," it is appropriate to observe that the Council Fathers were merely returning the favor, for Camus's "to open the prisons" echoes Jesus's self-appropriation of the words of the prophet Isaiah: "He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives [. . .], to let the oppressed go free [. . .]. [ [. . .] **ἀπέσταλκέν με κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν** [. . .], **ἀποστεῖλαι τεθραυσμένους ἐν ἀφέσει** [. . .] ]" (*Lk* 4:18; cf. *Isa* 61:1).

It is likely that Pope Paul VI was thinking especially of Camus when he said the following in his 1964 encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (my English translation from the French version): "Atheists, too, we see at times moved by noble sentiments, disgusted by the mediocrity and egoism of so many contemporary social milieux, and, quite aptly, borrowing from our Gospel both forms and a language of solidarity and human compassion [. . .]. [*Les athées, nous les voyons aussi parfois mus par de nobles sentiments, dégoûtés de la médiocrité et de l'égoïsme de tant de milieux sociaux contemporains, et empruntant fort à propos à notre Evangile des formes et un langage de solidarité et de compassion humaine* [. . .] ]" (sect. 108 of the French version of the encyclical). I am quoting this passage in French rather than Latin, for it would be surprising if Paul VI, an ardent Francophile, was not directing this passage to France in a special manner.

> absurdity peculiar to this problem comes from the fact that the very notion that makes the problem of freedom possible also takes away all its meaning. *For in the presence of God there is less a problem of freedom than a problem of evil.* You know the alternative: either we are not free and God the all-powerful is responsible for evil. Or we are free and responsible but God is not all-powerful. All the scholastic subtleties have neither added anything to nor subtracted anything from the acuteness of this paradox. (*Myth* 56; my italics)[53]

A major issue in this dissertation will be an analysis of Camus's glib disjunction--either God or human freedom--as he sets it forth in the above quotation, but let the following preliminary comments open the dialogue. Absolute, thoroughgoing determinism is rejected by the majority of human beings, either explicitly or implicitly, for the reason given by St. Thomas Aquinas: "*I answer that*, Man has free-will: otherwise counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards and punishments would be in vain" (*Summa theologiae*, pt. 1, ques. 83, art. 1, body).[54] Historically, many major thinkers--for

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[53] "*Le problème de «la liberté en soi» n'a pas de sens. Car il est lié d'une tout autre façon à celui de Dieu. Savoir si l'homme est libre commande qu'on sache s'il peut avoir un maître. L'absurdité particulière à ce problème vient de ce que la notion même qui rend possible le problème de la liberté lui retire en même temps tout son sens. Car devant Dieu, il y a moins un problème de la liberté qu'un problème du mal. On connaît l'alternative: ou nous ne sommes pas libres et Dieu tout-puissant est responsable du mal. Ou nous sommes libres et responsables, mais Dieu n'est pas tout-puissant. Toutes les subtilités d'écoles n'ont rien ajouté ni soustrait au tranchant de ce paradoxe"* (*Essais* 139-40).

[54] "*Respondeo dicendum quod homo est liberi arbitrii: alioquin frustra essent consilia, exhortationes, praecepta, prohibitiones, praemia et poenae.*"

Citations of St. Thomas's *Summa theologiae* (*Summa theologica*) will be given in the customary form--part, question, article, and objection number--rather than by page number.

Quotations from Aquinas are in keeping with the interdisciplinary nature of this dissertation, and, if McCarthy's statement is to be credited, would have pleased Camus. McCarthy says that one reason for Camus's having hit it off with Dominican priest Raymond-Léopold Bruckberger was that "[p]riests, Camus felt, should wear their cloth proudly and quote Aquinas rather than Freud" (181). In turn, "Bruckberger liked Camus, who looked like a boxer and in whom he saw his own violence" (180). The right that Camus accords to Bruckberger cannot logically be denied to anyone else.

example, Plato, Aristotle, Blessed John Duns Scotus, René Descartes, John Locke, and (to some extent) Immanuel Kant--agree with Camus and St. Thomas in defending free will.[55] Nor, from the standpoint of determinists themselves, is further argumentation with them of great utility. After all, regardless of the cogency of anti-determinist arguments, the determinist, according to his or her own contention, *has to* disregard them.

But to proceed to the assertion, as Camus does, that the existence of man's freedom cancels the existence of an omnipotent God is a pure begging of the question and, as I shall aim to establish, not the only instance in which the French novelist short-circuits the discussion. The compatibility of theism with the existence of moral and physical evil is precisely the point that must be examined and argued. Moreover, if one invokes the scandal of evil to deny God, then another argument advanced centuries ago must be refuted, and not merely dismissed out of hand on an indefensible *a priori* basis. Quoting St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas says:

> *Reply Obj* [sic] 1. As Augustine says (*Enchir*. xi): *Since God is the highest good, He would not allow any evil to exist in His works, unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring good even out of evil.* This is part of the infinite goodness of God, that he should allow evil to exist, and out of it produce good. (*Summa theologiae*, pt. 1, ques. 2, art. 3, reply to obj. 1)[56]

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[55] I am basing this list on Henry J. Koren's *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Animate Nature* (239). Koren states that Kant denies free will for the noumenal world, but accepts it for the phenomenal world (239).

[56] "*Ad primum ergo dicendum quod, sicut dicit Augustinus in* Enchiridio: Deus, cum sit summe bonus, nullo modo sineret aliquid mali esse in operibus suis, nisi esset adeo omnipotens et bonus, ut bene faceret etiam de malo. *Hoc ergo ad infinitam Dei bonitatem pertinet, ut esse permittat mala, et ex eis eliciat bona.*"

As we consider the above quotation, we should be aware of a comment that Camus makes in his *Carnets*: "The only great Christian mind who looked the problem of evil *in the face* is St. Augustine" (*Carnets II* 179).[57] We should not be surprised that Camus said this about a great Christian writer. Consider what he says in *L'Homme révolté* about Christ himself:

> Christ came to solve two major problems, evil and death, which are precisely the problems that preoccupy the rebel. (*Rebel* 32)[58]

Again anticipating a conjecture that will be developed later, I cannot help remarking that the above sentence could have been uttered by a committed Catholic.

**St. Augustine's Definition of Evil**

To avoid haziness and irrelevance as we compare the reactions of Dostoyevsky and Camus to evil, it is crucial to define evil. Because St. Augustine conveniently summarizes the whole tradition of the *philosophia perennis* on the issue of how this primordial, inescapable concept should be defined, and because there can be no serious intellectual enterprise (in philosophy, in literature, or in any other discipline) without definitions, I accept the following definition from the pen of the fifth-century bishop of Hippo in Camus's North Africa:

> And this is the totality of what is called evil, that is, sin and the

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[57] "*Le seul grand esprit chrétien qui ait regardé* en face *le problème du mal, c'est saint Augustin*" (my translation).

[58] "*Le Christ est venu résoudre deux problèmes principaux, le mal et la mort, qui sont précisément les problèmes des révoltés*" (*Essais* 444).

> punishment of sin. (*De vera religione* [*On the True Religion*], ch. 12; p. 402)[59]

In this connection, the reader should note that I understand the perennial philosophy to mean Aristotle's philosophy as developed and supplemented by the philosophies of Plato, the Stoics, the Neo-Platonist Plotinus, St. Thomas Aquinas, the other Scholastics, and the neo-Thomists.

In a comparative analysis of Dostoyevsky and Camus, it is especially fitting to rely on St. Augustine's invocation of sin as a core category. After all, the Russian member of this pair is constantly raising the issues of sin and punishment within the context of his Russian Orthodox cultural background: think only of *Crime and Punishment*, the title of one of his major works. In the Russian title of this novel, the word translated into English as "crime" is преступление (*prestuplenie*), which, according to *The Oxford Russian Dictionary* (400), derives from the verb преступать (*prestupat'* or "to transgress"). Hence, the translation of the title could be *Transgression and Punishment*.[60] In addition, as I have already begun to show, Camus is constantly reacting against his Catholic cultural background by conducting a polemic, sometimes overt, sometimes oblique, against his major intellectual antagonist, the Catholic Church. In Camus's *La Peste*, Dr. Rieux, echoing Ivan's revolt against God in *The Brothers Karamazov*, proclaims to Paneloux, who has also witnessed Philippe's death: "And until my dying day I shall refuse to love a scheme of things in which children are put to

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[59] "*Et hoc est totum quod dicitur malum, id est, peccatum et poena peccati*" (my translation).

[60] Professor Elizabeth K. Beaujour believes that the translation *should* be *Transgression and Punishment*.

torture" (*Plague* 218).[61] Since Paneloux is a Jesuit priest, he is a representative of the Catholicism with which Camus is in dispute as he protests, in the name of the philosophy of the absurd, against the physical evils of suffering and death. Reinforcing the logic of using St. Augustine's definition of evil as an organizing principle of this dissertation is the fact that Dostoyevsky, too, considers the Catholic Church a major antagonist of his--as paradoxical as this may seem, even to readers with little sympathy for Catholicism. Finally, it is quite relevant to quote St. Augustine given the fact that Camus wrote a neglected university thesis that the Pléiade edition subtitles *Entre Plotin et saint Augustin* [*Between Plotinus and St. Augustine*] (*Essais* 1220-1313).

**Dostoyevsky's Definition of Evil**

Having seen how St. Augustine**,** with at least some degree of implicit approval from Camus, defines the concept of evil, we ought to consider Dostoyevsky's definition. In a letter to Nikolai Liubimov, managing editor of *Russian Messenger*, Dostoyevsky assures his editor that he has revised the hitherto completed chapters of *Crime and Punishment* to forestall any possible confusion between evil and its contrary. He writes in a letter dated July 8, 1866: "*Good* and *Evil* are clearly delimited, and it will be quite impossible to confuse them now or to misinterpret the meaning" (Frank and Goldstein 232).[62] But what exactly does Dostoyevsky mean by evil? He himself tells us clearly in one of the last letters that he ever wrote. In his December 19, 1880, letter to Dr. Aleksandr Blagonravov, he says:

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[61] "*Et je refuserai jusqu'à la mort d'aimer cette création où des enfants sont torturés*" (*Théâtre* 1397).

[62] "*Зло* и *доброе* в высшей степени разделено, и смешать их и истолковать превратно уже никак нельзя будет" (*PSS* 28, pt. 2: 164).

> You correctly conclude that I see the root of evil in unbelief, but that a person who rejects his national identity rejects his faith at the same time. This is precisely the case with us, since our whole national identity is based on Christianity. (Frank and Goldstein 514)[63]

There is an even more concrete way to identify what Dostoyevsky means by evil, for the Russian novelist personalizes his understanding of evil through characterizations that are hard to forget. One thinks of the lecherous Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment* (and of his neglected prototype, Prince Valkovskii in *The Insulted and Injured*), the murderous Rogozhin in *The Idiot*, the child-molesting Stavrogin in *The Devils*, and the parricidal and suicidal Smerdiakov in *The Brothers Karamazov*. To be sure, if one agrees with Dostoyevsky, the whole revolutionary cell in *The Devils* (including its unconscious mentor, Stepan Verkhovenskii) has to be considered a veritable flock of demons. This authorial intention is clearly manifested in the now repentant Stepan's dying invocation of the Gospel incident (*Lk* 8:26-39) of the "legion" of devils whom Jesus allows to enter the herd of Gerasene swine, which then drown themselves in the Sea of Galilee (667-69).[64]

In contrast with the manner in which Camus will primarily deal with evil in the bulk (but not the totality) of his works, all these Dostoyevskian characters embody moral

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[63] "Вы верно заключаете, что причину зла я вижу в безверии, но что отрицающий народность отрицает и веру. Именно у нас это так, ибо у нас вся народность основана на христианстве" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 236).

Dostoyevsky is replying to Blagonravov's December 10, 1880, letter, in which the latter refers to *The Brothers Karamazov* and says: "I. S. Aksakov sees the root of evil in the denial of national identity, whereas you look at the topic much more deeply and see the root of evil in unbelief, although it is impossible not to agree that anyone denying national identity also denies belief. [И. С. Аксаков причину зла видит в отрицании народности, Вы же смотрите гораздо глубже на предмет и причину зла видите в безверии, хотя нельзя не согласиться с тем, что отрицающий народность отрицает и веру]" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 390; my translation).

[64] *PSS* 10: 498-99; pt. 3, ch. 7, sect. 2.

evil on the level of their personal lives, although Dostoyevsky does not deny that personal evil has ramifications in the life of the community and the state. Note, too, that this personal evil occurs in the form of contraventions of the moral law as interpreted by Russian Orthodoxy, whose ethical perspective Dostoyevsky appropriates well before he dies in communion with the official church of the Russian state, in contradistinction to Lev Tolstoy, who dies unreconciled to the Russian Orthodox Church in the stationmaster's house in Astapovo in 1910. [65]

### ***The Brothers Karamazov*: A *Roman à Thèse* on Evil**

In addition to Dostoyevsky's death in communion with the Russian Orthodox Church, we have his own words to assure us that he intends *The Brothers Karamazov* to be a refutation of what he calls the "blasphemy" of Ivan Karamazov, who rejects the Russian Orthodox understanding of God's providence on the ground that faith cannot be made rationally compatible with the physical and moral evil involved in the suffering and death of young children. Since Dostoyevsky's open declaration of a *roman à thèse* is critical for this dissertation, it merits quotation. Here is his own avowal, as it occurs in his May 10, 1879, letter to Nikolai Liubimov:

> The blasphemy of my hero [i.e., Ivan Karamazov] will be solemnly refuted in the next chapter (to appear in your June number), and I am

[65] In his captivating memoirs, entitled *La Russie des tsars pendant la grande guerre* [*The Russia of the Tsars During the Great War*], Maurice Paléologue, the last French ambassador to the court of the tsars, reports that Tolstoy's family and physicians refused to allow the старец (*starets* or "elder") of the monastery of Optina-Pustyn' to see Tolstoy at Astapovo on the ground of the dying man's medical state. Paléologue adds that Tolstoy, before he expired, conveyed his refusal of a Russian Orthodox funeral (2: 271). Clearly, the intention of the *starets* was to reconcile Tolstoy with the Russian Orthodox Church and thereby lift the decree of excommunication that the Holy Synod had issued against the novelist in 1901. In his biography entitled *Tolstoï* [*Tolstoy*], Henri Troyat gives largely the same account as Paléologue's (829-34).

> working on it now in fear, awe, and reverence, since I consider my task (the crushing of anarchism) as a civic duty. (Frank and Goldstein 465)[66]

In writing that Ivan's blasphemy will be refuted, and thus openly declaring his polemical objective, Dostoyevsky employs the verb опровергнуть (*oprovergnut'*), which, according to *The Oxford Russian Dictionary* (307), does indeed mean "to refute, disprove." Consequently, translator Andrew R. MacAndrew in the Frank-Goldstein edition of Dostoyevsky's letters accurately reflects Dostoyevsky's apologetic goal. (The adjective "apologetic" is used here in the sense of apologetics, i.e., the intellectual discipline that aims at defending, in a systematic manner and with cogent philosophical and historical argumentation, the reasonableness of committing oneself to the profession of Christianity as the revealed religion.)

MacAndrew, it must be noted, creates two problems in his translation of this crucial letter. First, in the extract quoted above, "next chapter" should be "next book." The word книге (*knige*) means "book," not "chapter," and, in the structure of *The Brothers Karamazov*, there is a difference between a book and a chapter. The promised refutation--in Dostoyevsky's mind--is book 6 ("The Russian Monk"), not chapter 6 of book 5. Second--and this is a much more serious problem--MacAndrew makes Dostoyevsky also say, a little earlier in the same letter: "My hero chooses an argument that, *in my opinion*, is irrefutable--the senselessness of children's suffering--and from it reaches the conclusion that all historical reality is an absurdity" (Frank and Goldstein

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[66] "Богохульство же моего героя будет торжественно опровергнуто в следующей (июньской) книге, для которой и работаю теперь со страхом, трепетом и благоговепием [sic], считая задачу мою (разбитие анархизма) гражданским подвигом" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 64).

What appears to be благоговепием (*blagogovepiem*) may be a typographical error for благоговением (*blagogoveniem* or "reverence").

465).[67] Logically, if Ivan Karamazov's atheistic argument based on the suffering of children is irrefutable, then Dostoyevsky's (or anyone else's) attempt to refute it is a waste of time. If he had truly considered such an effort futile, then Dostoyevsky would have denied his own purpose in writing *The Brothers Karamazov*. Accordingly, we must look carefully at the words that MacAndrew loosely translates as "an argument that, *in my opinion*, is irrefutable": тему, *по-моему*, неотразимую (*temu,* po-moemu*, neotrazimuiu*). In Russian, a тема (*tema*) is merely a subject, topic, or theme, and not an argument in the strict sense; for the concept of an argument, there are, according to *The Oxford Russian Dictionary* (638), two Russian words: аргумент (*argument*) and довод (*dovod*). Moreover, to say that the suffering of children is irrefutably senseless *from the limited perspective of Dostoyevsky or any other human being* is *not* the same thing as to say that such suffering is a logically irrefutable argument against God's existence or providence. A topic or theme may be undeniable in the sense that it is indisputably heart-wrenching--Ivan's catalogue of horrors visited on children is certainly that--while still not constituting a logically unanswerable argument. Since Dostoyevsky makes resoundingly clear his intention of refuting Ivan's argument for atheism and for the absurdity of historical reality, and since we should avoid implying that Dostoyevsky lapses into incoherence by blatantly contradicting himself in the same letter, we should conclude that he is not actually saying that Ivan's discourse is, in the true, proper, and philosophical sense, "irrefutable."

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[67] "Мой герой берет тему, *по-моему*, неотразимую: бессмыслицу страдания детей и выводит из нее абсурд всей исторической действительности" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 63).

According to *The Oxford Russian Dictionary*, неотразимый (*neotrazimyi*) means "irresistible" or "incontrovertible" (273).

**An Unnoticed Dostoyevskian Intertext in Camus's *La Peste*?**

Further riveting the link between Camus and Dostoyevsky, and highlighting their burning interest in the problems of suffering, death, and evil in general, is the strong possibility that the death of the child Philippe Othon in *La Peste*--clearly the apex of Camus's novel--is a masterful reworking of a scene in Dostoyevsky's *The House of the Dead*. In this earlier scene, apparently overlooked, Aleksandr Petrovich, Dostoyevsky's fictional stand-in, witnesses the final agony of a fellow prisoner in the infirmary: the twenty-five-year-old consumptive Mikhailov (220-23).[68] Both victims die of a feared disease belonging to the category of epidemics and near epidemics: the child from the bubonic plague, and the Russian convict from tuberculosis, an illness especially dreaded in the nineteenth century. There are eight additional elements common to the two texts: prolongation of the death agony over hours, public setting (prison hospital ward, plague quarantine area), paradoxical illumination from the sun, nakedness of the dying person, visibility of the emaciated victim's ribs, evocation of the crucifixion of Christ, reverent silence of the bystanders, and an observer who makes the sign of the Cross. I direct the reader's attention to table 1 ("Comparison Between the Deaths of Mikhailov in Dostoyevsky's *The House of the Dead* and Philippe Othon in Camus's *La Peste*) on pages 34-36 of this dissertation. Readers can judge for themselves, but I believe that the simultaneous inclusion of these nine elements in both texts seems to rule out a mere coincidence and to confirm Camus's dependence on Dostoyevsky's text as an intertext. I am using the term "intertext" in the sense in which it is used by Peter Dunwoodie in *Une*

[68] *PSS* 4: 140-41; pt. 2, ch. 1.

*Histoire ambivalente: Le Dialogue Camus-Dostoïevski* [*An Ambivalent History: The Camus-Dostoyevsky Dialogue*].

Table 1
Comparison Between the Deaths of Mikhailov in Dostoyevsky's *The House of the Dead* and Philippe Othon in Camus's *La Peste*

| Number of Common Element | Common Element | Mikhailov | | Philippe Othon | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The death results from a plague or quasi-plague. | And now, as I write this, there comes strikingly to my mind one dying man, a tuberculosis patient, that same Mikhailov [. . .].[69] | И вот теперь, как я пишу это, ярко припоминается мне один умирающий, чахоточный, тот самый Михайлов [. . .]. (*PSS* 4: 140) | The infection was steadily spreading, and the boy's body was putting up no resistance. Tiny, half-formed, but acutely painful buboes were clogging the joints of the child's puny limbs. (213) | *Le petit corps se laissait dévorer par l'infection, sans une réaction. De touts petits bubons, douloureux, mais à peine formés, bloquaient les articulations de ses membres grêles.* (*Théâtre* 1392) |
| 2 | The death agony is prolonged. | He died without consciousness and in pain, departing over a long period of time--several hours in succession. | Умер он не в памяти и тяжело, долго отходил, несколько часов сряду. (*PSS* 4: 140) | After some twenty hours Rieux became convinced that the case was hopeless. (213) | *Au bout d'une vingtaine d'heures, Rieux jugea son cas désespéré.* (*Théâtre* 1392) |
| 3 | The death is public: it takes place in a congregate facility in the presence of strangers or near strangers. | [. . .] and who died, I recall, on the fourth day after my arrival in the ward. | [. . .] и который умер, помнится, на четвертый день по прибытии моем в палату. (*PSS* 4: 140) | The boy was taken to the auxiliary hospital and put in a ward of ten beds which had formerly been a classroom. (212-13) | *Quant à l'enfant, il fut transporté à l'hôpital auxiliaire, dans une ancienne salle de classe où dix lits avaient été installés.* (*Théâtre* 1392) |

[69] The English translations of the quotations from *The House of the Dead* are my own; in David McDuff's Penguin Classics translation, these excerpts may be found on pages 220-22 (pt. 2, ch. 1). The excerpts from *La Peste* are taken from the Stuart Gilbert translation (212-17; pt. 4). The Russian quotations come from *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972-90). The French excerpts are taken from the 1999 printing of the *Théâtre, récits, nouvelles* volume of the Pléiade edition. Note that there are pagination differences between the 1999 printing and the 1962 printing of this Pléiade volume.

Table 1
Comparison Between the Deaths of Mikhailov in Dostoyevsky's *The House of the Dead* and Philippe Othon in Camus's *La Peste*

| Number of Common Element | Common Element | Mikhailov | | Philippe Othon | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Paradoxically, sunlight enters the scene of the death agony through windows. | I remember that the sun with its vigorous, slanting rays simply penetrated the green, somewhat frozen panes in the windows of our ward. Their whole stream poured itself onto the unfortunate man. | Помню, солнце так и пронизывало крепкими косыми лучами зеленые слегка подмерзшие стекла в окнах нашей палаты. Целый поток их лился на несчастного. (*PSS* 4: 140) | The light on the whitewashed walls was changing from pink to yellow. The first waves of another day of heat were beating on the windows. (216) | *Le long des murs peints à la chaux, la lumière passait du rose au jaune. Derrière la vitre, une matinée de chaleur commençait à crépiter.* (*Théâtre* 1395) |
| 5 | The victim dies naked. | He threw off the blanket, all his clothing, and, lastly, he started tearing his shirt off [. . .]. | Он сбил с себя одеяло, всю одежду и, наконец, начал срывать с себя рубашку [. . .]. (*PSS* 4: 140) | From the body, naked under an army blanket, rose a smell of damp wool and stale sweat. (214) | *Du petit corps, nu sous la couverture militaire, montait une odeur de laine et d'aigre sueur.* (*Théâtre* 1393) |
| 6 | The victim's ribs show as on a skeleton. | [. . .] with his ribs distinctly visible, exactly as on a skeleton. | [. . .] с ребрами, отчетливо рисовавшимися, точно у скелета. (*PSS* 4: 140) | [. . .] the flesh had wasted to the bone [. . .]. (215) | *[. . .] dont la chair avait fondu [. . .].* (*Théâtre* 1394) |
| 7 | The image of the cross of the crucifixion of Jesus is visible in the scene. | On his whole body there remained only a wooden cross with an amulet and shackles [. . .]. | На всем теле его остались один только деревянный крест с ладонкой [sic] и кандалы [. . .]. (*PSS* 4: 140)[70] | [. . .] the child lay flat, racked on the tumbled bed, in a grotesque parody of crucifixion. (215) | *[. . .] l'enfant prit dans le lit dévasté une pose de crucifié grotesque.* (*Théâtre* 1394) |
| 8 | The observers become silent or nearly so before or at the victim's death. | Half an hour before his death, we all seemed to become quiet, beginning to converse in all but a whisper. | За полчаса до смерти его все у нас как будто притихли, стали разговаривать чуть не шепотом. (*PSS* 4: 140) | But then, suddenly, the other sufferers fell silent. (217) | *Mais brusquement, les autres malades se turent.* (*Théâtre* 1396) |

[70] It appears that ладонкой (*ladonkoi*) is a typographical error for ладанкой (*ladankoi* or "amulet").

Table 1
Comparison Between the Deaths of Mikhailov in Dostoyevsky's *The House of the Dead* and Philippe Othon in Camus's *La Peste*

| Number of Common Element | Common Element | Mikhailov | | Philippe Othon | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | An observer makes the sign of the Cross after the victim's death. | While we awaited the guards, one of the inmates mentioned in a low voice that it would not be wrong to close the eyes of the dead man. Another man listened to him attentively, silently went up to the corpse, and closed its eyes. Having noticed the cross lying right there on the pillow, he took it, looked at it, and quietly hung it around Mikhailov's neck again; he did this and made the sign of the Cross on himself.[71] | В ожидании караульных кто-то из арестантов тихим голосом подал мысль, что не худо бы закрыть покойнику глаза. Другой внимательно его выслушал, молча подошел к мертвецу и закрыл глаза. Увидев тут же лежавший на подушке крест, взял его, осмотрел и молча надел его опять Михайлову на шею; надел и перекрестился. (*PSS* 4: 141) | Paneloux went up to the bed and made the sign of benediction. (217) | *Paneloux s'approcha du lit et fit les gestes de la bénédiction.* (*Théâtre* 1396) |

[71] In the Penguin translation, McDuff omits the sentence that I have underlined.

Of the nine elements common to Camus's text and Dostoyevsky's text, perhaps the most significant is the evocation of the crucifixion of Christ. In the light of the architecture of Dostoyevsky's text, it seems likely that the latter's remarkable account of Mikhailov's death agony is influenced by the Passion narratives in the Gospels. Writhing in his death throes, Christ on the Cross, like Mikhailov in the prison infirmary, expires in unspeakable torment over the course of hours (element 2). Christ, too, dies in a public place (element 3). Jesus's death scene also incorporates sunlight (element 4): he expires only when the sun has reappeared at three o'clock in the afternoon after an eclipse (*Mk* 15:33-37; *Lk* 23:44-46). Again resembling Mikhailov, Christ is probably crucified naked (element 5). Despite the loincloth of Christian iconography, the Romans humiliated criminals by crucifying them in utter nudity, as George Ronald Watson states in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (300). Further, the dying Jesus conforms to the comment that Mikhailov's ribs are "showing as clearly as the ribs of a skeleton" (element 6); this remark seems to echo the Crucifixion-related interpretation that Christian tradition accords to the Psalmist's words in *Ps* 22:17-18: "[. . .] they have pierced my hands and feet. I have counted all my bones, and they have watched me and gazed on me."[72] Jesus, of course, does not merely wear the image of a cross as does Mikhailov, but actually dies on a cross (element 7). Moreover, Christ's death, like Mikhailov's, also provokes a reverential response on the part of bystanders (elements 8 and 9), for the Roman

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[72] " [. . .] ὤρυξαν χεῖράς μου καὶ πόδας. ἐξηρίθμησα πάντα τὰ ὀστᾶ μου, αὐτοὶ δὲ κατενόησαν καὶ ἐπεῖδόν με" (my translation).

This Greek quotation is from the Rahlfs edition of the Greek Septuagint, where it is found in Psalm 21 (there is a numbering problem in Psalms). I regret that I cannot quote the Hebrew text, but no one familiar with the historic function fulfilled by the Septuagint in the understanding of the Old Testament in both Judaism and Christianity can object to quoting from it as a quasi-original text. Note, however, that there are divergences between the Septuagint and the Hebrew text underlying the 1986 New American Bible, which, again, is the English version to which I am giving priority in this dissertation.

centurion and soldiers assigned to the execution of Christ exclaim: "Truly, this was the Son of God!" (*Mt* 27:54).[73] Further underscoring the parallelism between Mikhailov and the crucified Jesus, Dostoyevsky tells us that the dying tuberculosis victim wears only a wooden cross and an amulet around his neck--in addition to his chains. But the mention of the chains is almost superfluous, for, like Christ, Mikhailov is a prisoner dying in the custody of the state. The correspondence between the scene in the prison infirmary and the events at Golgotha is also highlighted by the presence of the duty sergeant in the infirmary, which recalls the rôle played by the Roman soldiers in the execution of Jesus. Finally, when the prisoner Chekunov remarks of Mikhailov that "[h]e had a mother too!" the reader may think of the presence of the Mother of Jesus by her Son's cross (*Jn* 19:25-27).

Camus, for his part, incorporates into Philippe's death scene all the Passion-narrative elements that his Russian predecessor brings to mind, but Camus accords special emphasis to the motif of crucifixion by stating that Philippe's dying body assumes the tormented form of someone who has been crucified. We should not be surprised by Camus's allusion to the Crucifixion, for Jesus fascinates the French novelist, despite the latter's ostensible atheism. Beránková says that Jesus is the third most frequently cited person in Camus's *Carnets*, after Nietzsche and Tolstoy, while Dostoyevsky is tied for fourth place with Stendhal (28 [footnote 55]). Camus says in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*:

> "The laws of nature," says the engineer [i.e., Kirillov in *The Devils*], "made Christ live in the midst of falsehood and die for a falsehood."

[73] "Ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος."

> Solely in this sense Jesus indeed personifies the whole human drama. He is the complete man, being the one who realized the most absurd condition. He is not the God-man but the man-god. (*Myth* 107)[74]

Connected with this observation is Camus's claim, already mentioned, that Christianity is "a doctrine of injustice." Given Camus's interest in Jesus and the Crucifixion, we should not be surprised that Rosario Dolores Leparulo, in her Florida State University doctoral dissertation entitled *The Archetype of Christ in the Works of Albert Camus and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*, suggests that Meursault in *L'Étranger* [*The Stranger*] is a Christ figure (77-83). This contention is repeated by Beránková (171). We shall later see that Camus agrees with this view. Both Christ and--at least in the eyes of Camus--Meursault are the victims of judicial misfeasance and other evils afflicting their respective societies.

Since both the death of Mikhailov and that of Philippe Othon recall elements of the crucifixion and death of Jesus, the Passion narratives of the New Testament appear to be an original source text for the scenes written by Dostoyevsky and Camus--a source text of exceptional, *literally* canonical, status. This third text is, of course, a major text in Western literature for an examination of the problem of evil. In the official teaching of the institution to which both Dostoyevsky and Camus are constantly reacting throughout their fiction and non-fiction, both overtly and tacitly, and whose official representative--

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[74] "*«Les lois de la nature, dit l'ingénieur, ont fait vivre le Christ au milieu du mensonge et mourir pour un mensonge.» En ce sens seulement, Jésus incarne bien tout le drame humain. Il est l'homme-parfait, étant celui qui a réalisé la condition la plus absurde. Il n'est pas le Dieu-homme, mais l'homme-dieu*" (*Essais* 184).

Camus is truncating the words of Kirillov concerning Christ: "Now, since the laws of nature didn't spare even Him, didn't spare even that miracle, and forced even Him to live among lies and to die for a lie--it proves that the whole planet is a lie and is based on a lie and an inane smirk. [А если так, если законы природы не пожалели и *Этого,* даже чудо свое же не пожалели, а заставили и *Его* жить среди лжи и умереть за ложь, то, стало быть, вся планета есть ложь и стоит на лжи и глупой насмешке]" (634; *PSS* 10: 471; pt. 3, ch. 6, sect. 2).

the Jesuit Paneloux--figures so prominently in the death of Philippe Othon, the Passion accounts are considered to focus on the "greatest moral evil ever committed--the rejection and murder of God's only Son, caused by the sins of all men" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 312).[75] Given the importance of Dostoyevsky for Camus, it is fitting that Camus chooses a Jesuit to represent Catholicism. In venting his animus against the Catholic Church, Dostoyevsky singles out the members of the Jesuit order as special targets, making them personifications of evil.

In Camus's disconcerting narrative of Philippe's death agony, beyond the echoes of the Passion, it is possible to discern a Eucharistic motif that may have been intentionally inserted by Camus, whose minimal Catholic upbringing at least included receiving Holy Communion. Lottman informs us that "[t]here is a touching photograph of a neatly dressed eleven-year-old Albert Camus in his first Communion outfit" (35).[76] Just as Father Paneloux's religion asserts that Christ's body is made sacramentally, but really and actually, present during the Sacrifice of the Mass (a teaching formulated in the Catholic dogmas of the Real Presence and transubstantiation),[77] so, too, that same body is rendered present (but this time in a purely symbolic sense) on Philippe's death bed in the

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[75] "*mal moral le plus grand qui ait jamais été commis, le rejet et le meurtre du Fils de Dieu, causé par les péchés de tous les hommes*."

[76] This photograph is reproduced in Lottman's biography after page 226. Because the caption tells us that Albert was eleven years old at the time of the photograph, the occasion may not have been his First Communion (called *Communion privée* and received at the age of seven or so), but rather the *Communion solennelle* ("solemn Communion"), which was received five or so years later.

[77] Even though this dissertation is chiefly concerned with comparative literature rather than theology, it is necessary to provide a brief theological scholion to clarify and justify my speculation regarding the Eucharistic echoes in Camus. The Catholic Church teaches that the priest at Mass miraculously, but really and literally (not symbolically), transforms the "substance," or innermost reality, of bread and wine into the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ even though the appearances of the bread and wine (the color, shape, weight, etc.) remain unchanged. As far as the Church is concerned, after the consecration, there is no bread or wine on the altar; it is Christ who is present. See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (sections 1373-81).

resemblance that the child's twisted, pain-wracked limbs bear to those of the crucified Jesus: "[. . .] on the wildly rumpled bed, the child assumed the grotesque appearance of someone who had been crucified" (*Théâtre* 1394).[78] Just as Father Paneloux genuflects at every Mass before the Host that he has just changed into the body and blood of the crucified Christ, so, too, does Camus make the priest instinctively kneel before the crucified child: "And he allowed himself to slip to his knees, and everyone thought it natural to hear him say in a slightly muffled, but clear, voice, against the background of the nameless, unceasing moaning, 'My God, save this child'" (*Théâtre* 1395-96).[79] Strengthening the plausibility of a Eucharistic allusion in Philippe's death scene is the use of bread and wine as a metaphorical pair in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*. Since the elements (or "signs")[80] that are consecrated during the Mass are bread and wine, Camus's mention of the "wine of the absurd and the bread of indifference" appears too strongly evocative of his abandoned Catholicism to be a sheer coincidence. In the following sentences of Camus's philosophical essay in defense of absurdism, this dual trope both serves as an apparent counter-Eucharist and reinforces the possibility of a Eucharistic reflection in the death scene in *La Peste*:

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[78] "*[. . .] l'enfant prit dans le lit dévasté une pose de crucifié grotesque*" (*Plague* 215; my translation).

[79] "*Et il se laissa glisser à genoux et tout le monde trouva naturel de l'entendre dire d'une voix un peu étouffée, mais distincte derrière la plainte anonyme qui n'arrêtait pas: «Mon Dieu, sauvez cet enfant.»*" (*Plague* 216-17; my translation).

The Pléiade edition contains this expanded plea in its section of variant readings: "My God, save this child who has not had the time to be truly guilty. [*Mon Dieu, sauvez cet enfant* qui n'a pas eu le temps d'être vraiment coupable]" (*Théâtre* 1396, 1995 [endnote 1]; my translation).

[80] The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls the bread and wine "signs [*signes*]" (section 1333) for this reason: according to the emphatic teaching of the Catholic Church as summarized in a preceding footnote, the *substance* of the bread and wine at Mass, as the result of having been consecrated by a priest repeating the words of Jesus at the Last Supper ("This is my body . . . this is the chalice of my blood"), is changed into Christ's body, blood, soul, and divinity, which are now hidden under the *appearances* of bread and wine. Thus, the appearances of bread and wine become signs--*sacramental* signs--of the Real Presence of Christ, who is truly existing beneath them.

> The body, affection, creation, action, human nobility will then resume their places in this mad world. At last man will again find there the wine of the absurd and the bread of indifference on which he feeds his greatness. (*Myth* 52)[81]

By alluding in *La Peste* to the Passion of Christ, Camus is expressing one of the underlying affirmations of his philosophy of absurdism. As far as the Camusian absurdist is concerned, the putative God is a murderer. It is against this background that we may wish to understand a somewhat startling declaration made by Jacques Maritain in *God and the Permission of Evil*: "The fundamental certitude, the rock to which we must cling in this question of moral evil, is the *absolute innocence of God*" (3). It is as if the Catholic Maritain is intentionally contradicting Camus's indictment of God. In this indictment, it is God, not sinful mankind, who murdered God's own Incarnate Son, just as it is God who murders all other victims of homicide--and, indeed, every other human being without exception. This anti-Christian polemic lies behind the identification of Philippe Othon with the crucified Jesus. To miss this is to miss much of the significance of Camus's didactic scene. Not only that: it is also to misapprehend the deepest affirmations of absurdism. It is from the perspective of absurdism that we must understand a comment in Camus's notebooks:

> It was because he was jealous of our pain that God came to die on the Cross. (*Carnets II* 282)[82]

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[81] "*Le corps, la tendresse, la création, l'action, la noblesse humaine, reprendront alors leur place dans ce monde insensé. L'homme y retrouvera enfin le vin de l'absurde et le pain de l'indifférence dont il nourrit sa grandeur*" (*Essais* 137).

[82] "*C'est parce qu'il jalousait notre douleur que Dieu est venu mourir sur la Croix*" (my translation).

Camus formulates this private thought in language of flawless orthodoxy from the viewpoint of the Catholic Church, which insists that it was God himself who died on the Cross. To say that it was a

So clear is the likelihood of Dostoyevskian influence on Philippe Othon's death scene in *La Peste* that it seems surprising that this powerful example of Camus's rewriting of Dostoyevsky has, as far as I can determine, not previously been noticed. I have no difficulty in using the obvious term "influence" in addition to "intertext," and I do not understand why Davison, writing about the general relationship between our two authors, says: "The notion of influence appears curiously outmoded in these days of intertextuality [. . .]" (1). A database search for journal articles about "Mikhailov" and "Mixajlov" led to no article on this subject in the database of the Modern Language Association International Bibliography**.** Moreover, Teresa Rawa does not mention the Mikhailov passage in her article entitled "Camus et Dostoïevski: Quelques analogies textuelles" ["Camus and Dostoyevsky: Some Textual Analogies"]. Perhaps the failure to note the resemblances between the Mikhailov and Philippe Othon texts reflects neglect of *The House of the Dead* in favor of the major novels of Dostoyevsky. Frank says: "*House of the Dead* is probably the least read, and certainly among the least *carefully* read, of Dostoevsky's longer works, and it is usually treated far too cursorily by his interpreters and commentators" (*Years of Ordeal* 159). According to Beránková, we do not have any statement from Camus to confirm that he read *The House of the Dead*. Nonetheless, the Mikhailov passage seems to bear out her observation that "[. . .] even so, everything leads one to believe that he was not unfamiliar with them [i.e., *The House of the Dead* and

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human person who died, and that the Second Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity (the Incarnate Logos) did not die, is the heresy of Nestorianism. See Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (143-44).

The translation of Ott's scholarly, comprehensive textbook of Catholic doctrine has the additional advantages of being written in English instead of Latin and of being in print. Though reliable and helpful--even indispensable--for the most part, it contains, paradoxically, segments in which the author unwittingly undermines Catholic dogmas with problematic phraseology. For example, see his treatment (205) of the virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary *in partu* ("in childbirth").

other Dostoyevskian texts that Camus fails to mention explicitly]" (84, [footnote 234]).[83] In addition, as has already been mentioned, one of the themes of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*--the problematic nature of any purposeless, meaningless, repetitive human activity resembling the punishment inflicted on Sisyphus--may be another confirmation of Beránková's statement.[84]

Nadine Popluiko-Natov, in her University of Michigan doctoral dissertation entitled *Camus and Dostoevsky: A Comparative Study*, lists thirteen Camusian works in which there are "direct references" to Dostoyevsky and his texts (71),[85] and she says that *La Peste* contains no "explicit references" to Dostoyevsky (107). In the light of the striking correspondences enumerated in table 1 in my dissertation, it appears to me that

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[83] "[. . .] *tout porte à croire qu'il ne les ignorait pas pour autant."*

Since Beránková's dissertation has, unfortunately, not been translated into English, all translations from it in this dissertation are mine.

[84] As for the possibility of Camus's having read this Dostoyevskian text in French, the online catalogues of the Library of Congress and Harvard University show that *The House of the Dead* was translated into French as *Souvenirs de la maison des morts* [*Memories of the House of the Dead*] by Charles Neyroud and published by Plon-Nourrit in Paris in 1886.

[85] As listed by Popluiko-Natov, these thirteen works are:

1. *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*
2. *L'Homme révolté*
3. *Les Possédés*
4. "Pour Dostoïevski" ["For Dostoyevsky"]
5. *Discours de Suède* [*Speeches in Sweden*] (1958)
6. Interview given to *Demain* [*Tomorrow*] (October 1957)
7. "Dostoïevski prophète du XXe siècle" ["Dostoyevsky, Prophet of the 20th Century"] (*Spectacles*, mars 1958) [*Spectacles*, March 1958]
8. "Albert Camus nous parle de son adaptation des *Possédés*" ["Albert Camus Speaks to Us About His Adaptation of *The Possessed*"] (*Spectacles*, mars 1958)
9. Interview given to *Paris-Théâtre* [*Paris-Theatre*] (1958)
10. "Pourquoi je fais du théâtre" ["Why I Do Theatre"] (*Le Figaro Littéraire*, 16 mai 1959) [*Literary Figaro*, May 16, 1959]
11. *L'Été*
12. *Carnets I: mai 1935-février 1942* [*Notebooks I: May 1935-February 1942*]
13. *Carnets II: janvier 1942-mars 1951* [*Notebooks II: January 1942-March 1951*].

Popluiko-Natov's dissertation was completed in 1969, whereas *Carnets III: mars 1951-décembre 1959* [*Notebooks III: March 1951-December 1959*], which also contains references to Dostoyevsky, was not published until 1989.

Philippe Othon's death scene in *La Peste* should be considered a place in which Camus may be referring to his Russian predecessor, albeit in an intertextual manner and without mentioning his name. This possible dependence of Camus's *locus classicus* on a passage in Dostoyevsky reinforces the bond, already exceptionally solid, between the two novelists, and further justifies using their relationship as a prism for examining the scandal of evil.

Even if one does not wish to discern an intertextual relationship between the death scene of Philippe Othon and that of Mikhailov, these two scenes are bound together by the terrible scandal of death itself. For the unbelieving Camus of his thoroughgoing absurdist phase, this scandal is the supreme evil. To be sure, even for the believing Dostoyevsky, death can be described as a dreadful, monumental evil: does not Jesus himself weep at the tomb of his deceased friend Lazarus (*Jn* 11:35)? This biblical passage plays a pivotal rôle in *Crime and Punishment*, since Sonia reads the entire pericope of Lazarus's resurrection to Raskol'nikov in one of the most memorable and gripping scenes of the novel (274-78).[86] Worsening the scandal of death for our two novelists is the extreme agony in which both the child attacked by the plague and the prisoner attacked by consumption pass their final hours on earth**.** Readers do not need much imagination to be led by these passages to contemplate the sufferings that may await any one of us at the end of our lives. These reader reactions are tributes to the literary achievements of Dostoyevsky and Camus, and they are reflections of the gravity of the universal issues that these writers present.

[86] *PSS* 6: 249-52; pt. 4, ch. 4.

In view of my conjecture that Camus may have been moving toward Catholicism at the time of his death, I wish to note a striking bit of information about the name that Camus gives the young boy who dies in *La Peste*: Philippe Othon. Beránková, rightly emphasizing that Philippe is not a fully developed character, but rather a symbol of all suffering children and thus an emblem of all the victims of an absurd universe, says that he is "[s]o vague that he makes one rather think of an abstract concept than of a real person" (145).[87] This remark is ironic given the fact there was a real Philippe Othon in French history: a nobleman who ruled from 1608 to 1634 as the prince of the region of Salm, a region which was, in the same century, afflicted with the plague. What considerably augments this unexpected coincidence--if it is, in fact, a mere coincidence--is the fact that the prince returned to Catholicism on January 8, 1623, after having defected to Lutheranism.[88]

**Evil: Always a Personal Issue**

As we move toward the close of this introductory chapter, we should bear in mind the evils--grievous and exceptional--that Dostoyevsky endured in his own life, beginning with his arrest on April 23, 1849, by the tsarist authorities for having taken part in the Petrashevskii and Palm-Durov circles, which were deemed threats to the government. The mock execution to which Dostoyevsky and his fellow political prisoners were subjected in Semenovskii Square in St. Petersburg on December 22, 1849, at the behest

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[87] "*Si vague qu'il fait plutôt penser à un concept abstrait qu'à une personne réelle.*"

[88] For Prince Philippe Othon of Salm, see the Internet essay by Monique-Marie François: "Le Salm en quelques dates" ["Salm in a Few Dates"]. This essay appears on the Web site *Magique pays de Salm* [*The Magical Country of Salm*]; the URL is http://badonpierre.free.fr/salmpierre/tome4zd.html.

of Tsar Nicholas I (1825-55)--why is the tsar's cruelty not explicitly recognized as a crime of sadism?--was so traumatizing that one of the novelist's comrades, Nikolai Grigoriev, went permanently mad (Frank, *Years of Ordeal* 58). Even though Dostoyevsky's feigned execution gave the world some of the greatest passages in Russian literature, it was a horrific prelude to the four-year Siberian prison sentence that replaced death before a firing squad. To these early events in Dostoyevsky's biography must be added his recurrent epileptic attacks, which thrust onto his shoulders a cross whose weight is evident to anyone who has ever witnessed such an episode. There was also his general nervous condition, which will be discussed in detail in chapter 3. Moreover, we must also take into account the agonizing loss by Dostoyevsky and his second wife, Anna, of two young children: eleven-week-old Sonia in Geneva on May 24, 1868, and two-year-old Aleksei in St. Petersburg on May 16, 1878 (Yarmolinsky, *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* xii). It is obvious why Dostoyevsky gives the name Alesha to one of his positive characters in *The Brothers Karamazov*: Alesha is the diminutive form of Aleksei. And it is no accident that the two-year old boy whom the peasant woman Nastas'ia mourns in Father Zosima's presence--the little boy whose embroidered sash she shows the elder in one of Dostoyevsky's most touching scenes--also bears the name Aleksei (*The Brothers Karamazov* 40-42).[89] (The consoling pastoral counsel that Father Zosima imparts on this occasion is a partial refutation, delivered in advance, of Ivan Karamazov's atheistic discourse.) Taking this list of woes into account, a reader can easily understand why suffering is a major theme in the works of Dostoyevsky, and why no one but a strict formalist would disregard or minimize the impact that such pain must have had on his

[89] *PSS* 14: 45-47; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 3.

literary output, especially the parts that deal with man's struggle with suffering and other forms of evil.

We must also be aware of the extent of Camus's personal experience of evil. Prominent among the evils with which the French novelist had to contend was the terrible blow that tuberculosis inflicted on him beginning at the age of sixteen and lasting throughout his life. He comments directly on this trial--especially painful for a youth who loved athletics--in the preface to *L'Envers et l'endroit* [*The Wrong Side and the Right Side*]: "Even later, when a serious illness temporarily deprived me of the natural vigor that always transfigured everything for me, in spite of the invisible infirmities and new weaknesses this illness brought, I may have known fear and discouragement, but never bitterness" (*Lyrical* 9).[90] Camus's first marriage, to Simone Hié, collapsed on his opening a letter addressed to her. It disclosed to him that Simone, a narcotic addict, had been prostituting herself with doctors to obtain morphine (Lottman 114-15; McCarthy 79-80; Todd 113). It seems reasonable to acquiesce in Beránková's view: "It seems to us that the impact of this unexpected event on the psyche of the writer remains mostly underestimated" (50).[91] As will be seen later in my chapter on suicide (chapter 4), Camus was also to experience emotional pain in connection with his second marriage, to Francine Faure, who suffered from depression--a fact that may have left an imprint on *La Chute*. If Dostoyevsky endured considerable suffering in his life, so did Camus.

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[90] "*Même plus tard, quand une grave maladie m'ôta provisoirement la force de vie qui, en moi, transfigurait tout, malgré les infirmités invisibles et les nouvelles faiblesses que j'y trouvais, je pus connaître la peur et le découragement, jamais l'amertume*" (*Essais* 8).

[91] "*Il nous semble que l'impact de cet événement inattendu sur le psychique de l'écrivain reste largement sous-estimé*."

Now that the focus of this dissertation and the rationale for its title have been set forth in preparation for the first detailed analysis of the concrete and contrasting ways in which Dostoyevsky and Camus approach the scandal of evil, it seems appropriate to offer some remarks on the interdisciplinary, metatextual nature of this study. Evil is, above all, a philosophical--and, more specifically, a metaphysical--issue. Metaphysics, in turn, unavoidably raises the question of theism. Why limit oneself to discussing metaphysical and theological issues only in the abstract, arid terms of the philosopher, when graphic literary examples based on life and refined with the tools of the novelist's craft are readily available? As Camus says in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, "[t]he great novelists are philosopher novelists, that is to say, the contrary of writers with a thesis" (*Essais* 178).[92] To neglect literary presentations of the scandalous existence of evil is particularly irrational when the authors in question are writers of the stature of Dostoyevsky and Camus. Moreover, writers, like all people, are emotional, as well as intellectual, beings. This reality calls for evaluating, not only the texts themselves, but also their autobiographical and psychological wellsprings (to the degree, of course, to which these sources can be determined with certitude or responsibly hypothesized). Furthermore, philosophical and psychological issues can never be disconnected from the political realm. Accordingly, all through this study, I shall try to discern intersections between comparative literature on the one hand, and philosophy, theology, psychology, and political science on the other hand. Such a wide-ranging, multifaceted analysis will more fully establish the extent to which the texts of Dostoyevsky and Camus are actually, and not merely superficially, effective.

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[92] "*Les grands romanciers sont des romanciers philosophes, c'est-à-dire le contraire d'écrivains à thèse*" (*Myth* 101; my translation).

**My Central Thesis: Evil Overwhelms Both Camus and Dostoyevsky**

The question of my authors' effectiveness brings me to the central thesis of this dissertation, which is that *both Dostoyevsky and Camus, despite their undeniable literary attainments, fail, though in different ways, to come to grips with the scandal of evil. From the perspective of the* philosophia perennis*, each novelist allows himself to be overwhelmed by this tormenting issue since he fails to ground his position adequately.* As I establish in chapter 6 of this dissertation, the Russian novelist mostly ignores arguments from apologetics, thus subverting his own explicitly declared intention of refuting Ivan's atheistic discourse in the "Rebellion" chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*. From the viewpoint of the Russian Orthodoxy that Dostoyevsky is trying to defend, this self-undermining is bad enough, but the situation is considerably worsened, as I contend in chapter 5, when the author pulls the rug out from under the Russian Orthodox Church--and his own worldview. He does this by venting his enmity toward the Catholic Church in "The Grand Inquisitor" chapter, an unsparing attack on the Catholic belief in miracle, mystery, and authority. Dostoyevsky overlooks the fact that Russian Orthodoxy, too, accepts all the components of this key triad. In assailing Catholicism, Dostoyevsky is oblivious to the fact that he is implicitly attacking the Russian Orthodox Church. Furthermore, by unwittingly jeopardizing Russian Orthodoxy, he is also contradicting the pastoral counsel of the dying Father Zosima in the same novel, thus deconstructing his own text, for Father Zosima teaches that there is no solution for the problem of evil as it relates to Russia apart from the religion that he and other Russian monks symbolize in contrast with the atheist, who represents evil:

> The salvation of Russia comes from the people. And the Russian monk has always been on the side of the people. [. . .] The people will meet the atheist and overcome him, and Russia will be one and orthodox. (293-94).[93]

As for Camus, as I also argue in chapter 6, his failure to ground his response to the scandal of evil lies in a more basic abdication of intellectual responsibility: he simply disregards the Christian apologetic arguments altogether as if they do not even exist, opting for the fallacy of the *petitio principii*. In plain English, Camus begs the question. He does so by assuming the truth of atheism and ignoring the counterarguments, especially the appeal of the Catholic Church to the resurrection of Christ.

In connection with the Catholic Church, it must be said that *both* authors conduct a polemic against her--*and specifically in reference to the problem of evil*. This last point, a critical one, is evident in the case of Camus, especially, as we have seen, in the death scene of Philippe Othon in *La Peste*. But it is *not* as obvious that Dostoyevsky, too, rejects the solution that the Catholic Church proposes in response to evil. Readers may object: "Does Dostoyevsky the Russian Orthodox believer not agree with the Catholic Church in believing that the doctrines of the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption, contrition for sin, the forgiveness of sin, reparation for sin, the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body, together with all their consequences, collectively represent the answer to the physical and moral evils that torment humanity?" The rejoinder to this objection is in the affirmative, but that rejoinder entails a significant caveat, for Dostoyevsky simultaneously rejects the Catholic resolution of the scandalous

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[93] "От народа спасение Руси. Русский же монастырь искони был с народом. [. . .] Народ встретит атеиста и поборет его, и станет единая православная Русь" (*PSS* 14: 285; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. e). The adjective "orthodox" in the Garnett-Matlaw translation should be capitalized.

existence of evil by contesting an integral component of that resolution. This component is the claim of Catholicism to be the only true religion, the religion to which all human beings are morally obliged to be converted to achieve salvation from the evil of sin. For this reason, Dostoyevsky, no less than Camus, must be said to contradict the Catholic answer to the scandal of evil.

This scandal both animates literary texts and powerfully transcends them, since, like our two novelists, no writer, no reader, and no human being can escape suffering and mortality, which affect the entire human person--in the intellect as well as in the panoply of the emotions. Consequently, a dissertation on this quintessentially foundational, and always topical, subject, in addition to furthering knowledge of one of the major examples of the interaction between Russian and French literatures, should be of more than academic interest. Moreover, although I contend that both Dostoyevsky and Camus are ultimately overwhelmed as they attempt to grapple with the agonizing problem of evil, I also believe that their flawed attempts merit the panoptic analysis that I hope to achieve.

# CHAPTER 2

# AND SO I HASTEN TO GIVE BACK MY ENTRANCE TICKET: THE SUFFERING AND DEATH OF CHILDREN ARE FOREGROUNDED AS EVILS IN BOTH WRITERS

The evils especially emphasized as terrible scandals in the works of both Dostoyevsky and Camus are the suffering and death of innocent children. I shall begin with the Russian novelist, whose major text on this subject--one of the monumental texts in the entire Western canon--is Ivan Karamazov's impassioned indictment of the divine order of the universe. This indictment is handed up in the novel that bears Ivan's family name: *The Brothers Karamazov*.

## Ivan Karamazov's Ideological Race

Ivan's ideological manifesto, proclaimed in his conversation with his younger brother Alesha in a tavern in Skotoprigon'evsk (542),[94] their provincial Russian town, appears in chapter 4 ("Rebellion") of book 5 ("Pro and Contra"). This exchange, which is less of a dialogue between the brothers and much more of a monologue delivered by Ivan in Alesha's mostly passive presence, begins with Ivan's assuring his brother that it is not God's existence that he refuses to accept, but rather God's world, a world disfigured by blood-congealing evils. Continuing what Dostoyevsky's narrator calls a "long tirade" (217),[95] Ivan launches his attack by declaring that love of one's neighbor is a bizarre concept, for "[i]t's just one's neighbors, to my mind, that one can't love, though one

[94] "Скотопригоньевска" (*PSS* 15: 15; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 2).

[95] "длинную тираду" (*PSS* 14: 215; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 3).

might love those at a distance" (217).[96] With that explosive comment, Ivan bursts out of the starting blocks dashing toward his rhetorical climax with all the energy and relentlessness of a highly trained and powerfully motivated runner heading toward the finish line in a crucial race. He himself tells Alesha, in a sentence that can be applied to both Ivan's life journey and the immediate monologue: "And while I am on earth, I make haste to take my own measures" (225).[97] Given the frenetic pace with which Ivan attempts to demolish Christian theodicy before the eyes of his brother, a novice monk soon to leave the monastery for the perils of life in the world, it is doubtful that the latter has a chance to enjoy the tasty fish soup he ordered on entering the dining room, when his mood was still buoyant (210-211).[98]

Soon Alesha will ask in emotional torment: "Why are you trying me?" (224).[99] As Ivan furiously--"as though in delirium" (224)[100]--pounds the course of his rhetorical marathon, he hurls into Alesha's face examples of atrocities committed against children, beginning with what someone had recounted to him about war crimes allegedly perpetrated by Turks and Circassians in Bulgaria. Searing images now flash, one after the other, across the screen of the reader's mind as Ivan talks of unborn infants being cut out of their mothers' wombs, and mothers forced to watch their babies being tossed into the air like soccer balls and pierced by the tips of Turkish bayonets. Ivan's last Bulgarian horror image is equally, if not more, unsparing: a baby's gleeful laughs are ended when

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[96] "Именно ближних-то, по-моему, и невозможно любить, а разве лишь дальних" (*PSS* 14: 215; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4).

[97] "И пока я на земле, я спешу взять свои меры" (*PSS* 14: 223; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4).

[98] *PSS* 14: 208, 210; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 3.

[99] "--Для чего ты меня испытуешь [sic]?" (*PSS* 14: 222; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4).

[100] "как бы в бреду" (*PSS* 14: 222; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4).

the barbarian enemy soldier pulls a pistol trigger in the infant's face and spatters its brains all over the site of this outrage.

But all that is only a prelude to the Russian examples, which are perhaps even more horrifying, for Ivan now turns to instances in which children are tormented by their own parents, or in contexts that have nothing to do with the all-consuming savagery of warfare. The first example in the Russian phantasmagoria is the birch-rod flogging of a seven-year-old girl by parents who are later acquitted by an obtuse, heartless jury. Then comes the account of the five-year-old girl whose mother and father, having beaten her viciously, lock her in an outhouse and not only smear her face with her own excrement, but also make her consume it. But the catalogue of infamies does not end there as Ivan keeps racing toward his conclusion, for he then initiates the narrative of the general who, in a burst of anger, punishes an eight-year-old serf boy for throwing a rock at one of the general's hunting dogs. We learn that the child is stripped and forced to sprint in terror in a vain attempt to escape a pack of hundreds of madly howling animals before being mauled to death before the eyes of his hysterical mother.[101] The poor serf child is no longer running at this point, but Ivan still is: having reached the home stretch, Ivan now declares to Alesha that these unspeakable crimes inflicted on children make it impossible for him to accept the eternal harmony of God's universe, for such a divine plan is not

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[101] Ivan may be hinting that mental illness or senile dementia afflicted the murderous estate owner: "I believe the general was afterwards declared incapable of administering his estates. [Генерала, кажется, в опеку взяли]" (224; *PSS* 14: 221; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4). This raises the issue of possible exculpatory factors in the commission of horrifying acts of moral evil against children, and in the commission of crimes in general. It is somewhat surprising that Dostoyevsky may be raising this issue in Ivan's discourse, because it diverts attention from the main topic, which is the reconciliation of God's existence with the suffering and death of young children. Granted, Dostoyevsky tells correspondent Nikolai Liubimov in his letter dated May 10, 1879, that he took all Ivan's examples about children from the press (Frank and Goldstein 465; *PSS* 30, pt. 1: 64); nevertheless, a novelist has the option of reworking real-life material.

I do not believe that the above point is nullified by the possibility that the declaration of the general's mental incompetence may have been an exculpatory fiction.

worth its agonizing price in blood and tears. In such a cosmos, he proclaims to the believing Alesha, the punishment of hell for the murderers and torturers is meaningless, and so is forgiveness, for no one has the right to forgive such astounding evil committed even against the innocence and helplessness of children. Ivan Karamazov crosses his finish line, and, believing that he has won this philosophical race, proclaims in triumph to Alesha:

> And if the sufferings of children go to swell the sum of sufferings which was necessary to pay for truth, then I protest that the truth is not worth such a price. I don't want the mother to embrace the oppressor who threw her son to the dogs! She dare not forgive him! Let her forgive him for herself, if she will, let her forgive the torturer for the immeasurable suffering of her mother's heart. But the sufferings of her tortured child she has no right to forgive [. . .]. And so I hasten to give back my entrance ticket, and if I am an honest man I am bound to give it back as soon as possible. [. . .] It's not God that I don't accept, Alesha, only I most respectfully return Him the ticket. (226)[102]

Dostoyevsky's self-evaluation of what he believes he has achieved with this incandescent peroration of Ivan's indictment is expressed in terms that are surprisingly

[102] "И если страдания детей пошли на пополнение той суммы страданий, которая необходима была для покупки истины, то я утверждаю заранее, что вся истина не стоит такой цены. Не хочу я, наконец, чтобы мать обнималась с мучителем, растерзавшим ее сына псами! Не смеет она прощать ему! Если хочет, пусть простит за себя, пусть простит мучителю материнское безмерное страдание свое; но страдания своего растерзанного ребенка она не имеет права простить [. . .]. А потому свой билет на вход спешу возвратить обратно. И если только я честный человек, то обязан возвратить его как можно заранее. [. . .] Не бога [sic] я не принимаю, Алеша, я только билет ему почтительнейше возвращаю" (*PSS* 14: 223; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4).

hubristic and pugnacious. In the notebooks for the novel, he attacks his unbelieving critics in these words:

> Those villains have mocked me for an *uneducated* and retrograde faith in God. Those blockheads have never even conceived so powerful a rejection of God as exists in the Inquisitor and the preceding chapter, to which *the whole book* will serve as answer. After all, I do not believe in God like a fool (a fanatic). And they wanted to teach me, and mocked my backwardness! *Their stupid sort never even conceived a rejection as powerful as the one I overcame.* And they are going to teach me! (Norton Critical Edition of *The Brothers Karamazov* 769; my italics only for the penultimate sentence; other italics in the Norton text)[103]

Is it really the case that Dostoyevsky's "stupid" critics had "never even conceived" so powerful a rejection of God as the one invoking the suffering and death of children? Were not at least some of those opponents aware of the points made in the Book of Job? It is difficult to understand how Dostoyevsky could have forgotten this biblical book, even momentarily, since, in his June 10/22, 1875, letter to his second wife, Anna Grigor'evna Dostoevsky, he tells her that he loved it "when I was still almost a baby!" (Frank and Goldstein 406).[104] The account of Job's trials antedates Dostoyevsky's infancy by at least twenty centuries, having possibly been composed as early as the reign

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[103] "Мерзавцы дразнили меня *необразованною* и ретроградною верою в бога [sic]. Этим олухам и не снилось такой силы отрицание бога [sic], какое положено в Инквизиторе и в предшествовавшей главе, которому ответом служит весь роман. Не как дурак же, фанатик, я верую в бога [sic]. И эти хотели меня учить и смеялись над моим неразвитием. Да их глупой природе и не снилось такой силы отрицание, которое перешел я. Им ли меня учить" (*PSS* 27: 48).

The phrase "the whole book" is not italicized in the Russian text.

[104] "[. . .] я был еще тогда почти младенцем!" (*PSS* 29, pt. 2: 43).

of King Solomon in the tenth century B.C., according to Joseph Hontheim's article entitled "Job" in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*,[105] or at least no later than the third century B.C., according to John L. McKenzie in the *Dictionary of the Bible* (441). Dostoyevsky even has Father Zosima mention Job in *The Brothers Karamazov* (270-71).[106] Father Zosima's reference occurs in book 6, "The Russian Monk," the book that Dostoyevsky intends as a reply to Ivan's attack on faith in book 5.[107]

True, Job's agony does not explicitly raise the issue of the suffering and death of young children--Job's progeny seem to be past the age of childhood (*Job* 1:18)--but it certainly covers that topic by implication in its treatment of the suffering endured by the innocent. Job, tormented and dismayed, cries out in the presence of his vexing, impervious friends: "[. . .] Know then that God has dealt unfairly with me, and compassed me round with his net. If I cry out 'Injustice!' I am not heard. I cry for help, but there is no redress. He has barred my way and I cannot pass; he has veiled my path in darkness [. . .]" (19:6-8).[108]

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[105] Hontheim says: "Many Catholic investigators even at the present time assign the book to the reign of Solomon; the masterly poetic form points to this brilliant period of Hebrew poetry. The proofs, however, are not very convincing."

[106] *PSS* 14: 264-65; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 2, sect. b.

[107] In his May 10, 1879, letter to Nikolai Liubimov, Dostoyevsky says that book 5 is the culmination ["кульминационная точка"] of *The Brothers Karamazov* (Frank and Goldstein 464; *PSS* 30, pt. 1: 63), but in his August 7/19, 1879, letter to Liubimov, Dostoyevsky says that book 6 is the culmination (Frank and Goldstein 477; *PSS* 30, pt. 1: 102). There is no contradiction between the two letters if we regard books 5 and 6 as a unity, in which Ivan expresses the argument for atheism in book 5, and Father Zosima the argument for faith in book 6. Nevertheless, this obvious harmonization of Dostoyevsky's statements does not mean that he does an adequate job of answering Ivan.

[108] Here is the text in the Septuagint: "γνῶτε οὖν ὅτι κύριός ἐστιν ὁ ταράξας, ὀχύρωμα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐπ᾽ ἐμὲ ὕψωσεν. ἰδοὺ γελῶ ὀνείδει καὶ οὐ λαλήσω· κεκράξομαι, καὶ οὐδαμοῦ κρίμα. κύκλῳ περιῳκοδόμημαι καὶ οὐ μὴ διαβῶ, ἐπὶ πρόσωπόν μου σκότος ἔθετο."

I translate the Septuagint as follows: "Know, in that case, that it is the Lord who has caused me distress, and it is he who has crushed me underneath a fortress. Behold, I laugh with reproach, and I shall not speak; I shall cry out, and nowhere is there a [vindicating] judgment. I have been trapped in a circle, and I shall not pass through; he has thrown darkness into my face."

But let us set aside the Book of Job and focus instead on the daily experience of Dostoyevsky, his unbelieving critics, and every other human being. Has the author of *The Brothers Karamazov* forgotten the millions of children who have suffered before he was born? And the millions of mothers and fathers who have wept at their children's sick beds and mourned at their graves? Ignore the atheists of Dostoyevsky's time. It is simply not the case that the basic argument underpinning Ivan's indictment never dawned on anyone before that time. Dostoyevsky, boasting of his unquestionable literary accomplishment in *The Brothers Karamazov*, seems not to recall the extent to which the human race in all the centuries preceding his own was tormented by the problem of evil as much as Dostoyevsky, Ivan Karamazov, and Dostoyevsky's adversaries are. In his apparent forgetfulness, the great Russian novelist inflates the originality and singularity of Ivan's argument against God.

**An Irrefutable Argument?**

In *The Religion of Dostoevsky*, A. Boyce Gibson takes the peremptory position--which he expresses in an almost off-hand manner--that Ivan's invocation of the upsetting issue of the suffering of children "wrecks the cheap theodicies" and "has rendered them unavailable for all time" (212-13). In defending his position, Gibson may wish to use an adjective used by Dostoyevsky himself, who, as has already been noted in chapter 1, tells his correspondent Nikolai Liubimov that Ivan chooses a topic that is "[. . .] irrefutable--

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Even in the Greek, Job is saying that the cause of his suffering and perplexity is not his own guilt (for he maintains his innocence), but God. I suggest that "I laugh with reproach" refers to the reproach that Job directs against those who unjustly contend that he is suffering in punishment for his own "actual sins"--the sins which he himself supposedly committed. In Catholic theology, "actual sin" is a *technical term.* "Actual sin" is distinguished from "original sin." An actual sin is a sin that we ourselves commit; original sin is the sin that we do not commit, but merely inherit from Adam, the first human being. See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 404.

the senselessness of children's suffering [. . .]" (letter dated May 10, 1879; Frank and Goldstein 465).[109] As has also been noted in chapter 1, however, Dostoyevsky's adjective "irrefutable" should be understood as referring, not to atheism, but rather to the shocking nature of children's suffering. Logically, if we consider Ivan's *atheism* irrefutable, then Dostoyevsky's attempt to refute it is pointless--in fact, it is even dishonest. The unavoidable conclusion would then be this: no intelligent person can be a theist. But does this conclusion follow? To determine whether it does, we ought to pay the "Rebellion" chapter in *The Brothers Karamazov* the tribute of a respectful deconstruction in the light of the *philosophia perennis* whose beginnings arose centuries before Dostoyevsky.

Before we proceed to this deconstruction, let us deal with a preliminary question: in wrestling with the scandal of evil, does Dostoyevsky worsen the problem by committing an enormous scandal of his own? By this I mean his refusal to provide an adequate intellectual adversary for Ivan. Is it not the case that Ivan's interlocutor, his brother Alesha, who sits with him at the table in the tavern, should at least *try* to refute Ivan's almost frenzied arguments against the goodness and love--indeed, the very existence--of God? But Alesha hardly makes a decent attempt. All he can utter is the following plea, which is only a bare allusion to the crucifixion of Jesus:

> But there is a Being and He can forgive everything, all *and for all*, because He gave His innocent blood for all and everything. You have forgotten

[109] "[. . .] неотразимую: бессмыслицу страдания детей [. . .]" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 63).

> Him, and on Him is built the edifice, and it is to Him they cry aloud, "Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed!" (226-27)[110]

In these words, Alesha is certainly professing his faith, the faith of Russian Orthodoxy and of Dostoyevsky himself, but such a response is likely to be dismissed by an unbeliever as mere pious verbiage. Alesha is not truly countering Ivan, for Dostoyevsky does not have Alesha present a point-by-point, *in extenso* refutation of Ivan's position. For this reason, in the novel's book 5, the *pro*-theism side of the argument is, essentially, silent. As Gibson says, "[t]he 'Legend' [of the Grand Inquisitor] occurs in Part Two, Book Five, entitled 'Pro and Contra'; curiously, for it is dominated by Ivan and is nearly all Contra" (185). The Devil is given free rein; he faces no real opposition. This defect in the novel--and it is an artistic as much as an intellectual flaw--is all the more striking, and all the more baffling, when we consider that it contradicts and subverts the author's own professed purpose for writing *The Brothers Karamazov*: the destruction of atheism, which he calls "blasphemy" and "anarchism." In this chapter, then, we find a text which, from the perspective of the author's own intentions, is profoundly at war with itself.

Why view this as an artistic fault as well as a philosophical one? It is also an artistic flaw because this deficit flies in the face of verisimilitude: a young man who has now decided to devote his life to the message of the Russian Orthodox Church (albeit as a layman rather than a monk) is presented as meekly, and largely unresponsively, listening

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[110] "Но существо это есть, и оно может всё простить, всех и вся *и за всё*, потому что само отдало неповинную кровь свою за всех и за всё. Ты забыл о нем, а на нем-то и созиждается [sic] здание, и это ему воскликнут: «Прав ты, господи [sic], ибо открылись пути твои»" (*PSS* 14: 224; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4).

It appears that созиждается (*sozizhdaetsia*) is a typographical error for созидается (*sozidaetsia* or "is built").

to a polemic that must, from the standpoint of Russian Orthodoxy, be described as objectively blasphemous. This characterization is no less true for being uttered in our own sociocultural context, in which the concept of blasphemy is not uniformly understood and evaluated in the same light in which most of Dostoyevsky's contemporaries viewed it.

There is a counterargument to my criticism of what is basically Alesha's silence: at a critical moment during the Passion narrative, Jesus himself stands silent before Pontius Pilate (*Jn* 19:8-10). But Pilate, unlike Ivan, presents no extensive arguments to defend his complicity in the execution of Jesus, nor does the Roman prefect improvise a lengthy speech to support the radical skepticism implied in his throw-away line: "What is truth?" (*Jn* 18:38).[111] Ivan, on the contrary, delivers a long speech, and, in the course of it, both discomforts the believing reader and reinforces the unbelieving one. In contrast, the Apostle Paul certainly conforms to psychological and historical plausibility when, on more than one occasion in the Acts of the Apostles, he engages in lengthy oral apologias for the religious movement of which he is a herald.[112] Alesha is inadequately emulating St. Paul's example, which St. Peter reflects when he says that a Christian should "[a]lways be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope [. . .]" (*1 Pet* 3:15).[113] Indeed, St. Paul tells St. Titus that a bishop (and, by

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[111] "Τί ἐστιν ἀλήθεια; "

[112] See St. Paul's discourses before the Athenians at the Areopagus (*Acts* 17:22-34) and before King Agrippa and his sister Bernice (*Acts* 26:1-23).

[113] "[. . .] ἕτοιμοι ἀεὶ πρὸς ἀπολογίαν παντὶ τῷ αἰτοῦντι ὑμᾶς λόγον περὶ τῆς ἐν ὑμῖν ἐλπίδος [. . .]."

Note that the Greek word ἀπολογίαν (*apologian*), which the New American Bible translates as "explanation," should be translated as "defense" and is the etymological basis for the English word "apologetics."

extension, all other believers) should be exemplary, "[. . .] holding fast to the true message as taught so that he will be able both to exhort with sound doctrine and to *refute* opponents" (*Tit* 1:9; my italics).[114] What Dostoyevsky puts into the mouth of Alesha in "Pro and Contra," or, more accurately, what he does *not* make him say, is hardly a refutation, but instead a capitulation. In fact, from the perspective of the theological tradition of apologetics, what Dostoyevsky fails to do at this point in *The Brothers Karamazov* as he grapples with the scandal of evil is itself a scandal--and this is true despite the apophatic tradition of Russian Orthodoxy. Granted, Alesha Karamazov is not on the intellectual level of St. Paul, St. Augustine, or St. Thomas Aquinas; nonetheless, even a non-intellectual could say more to Ivan than his brother Alesha does, and one could add that the young monk's silence is all the more surprising since Dostoyevsky has Alesha more adequately confront the budding thirteen-year-old socialist intellectual Kolia Krasotkin in the later chapter entitled "Precocity" (522-28).[115]

The foregoing points make it difficult to accept Beránková's opinion (252-53, especially 252 [footnote 695]) that Alesha is a "saint" (her quotations marks). He is certainly not a saint who, like the iconic St. Michael the Archangel body-slamming the Devil, triumphs over what Dostoyevsky regards as Ivan's evil and blasphemous argument. In making her comment, Beránková refers to humility and to renunciation of the warrior's attitude. But Christianity understands humility differently, and, while rejecting violence that cannot be justified by the principle of self-defense, has a clear

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[114] "[. . .] ἀντεχόμενον τοῦ κατὰ τὴν διδαχὴν πιστοῦ λόγου, ἵνα δυνατὸς ᾖ καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῇ ὑγιαινούσῃ καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν."

[115] *PSS* 14: 499-504; pt. 4, bk. 10, ch. 6.

affinity for the military outlook.[116] Part of this military posture is recognition of the need for an intellectual defense of faith against all attacks.

In view of the Christian affinity for the military outlook, some readers of *The Brothers Karamazov* may not be altogether sympathetic to Dostoyevsky's symbolic gesture of having Alesha kiss Ivan "softly [. . .] on the lips" (244)[117] after the latter has committed what Alesha must regard as objective blasphemy. Those readers may, *a fortiori*, experience the same uneasiness in reference to the scene in which Jesus, having approached the Grand Inquisitor, "softly kissed him on his bloodless aged lips" (243)[118] --the Grand Inquisitor who represents allegiance to the Devil and to evil itself. As Professor Amy Mandelker remarked in a letter to me, "[t]he dark side is very eloquent; the good guys can only kiss." Readers who react in that manner may feel that Dostoyevsky's appropriation of the "holy kiss" of peace of which St. Paul speaks (*Rom* 16:16)[119] wrongly lapses into sentimentalism and unduly emphasizes the valid themes of love and forgiveness of the evildoer at the expense of the urgent need to combat evil. Uneasy readers may recall that Jesus did *not* kiss Judas Iscariot, a precursor of the Grand

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[116] Military imagery abounds in the Bible. The anointing of the sacrament of Confirmation is analogized to the tattooing or branding of Roman soldiers (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 1295). Above all, one of the people who impress Jesus (*Mt* 8:5-13) is the centurion--an officer in the Roman army--who built a synagogue (and who, for that reason, may have been a monotheist). In turn, the Catholic Church is so impressed with this Roman soldier that she repeats his words during the reception of Holy Communion at every Mass of the Roman rite: "Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof [. . .]. [Κύριε, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς ἵνα μου ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην εἰσέλθῃς [. . .] ]" (*Mt* 8:8). Note, too, that the word "virtue" comes from the Latin *virtus*, which is related to the noun *vir* ("male"). According to the Lewis and Short Latin dictionary (1997), *virtus* is the "sum of all the corporeal or mental excellences of man." This sum includes courage on the battlefield, both literal and metaphorical.

[117] "тихо [. . .] в губы" (*PSS* 14: 240; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5).

[118] "тихо целует его в его бескровные девяностолетние уста" (*PSS* 14: 239; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5). The Garnett-Matlaw translation's "aged lips" should be changed to "ninety-year-old lips."

[119] "φιλήματι ἁγίῳ."

Inquisitor. On the contrary, it was Judas who kissed Jesus as a means of handing him over to torture and execution, and Jesus asked him: "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (*Lk* 22:48).[120] Readers uncomfortable with Dostoyevsky's portrayal of both Jesus and Alesha as meek in a distorted sense in these scenes, and who wish for a stronger Jesus and a stronger Alesha (or Alesha's replacement by a militant Christian), may wish to appeal to a distinction that is clarified in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "Liberation in the spirit of the Gospel is incompatible with hatred of one's enemy as a person, but not with hatred of the evil that he does as an enemy" (section 1933).[121]

**What Ivan Karamazov *Could* Have Said**

But turning from Alesha to Ivan and the latter's attack on theism, one can try to make Ivan's argument for atheism based on the existence of evil even more plausible, even more distressing than Ivan himself makes it, while suggesting the responses that Alesha could have given had he been an adequate interlocutor. Let us consider, for example, the fact that children have been deliberately tortured and murdered not merely by the demented (like the possibly deranged Russian serf owner who ordered his hunting dogs to maul the eight-year-old serf boy to death), and not merely by soldiers half-crazed by the mania that can surface in any war (as was the case with the Turkish troops who, according to Dostoyevsky's report, were accused of having bayoneted infants in the Balkans). Instead, let us consider instances in which the tormenting and killing of

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[120] "Ἰούδα, φιλήματι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδως;"

[121] "*La libération dans l'esprit de l'Evangile est incompatible avec la haine de l'ennemi en tant que personne mais non avec la haine du mal qu'il fait en tant qu'ennemi.*"

children are carried out by national leaders presumably in full possession of their mental faculties, and in the context of the deliberate, calculated infliction of the evils of suffering and death on children in a certain category. These are children who, despite their not yet having attained adulthood, have committed themselves to proclaiming publicly the existence of a God who is love, and who, according to their proclamation, himself chose to undergo torture and death for the redemption of every human being. If Dostoyevsky, speaking through Ivan Karamazov, wishes to bolster the atheist's arguments by invoking a cruelty and a contradiction of such ghastly dimensions as to be capable of inducing nightmares in both the believer and the unbeliever, then why should he limit Ivan's attack to the type of horror that is the staple of any sensationalist press? Why should Ivan not have confronted Alesha--and Dostoyevsky's readers--with the even more traumatizing horrors surrounding the child martyrs of Christian historiography? If any additional real-world examples are pertinent to this philosophical discussion, then certainly these children are.

On the basis of his profoundly Russian Orthodox upbringing, perhaps Dostoyevsky knew that even children had been put to death in the anti-Christian persecutions carried out by the Roman Empire. But there was a later period that witnessed the killing of children whose innocence and faith failed to safeguard them from suffering and murder: I am referring to the century of Japan's penetration by Catholicism. According to Frederick Vincent Williams in *The Martyrs of Nagasaki*, on February 5, 1597, on a hill in Nagasaki, three boys--Saints Thomas Kozaki, thirteen years of age, Anthony Deynan, also thirteen, and Louis Ibaraki, twelve--were crucified, and, while affixed to their crosses, were lanced to death for the crimes of having converted to a new

religion and having served as acolytes at Mass (31-37). In addition, according to C. R. Boxer in *The Christian Century in Japan, 1549-1650*, among the fifty-five Catholics burnt alive on the dried up Kamo riverbed in Kyoto in October 1619, there were five- or six-year-old children whose mothers cried out: "Jesus, receive their souls" (349-50). It is reported in [Alban] *Butler's Lives of the Saints: Complete Edition*, that the Japanese authorities of this period routinely executed even minors as a means of punishing their parents (1: 260).[122]

Granted, Dostoyevsky may have been unaware of these disturbing events from a cultural context outside the purview of nineteenth-century Russians. Nonetheless, in 1990, a Japanese Slavist discovered the diary of Nikolai Iaponskii (I. D. Kasatkin), a Russian Orthodox priest who had been in charge of his church's mission in Japan. During a conversation between Dostoyevsky and Father Iaponskii at the time of Dostoyevsky's renowned visit to Moscow for the Pushkin Festival in 1880, "Dostoyevsky exhibited a great deal of curiosity about Japan and the Japanese, particularly wishing to know if 'there was anything special in their reception of Christianity'" (Frank, *Mantle of the Prophet* 507).[123] It is possible that Father Iaponskii may have taken this opportunity to inform Dostoyevsky of Japan's seventeenth-century experience with Christianity. But whether or not Dostoyevsky was aware of the history of Catholicism in Japan, the martyrdoms that took place during that history deserve to be

[122] The atmosphere that Japanese Catholic novelist Shūsaku Endō graphically recreates in *Silence* makes the sufferings and death of the child martyrs of Japan even more upsetting. In fact, Endō's novel, with its horrifying catalogue of physical and emotional tortures inflicted on Japanese converts, is so disturbing that it should be recommended only with caution to especially sensitive readers. It is a text that may trouble readers to a far greater extent than is the case with the "Rebellion" chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*. On November 13, 2005, John Hopewell reported in *Variety* that Martin Scorsese was planning to film *Silence*. If he does justice to Endō's novel, Scorsese's film version will be a blockbuster.

[123] Frank takes the internal quotation from *Letopis' zhizni i tvorchestva F. M. Dostoevskogo* [*Chronicle of the Life and Work of F. M. Dostoyevsky*], edited by N. F. Budanova and G. M. Fridlender (3: 423).

noted when assessing the effectiveness of the "Pro and Contra" chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*. In view of Dostoyevsky's desire to confront the atheist's invocation of apparently senseless suffering as a justification for denying God's existence, the Russian novelist need not have stopped at the sufferings that God allows to be inflicted on children in every society by abusive parents and psychopaths. He could have highlighted the even more dramatic, the even more troubling, outrages that God permits to be endured even by those children who are exceptionally devoted to him. Do these shocking accounts of child martyrs not appear to be even greater scandals for believers? What kind of God--an unbeliever may ask--would permit a child to be crucified for loving him? Had Dostoyevsky known of the crucifixion and burning of children in seventeenth-century Japan, he would certainly have been conforming to his own logic and purpose had he made Ivan cite these deaths as exceptionally forceful arguments against faith and in favor of atheism.

**The Child-Killing Passages of the Old Testament**

But there is another reason for saying that Ivan Karamazov's admittedly powerful attack on belief appears to be more potent than it actually is. Furthermore, this reason leads to the conclusion that Dostoyevsky himself does not realize the true dimensions of the scandal involved in the tormenting and killing of children. Dostoyevsky could have presented a much more superficially impressive critique of theodicy--some might even say a devastating critique--by pointing to an apparent contradiction in a text that he loved: the Bible. An attentive reading of the Bible can impair the force of Ivan's discourse to a greater extent than is possible by referring to historical incidents of which Dostoyevsky

may have been unaware. A problem of which Dostoyevsky ought to have been cognizant--in the light of his cultural background--is the problem of the *hērem* passages of the Old Testament. As a committed, literate Russian Orthodox believer, the author of *The Brothers Karamazov* should have been conversant with these potentially scandalous passages--scandalous in the sense that they can be obstacles to belief. It is reasonable to conclude *a priori* that Dostoyevsky read these biblical passages. True, the Scriptures that Dostoyevsky read during his Siberian incarceration were those of the New Testament, not the Old Testament.[124] It is also true that many Christians have never read the Bible from cover to cover. Nevertheless, Dostoyevsky enthusiastically urges a correspondent--Nikolai Ozmidov, in a letter dated February 1878--to read the entire Bible (Frank and Goldstein 446-47);[125] one can suppose that he had taken his own advice. But we do not have to limit ourselves to mere supposition. In a March 1877 article on the "Jewish question," Dostoyevsky displays his pronounced hostility to Jews by claiming that, if the demographic ratio were reversed, and there were eighty million Jews and only three million Christians in Russia, the Jews would commit genocide against the Christians: "Would they not massacre them altogether, exterminate them completely, as they did more than once with alien peoples in times of old in their ancient history?" (*A Writer's Diary* 2: 909).[126]

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[124] In an article entitled "Old People" in the 1873 volume of *A Writer's Diary*, Dostoyevsky says that the Decembrist wives gave him and other convicts copies of the "Gospels, the only book permitted in the prison [Евангелием--единственная книга, позволенная в остроге]" (1: 130; *PSS* 21: 12). Nonetheless, this has to be a synecdoche for the entire New Testament, because we have the actual New Testament copy that Dostoyevsky received; it is to be found in the Lenin Library. Highlights from this copy have been published by Keir Kjetsaa as *Dostoevsky and His New Testament*.

[125] *PSS* 30, pt. 1: 10.

[126] "Не избили бы дотла, до окончательного истребления, как делывали они с чужими народностями в старину, в древнюю свою историю?" (*PSS* 25: 80).

The phrase "potentially scandalous" has been used advisedly in connection with the Scriptural texts in which the God of the Old Testament is said to have commanded the early Israelites to kill every living being, human and non-human, during military campaigns conducted against their idolatrous neighbors in Canaan. *Hērem* ("ban" or "doom") is the Hebrew term for such genocidal warfare, which is explicitly reported as having targeted women, children, infants, and other noncombatants. In keeping with this concept, the whole defeated enemy city, including all its human and animal inhabitants and all its material objects, was consecrated to God by being killed or destroyed and thus removed from the victor's use (McKenzie 78). An exhaustive, or nearly exhaustive, list of Old Testament passages in which the command to kill children and infants is recorded would include the following thirteen passages: *Num* 21:33-35; *Num* 31:13-18; *Deut* 3:6-7; *Deut* 7:1-4; *Deut* 7:16-24; *Deut* 13:13-19; *Deut* 20:16-18; *Josh* 6:15-21; *Josh* 8:1-26; *Josh* 10:28-40; *Josh* 11:10-22; *1 Sam* 15:1-35; *1 Sam* 28:18.[127] Perhaps the most

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Dostoyevsky, anticipating the title that he will give to the pivotal book 5 of *The Brothers Karamazov*, entitles this section of *A Writer's Diary* "Pro and Contra."

A full discussion of Dostoyevsky's attitude toward his Jewish compatriots will be deferred until chapter 3, which will include an analysis of the equally outrageous "blood libel" passage that disfigures *The Brothers Karamazov*.

[127] Why is *Gen* 22:1-19 not included in this list? This is the pericope in which Abraham is commanded by God to kill his son Isaac as a sacrifice. The reason for the non-inclusion of this passage is not merely the absence of the war context. Nor is it the unwillingness of some contemporary Scripture scholars and theologians to believe that Abraham actually received such a command. These commentators maintain that Abraham somehow became subjectively--and erroneously--convinced that he must sacrifice Isaac. This is the position of Germain Grisez in *The Way of the Lord Jesus* (2: 478) and of Ignatius Hunt in *Understanding the Bible* (107).

To deal with the problematic supposition that God once willed that a father kill his own child, it is not necessary to adopt the position of the aforementioned commentators. The biblical text itself allows us to nuance the surface meaning of the narrative of Abraham's trial. Verse 5 tells us that Abraham informs his servants: "Both of you stay here with the donkey, while the boy and I go on over yonder. *We* will worship and then come back to you. [Καθίσατε αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῆς ὄνου, ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ τὸ παιδάριον διελευσόμεθα ἕως ὧδε καὶ προσκυνήσαντες ἀναστρέψωμεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς]" (my italics in the English text). Further, in verses 7 and 8, when Isaac, puzzled, asks his father where the sacrificial victim is, Abraham says to the boy: "Son, [. . .] God himself will provide the sheep for the holocaust. [Ὁ θεὸς ὄψεται ἑαυτῷ πρόβατον εἰς ὁλοκάρπωσιν, τέκνον]."

arresting of these child-killing passages is *1 Sam* 15:1-3, in which the prophet Samuel is portrayed as instructing King Saul as follows:

> Samuel said to Saul: "It was I the LORD sent to anoint you king over his people Israel. Now, therefore, listen to the message of the LORD. This is what the LORD of hosts has to say: "I will punish what Amalek did to Israel when he barred his way as he was coming up from Egypt. Go, now, attack Amalek, and deal with him and all that he has under the ban. Do not spare him, but kill men and women, children and infants, oxen and sheep, camels and asses."[128]

This is the most troubling *hērem* passage because the words ordering genocide are placed into the mouth of God himself: "kill men and women, children and infants." This

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These indications provide enough of a basis for wondering whether the biblical author wants us to think that Abraham truly believes that God will actually allow him to kill Isaac. Readers should put themselves in Abraham's place: on your way to the mountain of sacrifice, would you, too, not hope that God would relent at the last minute and spare the life of your child? Would you, too, not hope that God merely wished to test you, and did not truly want you to take the child's life? The biblical author tells us that God's angelic messenger stays Abraham's hand and saves Isaac from death. Even on the supposition that that author wishes us to believe that God inflicts an agonizing trial on Abraham, it is clear that the author does *not* believe that God actually wants Abraham to kill Isaac.

Since existentialism is dealt with later in this dissertation, it is interesting to note that Sartre, commenting on Søren Kierkegaard's reaction to Abraham's plight, says the following: "You know the story: An angel commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son: and obedience was obligatory, if it really was an angel who had appeared and said, 'Thou, Abraham, shalt sacrifice thy son.' But anyone in such a case would wonder, first, whether it was indeed an angel and secondly, whether I am really Abraham. Where are the proofs?" ("Existentialism is a Humanism" 293).

[128] "Καὶ εἶπεν Σαμουηλ πρὸς Σαουλ Ἐμὲ ἀπέστειλεν κύριος χρῖσαί σε εἰς βασιλέα ἐπὶ Ισραηλ, καὶ νῦν ἄκουε τῆς φωνῆς κυρίου· τάδε εἶπεν κύριος σαβαωθ Νῦν ἐκδικήσω ἃ ἐποίησεν Αμαληκ τῷ Ισραηλ, ὡς ἀπήντησεν αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ἀναβαίνοντος αὐτοῦ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου· καὶ νῦν πορεύου καὶ πατάξεις τὸν Αμαληκ καὶ Ιεριμ καὶ πάντα τὰ αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐ περιποιήσῃ ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξολεθρεύσεις αὐτὸν καὶ ἀναθεματιεῖς αὐτὸν καὶ πάντα τὰ αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐ φείσῃ ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀποκτενεῖς ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς καὶ ἕως γυναικὸς καὶ ἀπὸ νηπίου ἕως θηλάζοντος καὶ ἀπὸ μόσχου ἕως προβάτου καὶ ἀπὸ καμήλου ἕως ὄνου."

In verse 3, the Greek text says that Saul is to attack Hierim in addition to Amalek, and it orders the killing of "the infant as well as the nursling."

Having read the entire Koran in the translation of N. J. Dawood, I can state that the Koran contains *nothing* as sanguinary and unsettling as these Old Testament texts in which a command to kill children in warfare is attributed to God.

passage was actually cited on an Internet forum on August 4, 2004, in defense of the American atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In this exchange (to which the author of this dissertation contributed) amateur controversialist Robert Coger posed the following questions to Catholic apologist Karl Keating, who had condemned the attacks on the Japanese cities in the name of Catholic moral theology: "Would you say that this command by God was un-Christian, a violation of 'Christian moral teaching?' [sic] Would you say that God was unjust to require the destruction of the women, children, and infants? In this instance, does not God consider the entire population culpable? On what basis to [sic] you make your universal moral distinctions?" ("Re: Karl Keating's E-Letter of August 3, 2004," post 41).

The central topic of this dissertation is not biblical exegesis, but the manner in which Dostoyevsky and Camus deal with the scandal of evil, and the reconciliation of passages such as *1 Sam* 15:1-3 with the Christian concept of the sanctity of human life could itself be (and has been) the subject of an entire dissertation. Nevertheless, it seems justified to go beyond noting a grave question raised by Dostoyevsky's "Rebellion" chapter and to comment on how Dostoyevsky *could* have extricated himself from this difficulty had he raised the issue--an issue that he could, and should, have raised as he dealt with evils inflicted on children. Let us consider three possible extrications: (1) there was neither a divine command to massacre children in Canaan nor actual massacres of children, but merely the use of hyperbolic language; (2) the Hebrews settling in Canaan merely *thought* that God had ordered them to practice *hērem* warfare, which they did practice, but there was no such order; and (3) God actually authorized the new settlers in

Canaan to kill all the inhabitants of enemy cities, including children, and this genocidal warfare actually occurred.

The *first hypothesis* is defended by Todd Lyle Lake's Boston College dissertation entitled *Did God Command Genocide? Christian Theology and the* Hērem. Lake's thesis is that the *hērem* passages of the Old Testament are merely an example of the literary device of hyperbole: the biblical authors simply indulge in exaggeration, never truly intending to assert that the ancient Hebrews actually massacred, or believed that they had the moral right to massacre, women, children, and infants during the military campaign that accompanied the Hebrew settlement of Canaan.

Lake's solution is unconvincing: the *hērem* passages, especially the whole episode introduced by *1 Sam* 15:1-3, appear to be too strong and too extensive to be regarded as nothing more than rhetorical devices employed to make battle reports more graphic. In that chapter of the First Book of Samuel, Saul's failure to carry out the slaughter of all the *livestock* of the Amalekites is cited as one of the reasons for the prophet Samuel's adamant repudiation of Saul's kingship. The biblical author tells us that Saul's merely having allowed Agag, the Amalekite king, to continue living, together with the choicest sheep, oxen, and lambs, while mercilessly slaughtering all the other Amalekites, was enough to enrage Samuel: "At this Samuel grew angry and cried out to the LORD all night" (*1 Sam* 15:11)[129] over Saul's failure to kill Agag and the animals. In view of Samuel's reaction to the survival of one Amalekite and some animals, one can imagine how much angrier the prophet might have been portrayed as being had Saul spared the lives of any of the women and children of the conquered city. No, it appears

[129] "καὶ ὠθύμησεν Σαμουηλ καὶ ἐβόησεν πρὸς κύριον ὅλην τὴν νύκτα."

that a solution other than hyperbole must be sought by anyone who, as Dostoyevsky ought to have done, wishes to come to grips with the scandal of evil and to repel all the assaults of adversaries of Christian belief.

The *second hypothesis* regarding the child-killing passages of the Old Testament is defended by modern Catholic theologians and exegetes such as Grisez,[130] Hunt,[131] and McKenzie,[132] who have all proposed that the ancient Hebrews merely *thought* that killing non-combatants during the conquest of Canaan was permitted to them by God as an exception to the prohibition of murder. This solution is adopted in a footnote to *1 Sam* 15:3 in the New American Bible:

> The interpretation of God's will here attributed to Samuel is in keeping with the abhorrent practices of blood revenge prevalent among pastoral, seminomadic peoples such as the Hebrews had recently been. The slaughter of the innocent has never been in conformity with the will of God.

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[130] Grisez's comment: "However, the Old Testament's rules for war need not be read as assertions by the relevant human authors that the killing of innocents is morally required. Read as they should be, in the wider context of the Bible as a whole, these rules only show what the Israelites of early times believed to be God's will, and so were bound in conscience to do, but they do not reflect the moral truth. The New Testament, read in accord with Christian tradition and the magisterium's interpretation, makes it clear that God never willed the killing of the innocent [. . .]" (2: 478).

In Grisez's remarks, the term "magisterium" refers to the official teaching authority of the Catholic Church, i.e., the Pope and all the Catholic bishops teaching in a united, authoritative manner today and in all preceding centuries.

[131] Hunt states as follows: "Yahwism would have plenty of trouble surviving without the added temptations of the idolatrous and licentious Canaanites living in and around the still wavering Hebrew monotheists. It does seem, nonetheless, that such warfare was merely *interpreted* and phrased as the will of Yahweh" (107).

[132] McKenzie writes the following: "These mass murders of hostile peoples were doubtless done in good faith by the early Hebrews, but they cannot be justified morally in any way by the fact that the Hebrews believed that the action was pleasing to God, and the growth of Hb understanding in this respect is exhibited in the historical books, where the practice does not appear after the war of Saul with the Amalekites" (78).

In the above annotation, consider the emphatic absolutizing adverb "never" in the last sentence: its insertion clearly signals the position that God did *not* command or allow the killing of children and other noncombatants even in what other commentators consider the exceptional circumstances of the *hērem* passages of the Old Testament.

This second hypothesis for dealing with the child-killing passages is problematic, as Dostoyevsky might well have pointed out had he been aware of this approach, for these passages appear in the historical books of the Old Testament, a fact which brings into play the doctrines of the Russian Orthodox Church--and the Catholic Church--concerning the divine inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. Note that the phrase "attributed to Samuel" in the New American Bible annotation has wide-ranging ramifications. Mere attribution would uncouple the command to commit genocide, not only from the instructions given by God's prophet, but, even more importantly, from God's will itself. But is it compatible with biblical inspiration and inerrancy to hold that the *hērem* was merely *ascribed* to the historical Samuel? Were they to give an affirmative response to this question, the defenders of the second hypothesis might wish to appeal to two decisions issued by the Pontifical Biblical Commission in the early years of the twentieth century. This Vatican office, a vigilant guardian of orthodoxy in opposition to German and French scholars of the rationalist school of biblical criticism, conceded two possibilities that some may consider relevant to solving the problem posed by the *hērem* passages. On February 13, 1905, this commission issued a decision granting that Scripture might contain "tacit or implied quotations" that would not engage the veracity of either the human or the divine author of a biblical book. On June 23, 1905, the same commission declined to rule out completely the possibility of biblical

"narratives historical only in appearance."[133] These decisions provide potential openings for the thesis of Grisez and his colleagues. If biblical inerrancy is not jeopardized by a *tacit* quotation, then an *explicit* quotation, such as that attributed to Samuel in *1 Sam* 15:1-3, may be even less compromising. Furthermore, the principle of narratives that are historical only on the surface could be invoked to deny the very authenticity of the words ascribed to Samuel.

True, these decisions of the Pontifical Biblical Commission make clear that these hypothetical literary forms are to be acknowledged only with the greatest caution and circumspection and, as it were, with reluctance and under compulsion. Nonetheless, it is also true that the door, instead of being slammed shut, is left open, even if the aperture is but a crack, and this crack is all the more significant since the Pope of that time, St. Pius X, was to condemn the heresy of Modernism, which he defined essentially, in the *Lamentabili* syllabus of 1907, as the attempt to transmute Catholicism into a "broad and liberal Protestantism" (Denzinger-Schönmetzer, section 3465).[134] Moreover, some exegetes would consider the solution proposed by Grisez and his colleagues to be within the parameters of comments that Pope Pius XII makes toward the end of his 1943 encyclical on biblical studies, *Divino afflante Spiritu*. In this encyclical, not only does Pius XII uncompromisingly uphold the traditional doctrine of biblical inerrancy, but he also (in sections 44-48) encourages scholars to advance, with due prudence, new hypotheses in the hope of resolving Scriptural difficulties in passages that the Catholic

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[133] Both of these documents may be found in Dean P. Béchard's *The Scripture Documents: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings* (187-88).

[134] "*protestantismum latum et liberalem.*"

Denzinger-Schönmetzer and (later) Neuner-Dupuis--both are collections of official Catholic documents--are cited by section number rather than by page, in accordance with convention.

Church has not yet interpreted authoritatively. Consequently, some may ask whether it is not possible to remain within the frontiers of Christian orthodoxy while invoking "tacit quotations" or "narratives historical only in appearance" to deny that God--to cite Ivan Karamazov's atheistic discourse--anticipated the alleged actions of the Turkish troops in the Balkans by commanding the killing of children in warfare.[135]

Finally, the *third hypothesis* concerning the *hērem* passages maintains that God did indeed order the ancient Israelites to kill every living soul in these military situations, including children, by way of exception to the general prohibition against slaughtering noncombatants in war. For example, St. Thomas Aquinas, commenting on *Deut* 20:13-19 in a section of the *Summa theologiae* in which he defends the rationality and coherence of Old Testament legislation, takes the position that these commands to kill children represent divine punishment legitimately visited on the innocent:

> *Reply Obj.* 4. A distinction was observed with regard to hostile cities. For some of them were far distant, and were not among those which had been promised to them. When they had taken these cities, they killed all the men who had fought against God's people; whereas the women and children were spared. But in the neighboring cities which had been promised to them, all were ordered to be slain, on account of their former crimes, to punish which God sent the Israelites as executor of Divine justice: for it is written (Deut. ix. 5): *Because they have done wickedly,*

[135] William G. Most, a scholar solicitous for Catholic orthodoxy, may be implicitly appealing to the Pontifical Biblical Commission's decision on tacit quotations to solve an analogous difficulty. In *Free from All Error: Authorship, Inerrancy, Historicity of Scripture, Church Teaching, and Modern Scripture Scholars*, he draws attention to the two apparently conflicting accounts of David's first meeting with Saul. Did David first meet Saul when David was summoned to play the harp to relieve the king's melancholia (*1 Sam* 16:14-23), or did this first encounter take place right after David had slain Goliath (*1 Sam* 17:55-18:5)? Most writes: "In giving the two versions, the inspired writer is, in effect, telling us: 'I found these two versions. I do not know which is correct. But here they are.' So there is no error at all" (88).

> *they are destroyed at thy coming in.*--The fruit-trees were commanded to be left untouched, for the use of the people themselves, to whom the city with its territory was destined to be subjected. (pt. 1 of pt. 2, ques. 105, art. 3, reply to obj. 4)[136]

This reply by St. Thomas is all the more problematic for many contemporary readers--to say nothing of Ivan Karamazov, had he ever read it--because the objection to which Aquinas is responding is the following:

> *Obj.* 4. Further, men are much more akin to us than trees. But we should show greater care and love for these things that are nearest to us, according to Ecclus. xiii. 19: *Every beast loveth its like: so also every man him that is nearest to himself.* Therefore the Lord unsuitably commanded (Deut. xx. 13-19) that all the inhabitants of a captured hostile city were to be slain, but that the fruit-trees should not be cut down. (*Summa theologiae*, pt. 1 of pt. 2, ques. 105, art. 3, obj. 4)[137]

By posing the above objection, St. Thomas is demonstrating his human feeling and his awareness of the tremendous difficulty that arises from holding that God actually commanded that children be killed. This is precisely the objection that Ivan Karamazov

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[136] "*Ad quartum dicendum quod circa civitates hostium quaedam distinctio adhibebatur. Quaedam enim errant remotae, non de numero illarum urbium quae eis erant repromissae: et in talibus urbibus expugnatis occidebantur masculi, qui pugnaverant contra populum Dei; mulieribus autem et infantibus parcebatur. Sed in civitatibus vicinis, quae erant eis repromissae, omnes mandabantur interfici, propter iniquitates eorum priores, ad quas puniendas Dominus populum Israel quasi divinae justitiae executorem mittebat: dicitur enim Deut. 9,5:* Quia illae egerunt impie, introeunte te deletae sunt. *Ligna autem fructifera mandabantur reservari propter utilitatem ipsius populi, cuius ditioni civitas et eius territorium erat subiiciendum*."

[137] "*4. Praeterea, multo magis appropinquant nobis homines quam arbores. Sed his quae sunt nobis magis propinqua, magis debemus affectum et effectum dilectionis impendere; secundum illud Eccli. 13,19.* Omne animal diligit simile sibi: sic et omnis homo proximum sibi. *Inconvenienter igitur Dominus, Deut. 20,13ss, mandavit quod de civitatibus hostium captis omnes interficerent, et tamen arbores fructiferas non succiderent.*"

should have thrown into his indictment, but did not. St. Thomas, considering himself unable to deny the reality of this command without denying the authority of inspired Scripture, sets aside his human reaction and accepts the existence of the command, which he views as an example of God's use of human instruments to implement divine justice. In taking this position, St. Thomas is adopting the same approach whereby he defends the Scriptural narratives in which innocent children die in the destruction of Sodom, and in which collective punishment is meted out to Dathan and Abiron and their relatives. We should note objection 3, and then the reply to it, in a *Summa theologiae* article in which Aquinas answers the following question: "Whether Vengeance Should Be Taken on Those Who Have Sinned Involuntarily?" First, the objection:

> *Obj.* 3. Further, ignorance makes an act involuntary. Now vengeance is sometimes taken on the ignorant. Thus the children of the people of Sodom, though they were in invincible ignorance, perished with their parents (Gen. xix). Again, for the sin of Dathan and Abiron their children were swallowed up together with them (Num. xvi). Moreover, dumb animals, which are devoid of reason, were commanded to be slain on account of the sin of the Amalekites (1 Kings xv).[138] Therefore vengeance is sometimes taken on those who have deserved it involuntarily. (pt. 2 of pt. 2, ques. 108, art. 4, obj. 3)[139]

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[138] This is *1 Sam* 15 in the New American Bible and other English-language translations. The Dominican fathers' translation of St. Thomas's *Summa theologiae* uses the Challoner revision of the Douay-Rheims translation of the Bible. In that older version, *1 Samuel* is called *1 Kings*.

[139] "*3. Praeterea, ignorantia causat involuntarium. Sed vindicta quandoque exercetur in aliquos ignorantes. Parvuli enim Sodomitarum, licet haberent ignorantiam invincibilem, cum parentibus perierunt, ut legitur Gen. 19,25. Similiter etiam parvuli pro peccato Dathan et Abiron pariter cum eis absorpti sunt, ut habetur Num. 16,27 sqq. Bruta etiam animalia quae carent ratione iussa sunt interfici pro peccato Amalecitarum, ut habetur I Reg. 15,2-3. Ergo vindicta quandoque exercetur in involuntarios*."

And now St. Thomas's reply to the objection:

> *Reply Obj.* 3. By the judgment of God children are punished in temporal matters together with their parents, both because they are a possession of their parents, so that their parents are punished also in their person, and because this is for their good lest, should they be spared, they might imitate the sins of their parents, and thus deserve to be punished still more severely.
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> Vengeance is wrought on dumb animals and any other irrational creatures, because in this way their owners are punished; and also in horror of sin. (pt. 2 of pt. 2, ques. 108, art. 4, reply to obj. 3)[140]

Note something striking: in referring to *1 Sam* 15:1-3, St. Thomas omits mentioning the killing of the women and children. He comments only on the slaughter of the animals belonging to the Amalekites. One may wonder whether the saint reflexively, perhaps subconsciously, draws back in repugnance from adverting to the massacre of innocent human beings--as if he foresees the problem that will be more tormenting for believers in the centuries to come, in the centuries in which genocide will become an even more agonizing moral issue owing to the threat of nuclear annihilation. In any ethical system based on the *philosophia perennis*, such annihilation has to be considered a catastrophic moral and physical evil. Also striking for the contemporary reader is the fact that Aquinas cites the mass killing of the children in Sodom and the children of

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[140] "*Ad tertium dicendum quod parvuli divino iudicio simul puniuntur temporaliter cum parentibus, tum quia sunt res parentum, et in eis etiam parentes puniuntur. Tum etiam quia hoc in eorum bonum cedit: ne, si reservarentur, essent imitatores paternae malitiae, et sic graviores poenas mererentur.--In bruta vero animalia, et quascumque alias irrationales creaturas, vindicta exercetur, quia per hoc puniuntur illi quorum sunt. Et iterum propter detestationem peccati.*"

Dathan and Abiron without noting a crucial moral distinction between those examples and the killing of the Canaanite children: the children in Sodom and those of Dathan and Abiron are killed directly by God acting through a natural or supernatural catastrophe without the involvement of any human agent, whereas the Canaanite children are intentionally killed by human beings--although St. Thomas holds that this intention is authorized by God.[141]

Reacting to the above Thomistic treatment of the child-killing passages of the Old Testament, the proponents of Grisez's solution (the second hypothesis) might wonder whether the Angelic Doctor would be willing, were he living in our century, to reconsider his position and concur with the contents of the footnote in the New American Bible, thus reversing the presuppositions that he evinces in the *Summa theologiae*. Grisez could point out that it is St. Thomas himself who subordinates the authority of every Catholic theologian (including his own exceptional authority) to the far greater authority of the Church. In replying in the negative to the question whether the children of Jews and other non-Catholics are to be baptized against the will of their parents, the saint says the following: "[. . .] the very doctrine of catholic [sic] doctors derives its authority from the

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[141] No one should object that, in the saint's perspective, even the Amalekite children were guilty because of original sin (which will be discussed later in relation to Dostoyevsky and Russian Orthodoxy). In Thomism, as well as in Catholicism, despite both original sin and personal sin (technically called actual sin, as has already been noted), *all* noncombatants are innocent in the context of warfare, inasmuch as all noncombatants are non-aggressors.

In fact, when section 2263 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in its discussion of the fifth commandment of the Decalogue ("You shall not kill" in the Catholic enumeration), refers to the classic opposition between an innocent person on the one hand, and an aggressor on the other hand, it quotes a dictum from Aquinas: "The legitimate defense of persons and societies is not an exception to the prohibition against the murder of the innocent that constitutes intentional killing. 'The act of self-defense can have a double effect: the preservation of one's own life; and the killing of the aggressor. . . . The one is intended, the other is not.' [*La défense légitime des personnes et des sociétés n'est pas une exception à l'interdit du meurtre de l'innocent que constitue l'homicide volontaire. «L'action de se défendre peut entraîner un double effet: l'un est la conservation de sa propre vie, l'autre la mort de l'agresseur. ( . . .) L'un seulement est voulu; l'autre ne l'est pas.*»]." The interior quotations are taken from St. Thomas (*Summa theologiae*, pt. 2 of pt. 2, ques. 64, art. 7, body).

Church. Hence we ought to abide by the authority of the Church rather than by that of an Augustine or a Jerome or of any doctor whatever" (*Summa theologiae*, pt. 2 of pt. 2, ques. 10, art. 12, body).[142]

In the twenty-first century--Grisez and the others might wish to argue thus--whether or not St. Thomas would ultimately reverse his position on the *hērem* passages, we can be confident that he would carefully consider the following datum: the teaching authority of the Church teaches--and does so with greater emphasis and with more urgency than ever before given the terrifying Damoclean sword hanging over all mankind in the nuclear age--that no noncombatants may ever be intentionally killed, either individually or in massive numbers. Moreover, the universal, absolutist cast of the following statement in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* makes it difficult for many of our contemporaries to accept the position that ancient Canaanite women and children represent a temporal and geographic exception to noncombatant immunity and the inviolable sanctity of human life: "The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the golden rule, and to the holiness of the Creator. The law forbidding it is universally valid: it obliges each and everyone, always and everywhere" (section 2261).[143]

Nonetheless, even in the twenty-first century and despite the above quotations, St. Thomas might well reaffirm his thirteenth-century reaction to the *hērem* passages, citing both Catholic tradition and the inerrancy and historicity of Scripture. He might wish to

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[142] "*[. . .] ipsa doctrina Catholicorum Doctorum ab Ecclesia auctoritatem habet: unde magis standum est auctoritati Ecclesiae quam auctoritati vel Augustini vel Hieronymi vel cuiuscumque Doctoris.*"

[143] "*Le meurtre volontaire d'un innocent est gravement contraire à la dignité de l'être humain, à la règle d'or et à la sainteté du Créateur. La loi qui le proscrit est universellement valable: elle oblige tous et chacun, toujours et partout.*"

confirm the annotation to *1 Kings* (*1 Sam*) 15:3 in the Catholic Douay-Rheims-Challoner translation of the Bible:

> The great Master of life and death (who cuts off one half of all mankind whilst they are children) has been pleased sometimes to ordain that children should be put to the sword, in detestation of the crimes of their parents, and that they might not live to follow the same wicked ways. But without such ordinance of God it is not allowable, in any wars, how just soever, to kill children.

If St. Thomas's reaction to the *hērem* passages is correct, the new catechism's condemnation of murder has to be understood in accordance with the formulation of moral theologian Francis J. Connell in *Outlines of Moral Theology*: "Thou shalt not kill directly an innocent person, apart from a special divine authorization" (31). Even today, St. Thomas might wish to defend Connell's formulation, insisting on the validity of all the principles that he enunciates in the *Summa theologiae* article in which he defends divine punishment visited even on the innocent (pt. 2 of pt. 2, ques. 108, art. 4). This article of the *Summa theologiae* can be read as a direct answer to Ivan Karamazov's atheistic discourse. No one who wishes to deal with Ivan's argument on more than a superficial level should fail to ponder St. Thomas's article. Note, too, that there are modern biblical commentators who agree with St. Thomas's thirteenth-century position. For example, a defense from a Protestant viewpoint of the reality of the divine command to slaughter Canaanite women and children may be read in Eugene H. Merrill's essay entitled "The Case for Moderate Discontinuity" in *Show Them No Mercy: Four Views on God and Canaanite Genocide*, by C. S. Cowles, Eugene H. Merrill, Daniel L. Gard, and

Tremper Longman III. Merrill states: "At the risk of cliché, all that can be said is that if God is all the Bible says he is, all that he does must be good--and that includes his authorization of genocide" (94).

By citing the hypothesis of Grisez, Hunt, McKenzie, and the annotator in the New American Bible, I am *not* implying that this hypothesis for resolving the problem posed by the *hērem* passages is right and that St. Thomas's solution is wrong. In fact, like all consistent Catholics, Grisez himself, together with the other contemporary Catholic scholars who share his view, must be said to submit his merely tentative solution implicitly and tacitly to the ultimate judgment of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, which alone, in Catholic belief, has the right to interpret Scripture authoritatively.[144]

Whatever the Catholic Church's ultimate judgment on the *hērem* passages may be, I suggest that those verses are among the most problematic in the Bible. Even if St. Thomas is right and Grisez and the others are wrong, the child-killing passages constitute an apologetic difficulty that should be acknowledged by anyone who, like Dostoyevsky, wishes to answer Ivan Karamazov. This statement regarding *The Brothers Karamazov* is the core of what I wish to say in this excursus, whereas the correct reaction to the *hērem* verses is an issue that cannot be decided in this dissertation.[145]

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[144] The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "The task of interpreting the Word of God authentically has been entrusted solely to the Magisterium of the Church, that is, to the Pope and to the Bishops in communion with him. [*La charge d'interpréter authentiquement la Parole de Dieu a été confiée au seul Magistère de l'Eglise, au Pape et aux évêques en communion avec lui*]" (section 100).

[145] In *Divino afflante Spiritu*, Pope Pius XII says: "No wonder if of one or other question no solution wholly satisfactory will ever be found, since sometimes we have to do with matters obscure in themselves and too remote from our times and our experience; and since exegesis also, like all other most important sciences, has its secrets, which, impenetrable to our minds, by no efforts whatsoever can be unraveled. [*Nihil igitur mirum, si unius alteriusve quaestionis nullum unquam habebitur responsum plane perfectum, cum interdum agatur de rebus obscuris et a nostris temporibus nostraque experientia nimis longe remotis; et cum etiam exegesis, sicut ceterae graviores disciplinae, sua habere possit secreta, quae mentibus nostris impervia, quibusvis conatibus aperiri nequeant*]" (sect. 45; Latin from *Enchiridion Biblicum*, sect. 563).

A contemporary reader, even if he or she is scandalized by St. Thomas's view of the child-killing passages of the Old Testament, should at least acknowledge that St. Thomas, in his usual forthright manner, confronts these problematic passages head on. Dostoyevsky fails to do this, and this is a major--and overlooked--flaw in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Had Dostoyevsky, writing as a self-avowed Christian apologist, chosen to deal in *The Brothers Karamazov* with the Old Testament command to kill children--an issue which, in its own way, is as serious for Christians as children's suffering and death considered in themselves--then he ought to have suggested the possible validity of the second or third hypotheses discussed above in his defense of Christianity's reaction to the scandal of evil. Regardless of how Dostoyevsky resolved, or would have resolved, this question in his own mind, his failure to deal in some manner with these biblical passages in *The Brothers Karamazov* is an example of his not fully facing up to this scandal.

As busy as the Devil is in that novel, even taking the trouble to send a demon to appear in person to the troubled, and now nearly delirious, Ivan, Satan fails to propose to Ivan, who may be considered his human mouthpiece, an obvious and serious objection to the Christian response to evil. In the tavern monologue, Dostoyevsky could have had Ivan taunt Alesha by saying: "You believers say that God himself ordered the Jews to kill children and infants!" And he could have made Alesha give at least a skeletal reply by answering: "Perhaps they merely *thought* that God had commanded this." Alternatively, Dostoyevsky could have had Alesha say: "The facts of God's existence and love for us are unaffected by *any* command that he gives, even if our puny intellects cannot fully understand it." But Dostoyevsky does neither of these things. He thus misses an exceptional opportunity to explore all the ramifications of Dmitrii's solemn warning to

Alesha: "God and the devil are fighting there and the battlefield is the heart of man" (97).[146] Just as Alesha is wanting as an articulate defender of belief in God, so, too, is the Dostoyevskian Devil wanting as the relentless, insidious adversary of both God and man.

**Dmitrii, Not Alesha**

To extend my respectful criticism of the serious weaknesses, both literary and philosophical, in Dostoyevsky's foregrounding of the suffering and death of children in Ivan Karamazov's tavern discourse, I suggest that there is a major casting error in this dramatic scene. It is Dmitrii, not Alesha, whom Dostoyevsky should have made the Christian apologist in the "Rebellion" chapter. Interestingly, it was not Alesha, but Dmitrii, whom Ivan had invited to dine with him at the Metropolis Tavern. Dmitrii failed to show up, and Alesha, finding out about the meeting from Smerdiakov, simply invited himself, pretending to end up in the dining room by chance (209).[147] The Russian novelist's failure either to change Alesha's characterization or to substitute Dmitrii for Alesha in the tavern episode is another example of the degree to which he falls short of achieving his own stated goal in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Why would it have been much better if Dmitrii had been present in response to Ivan's tavern invitation? The

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[146] "Тут дьявол с богом [sic] борется, а поле битвы--сердца людей" (*PSS* 14: 100; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3).

[147] *PSS* 14: 207; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 2.

Alesha is something of a freeloader, though a likeable one: "Everyone, indeed, loved this young man wherever he went [. . .]. [Да и все этого юношу любили, где бы он ни появился [. . .] ]" (14; *PSS* 14: 19; pt. 1, bk. 1, ch. 4). And later: "It was very characteristic of him, indeed, that he never cared at whose expense he was living. [Характерная тоже, и даже очень, черта его была в том, что он никогда не заботился, на чьи средства живет]" (15; *PSS* 14: 20; pt. 1, bk. 1, ch. 4).

Since it was Smerdiakov who told Alesha where he could get a free meal, it can be said that the murderer of Fedor Karamazov was responsible for an additional crime: making Ivan's atheistic speech seem more powerful than it is by depriving Ivan of an effective adversary and substituting a pushover. From the Christian perspective, Ivan, who is complicit (by means of his nihilistic remarks) in the physical murder that Smerdiakov commits, is thus allowed to get away with intellectual murder.

answer is clear: Dmitrii is much more articulate and forceful than Alesha, who lacks Dmitrii's assertive, commanding personality.

As for Dmitrii's intellectual ability, we should disregard his excessively modest statement to the gathering in Father Zosima's cell: "I am not a cultivated man [. . .] (62).[148] Dmitrii's later self-evaluation is more accurate than his self-deprecating statement at the monastery: "Don't think I'm only a brute in an officer's uniform, who drinks vodka and leads a dissolute life" (95).[149] The first example of Dmitrii's intellectual and rhetorical skills occurs in his early monologue addressed to Alesha in the

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[148] "[. . .] я человек необразованный [. . .]" (*PSS* 14: 66; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 6).

[149] "Не думай, что я всего только хам в офицерском чине, который пьет коньяк и развратничает" (*PSS* 14: 99; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3).

The Russian word хам (*kham*) can also be translated as "lout." I suggest that Dmitrii's disavowal of this characterization is largely (not totally) justified, and that he is at least partially correct when he tells Alesha: "For though I'm a man of base desires, I'm honest. [Потому что ведь я человек хоть и низких желаний, но честный]" (102; *PSS* 14: 105; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 4). Dmitrii demonstrates this sense of honor by refusing to allow Katerina Ivanovna to sell him her sexual favors in exchange for the funds necessary to save her father--even though her attractiveness so overwhelmed him that "I could scarcely breathe. [Пересекло у меня дух даже]" (102; *PSS* 14: 105; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 4). Dmitrii's honorable conduct on this occasion is one of the reasons why Dostoyevsky should have made him rather than Alesha the defender of Russian Orthodoxy in the tavern scene.

Translator Ralph E. Matlaw in the Norton Critical Edition makes Dmitrii a vodka drinker, but the Russian text says that he drinks cognac. What adds to the strangeness of this mistranslation is this: earlier in the green gazebo scene, Matlaw more correctly translates the sentence in which we are told that there are "half a bottle of brandy and a wineglass on the table [на столике полбутылки коньяку и рюмочку]" (93; *PSS* 14: 96; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3). (Cognac is a kind of brandy.) I wonder whether Matlaw's mistake reflects his unjust, perhaps subconscious, depreciation of Dmitrii, and possibly his disparagement of the military vocation. The subliminal thought may be that a cultured gentleman drinks cognac, whereas an uneducated "brute" drinks vodka. But a Russian officer who can quote Goethe, Nekrasov, and Schiller from memory (93-96; *PSS* 14: 96-99; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3) cannot be regarded as a Joe Sixpack.

In another mistranslation in the same episode, Matlaw also makes Dmitrii address Alesha as "[m]y dear, my dear" instead of "friend, friend" [--Друг, друг] (95; PSS 14: 99; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3). Granted, Dmitrii later says to his half brother: "--Молчи, Алеша, молчи, милый, хочется мне ручку твою поцеловать, так, из умиления" (*PSS* 14: 101). Matlaw renders this as follows: "Hush, Alyosha, hush, darling! I could kiss your hand, you touch me so" (98; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 4). To avoid embarrassing or angering both Dmitrii and Alesha, I suggest the following revision: "Stop, Alesha, stop, dear boy. I could kiss your hand--that's right--from emotion." According to *The Oxford Russian Dictionary*, так (*tak* or "so, thus") can be used as an intense affirmative, and так точно (*tak tochno*) signifies an emphatic "yes!" in military parlance (527). Accordingly, if Dmitrii were an officer in the United States Navy, his так would perhaps be the equivalent of "Roger that!"

I make the above observations with great respect for Matlaw and his Norton Critical Edition of *The Brothers Karamazov*. This edition is indispensable for all Dostoyevskians.

green gazebo; it is during this speech--from which his "I'm not merely a lout" statement is quoted--that he identifies what is really at stake in the horrendous struggle between good and evil, between God and the Devil, in every human heart (90-110).[150] The second example is found in the discussion between Dmitrii and Alesha when Dmitrii is in jail awaiting trial (554-66).[151] It is during this meeting that Dmitrii exclaims:

> Rakitin says that one can love humanity without God. Well, only a sniveling idiot can maintain that. (561)[152]

I suggest that "snot-nosed little shrimp" better conveys the Russian invective in the above outburst, which clinches the argument for making Dmitrii Ivan's natural debating partner, and not the reticent and somewhat timid Alesha. Furthermore, even though Alesha is more devout than Dmitrii, Alesha is much less articulate. Alesha calls to mind an observation made by Catholic apologist Frank Sheed: "[. . .] men have been martyred who could not have stated a doctrine of the Church correctly [. . .]" (*Theology for Beginners* 5).

Given what has already been said about the Christian affinity for the military posture, the fact that Dmitrii had served as a lieutenant in a line (combat) regiment of the Russian army reinforces the idea of giving this assignment--an intellectual commando mission--to Dmitrii instead of Alesha. Note that the saintly Father Zosima, who emblematizes the Russian Orthodox Church, had also been a Russian army officer

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[150] *PSS* 14: 93-112; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3-ch. 5.

[151] *PSS* 15: 26-36; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 4.

[152] "Ракитин говорит, что можно любить человечество и без бога [sic]. Ну это сморчок сопливый может только так утверждать [. . .]" (*PSS* 15: 32; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 4).

(274).[153] Then, too, the cast substitution that I am suggesting is also consonant with Dmitrii's more extensive life experience and his more impressive physical presence: "He was muscular, and showed signs of considerable physical strength" (58).[154] A bit later we are told: "He had the long determined stride of a military man" (59).[155] In contrast to the tongue-tied Alesha, Dmitrii has the personality to make him the logical choice for the rôle of the intrepid Christian apologist capable of providing an immediate and worthy answer to what Dostoyevsky calls Ivan's "blasphemy."

Dmitrii could have spoken with much greater authority and effectiveness than does Alesha, thus duplicating the same forthright manner with which he confronts Ivan during the latter's first visit to the jail in which Dmitrii is awaiting trial. On that occasion, the no-nonsense Dmitrii bluntly tells Ivan that a nihilist has some nerve suspecting anyone of having committed a crime. Or, in the words of the text: "He even succeeded in insulting Ivan Fyodorovich during their first interview, telling him sharply that it was not for people who declared that 'everything was lawful,' [sic] to suspect and question him (572).[156] One can easily imagine the overwhelming dynamism with which

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[153] *PSS* 14: 268; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 2, sect. c.

[154] "Был он мускулист, и в нем можно было угадывать значительную физическую силу [. . .] (*PSS* 14: 63; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 6).

Perhaps the noun form мускулист indicates, not merely that Dmitrii is muscular, but also that he is a man who cultivates his physique, i.e., in contemporary parlance, a bodybuilder. That bodybuilding, at least in a rudimentary form, existed in nineteenth-century Russia is evident from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, in which Levin works out with thirty-six pound weights (86; pt. 1, ch. 26).

[155] "Шагал он решительно, широко, по-фрунтовому [sic]" (*PSS* 14: 63; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 6).

I wonder whether по-фрунтовому (*po-fruntovomu*), which cannot be verified in that spelling in *The Oxford Russian Dictionary*, is a typographical error for по-фронтовому (*po-frontovomu* or "like a front-line soldier"). Obviously, the Russian expression is related to the French and English military term "front."

[156] "Он даже успел оскорбить в это первое свидание Ивана Федоровича, резко сказав ему, что не тем его подозревать и допрашивать, которые сами утверждают, что «всё позволено»" (*PSS* 15: 42; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 6).

Dmitrii could have demolished Ivan's entire discourse had Dostoyevsky put Dmitrii in Alesha's seat in the tavern's dining room. Dmitrii could have driven home the blatant absurdity inherent in the thinking of a nihilist like Ivan, who angrily catalogues outrages committed against children while simultaneously telling people, including his possible half brother Smerdiakov, the future murderer of the father of all the Karamazov sons, that "[e]verything is lawful." If everything is lawful, then there are no outrages, against children or anyone else, because moral evil simply ceases to exist. I can see Dmitrii ending one of his verbal onslaughts by exclaiming: "Congratulations, brother, for solving the problem of evil by showing us all that there is no problem! In your system, *nothing* is evil. According to your nihilism, should there ever be a crisis in the material conditions needed to sustain the population, people will be justified in throwing babies into latrines, burning them, or even eating them, and marriage itself as a means of transmitting human life can be abolished. You and I ought to know perfectly well that atheism is nonsense, and that there are only two options: either to have faith, or to burn everything, including babies."[157] In a metaphorical, polemical sense, Dmitrii, if he had pursued this line of

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[157] I am borrowing the last two sentences of Dmitrii's hypothetical verbal assault against Ivan's dictum "Everything is lawful" from Dostoyevsky himself. In Wasiolek's edition of the notebooks for *The Devils*, all the following remarks are attributed to the "Prince": "(For instance, if science is unable to provide for people's subsistence, and there is a shortage of space, people are going to throw their babies into latrines, or eat them. I won't be surprised if they do both, especially if science suggests it to them.) (And the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride shall cease to be heard.)" [Если средства науки, например, окажутся недостаточными для пропитания и жить будет тесно, то младенцев будут бросать в нужник или есть. Я не удивлюсь, если будет и то и другое, так должно быть, особенно если так скажет наука. («Не слышно гласа жениха и невесты»)] (239-40; *PSS* 11: 181). (Translator Victor Terras drops "this is bound to happen" after "I won't be surprised if they do both.") "As for morality left to its own devices, or to those of science, it may easily degenerate and turn into the foulest abomination--such as the rehabilitation of the flesh, or even the burning of babes. [Нравственность же, предоставленная самой себе или науке, может извратиться до последней погани--до реабилитации плоти и до сожжения младенцев]" (253; *PSS* 11: 188). "Yet you and I know perfectly well that all this is nonsense, and that there are only two alternatives: either to have faith, or to burn everything. [Но ведь мы с вами знаем, что всё это вздор и что есть только две инициативы: или вера, или жечь.]" (241; *PSS* 11: 182).

For the stilling of the voices of the bridegroom and bride, Wasiolek (240 [footnote 4]) gives these biblical citations: *Rev* 18:23 and *Jer* 7:34.

argumentation, and if he had hammered away at the point that a nihilist has no right in logic even to raise issues of theodicy or morality, could have wiped the floor with Ivan, thus fulfilling Dostoyevsky's stated goal for *The Brothers Karamazov*: the "crushing" of unbelief. In the Russian text of Dostoyevsky's letter dated May 10, 1879, to Nikolai Liubimov (Frank and Goldstein 465),[158] the "crushing"--разбитие (*razbitie*)--actually means "smashing." It is hard to picture Alesha as a smasher.

But Dmitrii's salvo attacking Ivan's dictum "Everything is lawful" could have been only the beginning of what Dostoyevsky could have had Dmitrii say to Ivan in the tavern. He could then have made Dmitrii assert, develop, and defend the thought that St. Thomas quotes from St. Augustine at the beginning of the *Summa theologiae* (pt. 1, ques. 2, art. 3, reply to obj. 1), and which has been quoted earlier in this dissertation as a key text: the principle that God permits evil only because he can extract good from it. Dostoyevsky could have had Dmitrii go on to explain that this principle remains true regardless of the inability of Ivan, or any other human being, to *see* its truth fully in every facet of the human condition, especially in the agonizing problem posed by the suffering and death of children. Dmitrii could also have added something that the Catholic Church says in her new catechism, for it is a thought that is congruent with Dostoyevsky's Russian Orthodoxy and with his plan for *The Brothers Karamazov*:

> *There is not a single aspect of the Christian message that is not in part an answer to the question of evil.* (section 309; italics in the original)[159]

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[158] *PSS* 30, pt. 1: 64.

[159] "Il n'y a pas un trait du message chrétien qui ne soit pour une part une réponse à la question du mal."

The above sentence parallels what Dostoyevsky himself says in his notebooks in an excerpt that has already been quoted: the "*whole book*" (Norton Critical Edition of *The Brothers Karamazov* 769)[160] is the answer to Ivan's attack on faith.

Regardless of the actual apologetic impact of the whole novel, either Alesha or Dmitrii could have effectively summarized the novel's defense of belief in a few incisive paragraphs. And, in point of fact, the dying Father Zosima actually undertakes this summary in book 6 ("The Russian Monk"), which is why Dostoyevsky does not contradict himself when he also says, in his May 10, 1879, letter to Nikolai Liubimov, that the refutation of Ivan's nihilism is to be found in that book (Frank and Goldstein 464-65).[161] Nonetheless, it cannot be said that the dying Father Zosima's pastoral counsel, as moving as it is for Russian Orthodox as well as many other readers, represents an attempt to meet Ivan Karamazov *on his own ground*. In that sense, I cannot consider book 6 an entirely satisfactory response to Ivan's rebelling against God for permitting children to be tormented and killed.

**The Mystery of the Demonic Liza Khokhlakova**

Ivan Karamazov's rebellion in book 5 of *The Brothers Karamazov* is Dostoyevsky's major treatment of the suffering and death of children in his last novel, but that novel contains ancillary segments on the suffering of children. One of those segments occurs in the chapter entitled "The Little Demon" (548-54).[162] This chapter

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[160] "весь роман" (*PSS* 27: 48).

[161] *PSS* 30, pt. 1: 63-64.

[162] *PSS* 15: 20-25; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3. The Russian title is "Бесенок" (*Besenok*).

deals with the final interaction between Alesha and one of the strangest and most upsetting characters ever created by the Russian novelist: Liza Khokhlakova. In fact, because of this character, this entire chapter is extremely strange--even stranger than the chapter in which Ivan converses with the devil. It is odd, too, that Liza has not attracted much critical attention, but it is worth our time to consider her, for the author explicitly associates her with evil. Liza is so disturbed that her own mother calls her insane. Madame Khokhlakova tells Alesha: "I believe she's quite mad" (547).[163] Dostoyevsky underscores the evil aura radiating from this profoundly troubled young lady by drenching her in psychopathology. This relatively short chapter is almost a clinical catalogue of psychological disorders: anxiety, pyromania, sadism, masochism, and, above all, suicidal ideation. The morbid traits in this portrait are perhaps so disturbing to many readers that there has been an understandable aversion to paying this character the attention that she merits.

There is an additional issue relating to Liza: why does Dostoyevsky combine the foregoing pathologies with a reference to one of the ugliest aspects of historical crimes against Jews? It is in this evocation that we find a reference to suffering children. In Russian history, in addition to pogroms, in which hatred of Jews culminated in organized massacres, one of the most virulent manifestations of this hatred was the calumny--called the "blood libel"--that accused Jews of abducting and murdering Christian children to use their blood in the celebration of Passover. This is precisely the accusation that Dostoyevsky mentions in this unsettling chapter of one of his masterpieces. It is upsetting to note that the pre-eminently positive Alesha is *not* upset when Liza asks him whether there is any truth to the allegation that Jews murder children at Easter:

[163] "Я думаю, она совсем помешалась" (*PSS* 15: 19; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 2).

> "Alyosha, is it true that at Easter the Jews steal a child and kill it?"
>
> "I don't know."
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> "There's a book here in which I read about the trial of a Jew, who took a child of four years old and cut off the fingers from both hands, and then crucified him on the wall, hammered nails into him and crucified him, and afterwards, when he was tried, he said that the child died soon, within four hours. That was 'soon'! He said the child moaned, kept on moaning and he stood admiring it. That is nice!"
>
> "Nice?"
>
> "Nice, I sometimes imagine that it was I who crucified him. He would hang there moaning and I would sit opposite him eating pineapple compote. I am awfully fond of pineapple compote. Do you like it?"
>
> Alyosha looked at her in silence. (552)[164]

The above passage is so problematic that the widely available 1999 Signet Classic version of *The Brothers Karamazov* (552), based on Constance Garnett's original 1912 translation (629), bowdlerizes her renderings by changing "the Jews steal" and "the trial of a Jew" to "certain religious sects steal" and "the trial of a man." Liza's question and Alesha's passive reaction are all the more disturbing when one considers the antipathy

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[164] "Алеша, правда ли, что жиды на пасху детей крадут и режут?

"--Не знаю.

"--Вот у меня одна книга, я читала про какой-то где-то суд, и что жид четырехлетнему мальчику сначала все пальчики обрезал на обеих ручках, а потом распял на стене, прибил гвоздями и распял, а потом на суде сказал, что мальчик умер скоро, чрез четыре часа. Эка скоро! Говорит: стонал, всё стонал, а тот стоял и на него любовался. Это хорошо!

"--Хорошо?

"--Хорошо. Я иногда думаю, что это я сама распяла. Он висит и стонет, а я сяду против него и буду ананасный компот есть. Я очень люблю ананасный компот. Вы любите?

"Алеша молчал и смотрел на нее" (*PSS* 15: 24; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3).

that Dostoyevsky displays elsewhere in reference to Jews. In *Dostoyevsky and the Jews*, David I. Goldstein is fully justified in being scandalized by Alesha's reaction: "How could Dostoyevsky have dared to put these words in the mouth of his Alyosha, Alyosha, the incarnation of charity, the symbol of Russia's spiritual regeneration? No, an Alyosha could never have spoken those words" (156). Goldstein's outrage is motivated by his knowledge of the horrors historically associated with the blood libel.[165]

The reader first being introduced to Dostoyevsky (and reading an unexpurgated edition of *The Brothers Karamazov*) may well wonder why, in presenting the startlingly morbid Liza as a minor, but graphic, embodiment of moral evil, the author chooses to inject the accusation of ritual murder into her characterization. It would be a relief to think that Dostoyevsky merely uses Liza's reference to the crucified child as a sign of her unbalanced mental state, and thus of her own personal involvement in the scandal of evil. Unfortunately, however, this does not seem to be the case. Frank quotes what Dostoyevsky wrote to Ol'ga Novikova on March 28, 1879, concerning the March 17,

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[165] A well-documented instance of these horrors occurred in the city of Trent, Italy, in 1475. After the corpse of Simon, a two-year old Christian boy, had been found in or near a Jewish home, the authorities charged eighteen Jews with ritual murder. The nightmare that ensued--the approval by civil and ecclesiastical authorities of torture, conversions under pressure, and executions--should upset contemporary Catholics and Jews alike. Catholics have to be deeply embarrassed by the fact that it took until 1965 for the Vatican to terminate the veneration of Simon of Trent, previously considered a martyr. That a child accidentally drowned, or was murdered by a psychopath or someone else, is awful enough. Even more awful is the possibility that a murderer, knowing of the prejudice and slanders against Jews, may have deliberately diverted suspicion to them by depositing the victim's body in or near a Jewish house, thus illustrating the justice of Goldstein's emotional reaction to Alesha Karamazov's (and thus Dostoyevsky's) distressing non-reaction to Liza Khokhlakova's reference. For this terrible incident in European history, see R. Po-chia Hsia's riveting *Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial*.

In fairness to the Church's hierarchy, we should note the following: even though, regrettably, some Popes believed in the blood libel, as Félix Vernet points out in *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique* [*Apologetic Dictionary of the Catholic Faith*] (2: 1710-11), several Popes issued documents condemning the accusation of ritual murder as slander, as Edward H. Flannery states in *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-Three Centuries of Antisemitism* (100). For the significance of Dostoyevsky's inclusion of the blood libel in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Flannery's entire section on the accusation of ritual murder should be consulted (99-102). An essential book for this subject is Solomon Grayzel's *The Church and the Jews in the XIIIth Century: A Study of Their Relations During the Years 1198-1254, Based on the Papal Letters and the Conciliar Decrees of the Period*. This work, which contains extensive quotations from papal documents, is alternately horrifying and consoling.

1879, acquittal of nine Georgian Jews accused of the eve-of-Passover murder of a young girl in the Kutais district--a charge for which there was no evidence (*Mantle of the Prophet* 423; see also Goldstein 157). Dostoyevsky opines: "How disgusting that the Kutaisi Yids were acquitted. They are beyond doubt guilty. I'm persuaded by the trial and by everything, including the vile defense by Alexandrov, who is a remarkable scoundrel here, 'a hired conscience of a lawyer'" (Lowe and Meyer 5: 77).[166] In addition, Frank draws our attention to another epistolary passage that removes whatever doubt one might have entertained regarding the justification for considering Dostoyevsky's thinking to have been tainted by hostility toward Jews. Writing to Iuliia Abaza on June 15, 1880, Dostoyevsky says the following:

> That idea, that races of people who have received their original idea from their founders, and in *subordinating themselves* to it exclusively over the course of several generations subsequently must necessarily degenerate into something separate from humanity as a whole, and even, in the best conditions, into something inimical to humanity *as a whole*--that idea is true and profound. Such, for instance, are the Jews, beginning with Abraham and continuing to the present, when they have turned into Yids. Christ (besides the rest of his significance) was the correction of this idea, expanding it to pan-humanness. But the Jews refused the correction and remained in all their former narrowness and inflexibility, and therefore

[166] "Как отвратительно, что кутаисских жидов оправдали. Тут несомненно они виноваты. Я убежден из процесса и из всего, и из подлой защиты Александрова, который замечательный здесь негодяй--«адвокат нанятая совесть»" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 59).

> instead of pan-humanness have turned into enemies of humanity, denying everyone except themselves, and now really remain the bearers of the anti-Christ, and, of course, will be triumphant for a while. (Lowe and Meyer 5: 246)[167]

Given Dostoyevsky's application of the terms "enemies of humanity" and "bearers of the Antichrist" to the Jews in the above outburst, it seems that he is engaging in a measure of self-deception when he writes to a Jewish correspondent, Arkadii Kovner, on February 14, 1877: "[. . .] I am not an enemy of the Jews at all and never have been" (Frank and Goldstein 437).[168] There are degrees of enmity, and, even though Dostoyevsky cannot be accused of the same mentality that characterized those who participated in pogroms, it cannot be said that someone who associates the Jews with the Antichrist in the unjustly targeting, sweeping manner of Dostoyevsky is free of all hostility toward them.[169] It is paradoxical that Dostoyevsky invokes the biblical figure of

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[167] "Мысль эта, что породы людей, получивших первоначальную идею от своих основателей и *подчиняясь* ей исключительно в продолжение нескольких поколений, впоследствии должны необходимо выродиться в нечто особливое от человечества, как от целого, и даже, при лучших условиях, в нечто враждебное человечеству, *как целому*,--мысль эта верна и глубока. Таковы, например, евреи, начиная с Абраама и до наших дней, когда они обратились в жидов. Христос (кроме его остального значения) был поправкою этой идеи, расширив ее в всечеловечность. Но евреи не захотели поправки, остались во всей своей прежней узости и прямолинейности, а потому вместо всечеловечности обратились во врагов человечества, отрицая всех, кроме себя, и действительно теперь остаются носителями антихриста, и, уж конечно, восторжествуют на некоторое время" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 191).

[168] "[. . .] я вовсе не враг евреев и никогда им не был" (*PSS* 29, pt. 2: 140).
At least Dostoyevsky had the courtesy to send a lengthy, civil letter in reply to Kovner.

[169] Why is it necessary to add the qualifying phrase "in the unjustly targeting, sweeping manner of Dostoyevsky"? The reason is that Dostoyevsky could object as follows: in Christian belief, *all* unrepentant sinners regardless of their ethnicity are in league with the Devil and therefore allied with the Antichrist and all his forerunners. This is why Jesus tells his enemies: "You belong to your father the devil and you willingly carry out your father's desires. [ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστέ καὶ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν]" (*Jn* 8:44). For this reason, the Catholic Church officially teaches that the Devil authors and instigates sins: "When we ask to be delivered from the Evil One, we pray as well to be freed from all evils, present, past, and future, of which he is the author or instigator. [*En demandant d'être délivrés du Mauvais, nous prions également pour être libérés de tous les*

the Antichrist, for it is Christ who tells the Samaritan woman at the well: "[. . .] salvation is from the Jews" (*Jn* 4:22).[170]

But to return to Liza Khokhlakova, although Dostoyevsky foregrounds her problematic mental state, he presents her as an evil character in the objective sense. She herself says: "It's simply that I don't want to do good, I want to do evil, and it has nothing to do with illness" (550).[171] (Aware of the Dostoyevskian echo or not, Camus will later attribute a similar thought to the homicidal Emperor Caligula in his play of that name: "[. . .] I am pure in evil" [*Théâtre* 58]).[172] We can hardly be surprised by

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*maux, présents, passés et futurs, dont il est l'auteur ou l'instigateur*]" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 2854).

[170] "[. . .] ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν."

One may well detect signs of inner conflict in Dostoyevsky's remarks on Jews and may conclude that, deep in his psyche, Dostoyevsky sees the conflict, too. The man who wrote the moving passages of *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, and who (as we shall see in a later chapter) may have given the concept of "active love" to the vocabulary of the Catholic Church--is it possible for such a man to be totally oblivious to the fact that any degree of hatred directed to the Jews, or to any other people, is wrong and un-Christian?

In the very issue of *A Writer's Diary* (March 1877) in which he makes one of his outrageous comments on Jews (the one that I noted earlier in this chapter in connection with the *hērem* passages), Dostoyevsky quotes long excerpts from a letter sent to him by a young Jewish woman about the late Dr. Hindenburg, a kindly obstetrician and Russified German Protestant. This doctor was loved and mourned by all his Christian and Jewish patients ("The Funeral of 'The Universal Man'"; 2: 919-22; *PSS* 25: 88-90). Without repudiating or obscuring in the least his firm belief in Christ and in Russian Orthodoxy as the only true religion, Dostoyevsky, in the outstanding little essay that immediately follows in the same issue ("An Isolated Case"; 2: 922-25; *PSS* 25: 90-92), warmly commends this doctor and his patients as examples of the brotherhood for which all Christians and Jews in Russia must strive in keeping with the Golden Rule.

Attentive readers of *The Brothers Karamazov* will know at once what became of this beloved physician after his lamented death: he now lives forever as Dr. Herzenstube, the doctor who took pity on the neglected little Dmitrii Karamazov and bought him a pound of nuts--an act of charity that Dmitrii never forgot (640-41; *PSS* 15: 105-07; pt. 4, bk. 12, ch. 3). Dr. Herzenstube's testimony about this incident at Dmitrii's trial is one of the most touching scenes in the novel. How ironic that we have Dostoyevsky's Jewish correspondent to thank for it! Her name was Sofia Lur'e; regrettably, we know little about her life after her correspondence with Dostoyevsky (Goldstein 210-11 [endnote 44]).

It should also be pointed out that Dostoyevsky advocated the extension of equal civil rights to Russian Jews as a matter of humaneness, justice, compassion, and Christianity itself. He takes this position in a March 1877 article entitled, appropriately, "But Long Live Brotherhood!" (*A Writer's Diary* 2: 915-18; *PSS* 25: 86-88).

[171] "Я просто не хочу делать доброе, я хочу делать злое, а никакой тут болезни нет" (*PSS* 15: 22; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3).

[172] "[. . .] *je suis pur dans le mal*" (*Caligula and Three Other Plays* 36; act 2, sc. 14; my translation).

Dostoyevsky's entitling Liza's main chapter "A Little Demon." Reading about this demon, the reader cannot fail to experience a pronounced aversion to a character who discloses her desire to eat pineapple compote while watching a four-year-old boy writhe and scream as he is being crucified.

Perhaps Dostoyevsky gives us a clue to an ideological interpretation of the pineapple compote episode by linking it to Ivan's amoralism, encapsulated in his dictum: "Everything is permitted." After her description of the crucified child's agony, Liza informs Alesha of the following events: she had sent for Ivan and told him about the tortured child and the pineapple compote, and "[h]e laughed and said it really was nice" (553).[173] Alesha's reaction is significant: "No, for perhaps he believes in the pineapple compote himself. He is very ill now, too, Lise" (553).[174] Does this mean that Alesha believes that Ivan, too, might enjoy watching a four-year-old being crucified? The answer may be in the affirmative, and Dostoyevsky may thus be dramatically highlighting his conviction that atheism, far from solving the problem of evil, exacerbates it. He may be intimating that following Ivan's example of invoking the suffering of children (or any other moral or physical evil) to justify one's rejection of God's existence and providence leads to a rejection of the moral law, and that this rejection in turn hurls us into an abyss in which one may even become capable of enjoying a refined dessert while witnessing the crucifixion of a child. In the tavern, Ivan had told Alesha the course of action that he felt impelled to adopt as a result of the suffering of children: "And so I

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[173] "Он вдруг засмеялся и сказал, что это в самом деле хорошо" (*PSS* 15: 24; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3).

[174] "--Нет, потому что он сам, может, верит ананасному компоту. Он тоже очень теперь болен, Lise" (*PSS* 15: 24; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3).

hasten to give back my entrance ticket [. . .]" (226),[175] i.e., to refuse the Christian solution to the scandal of evil, and perhaps also to commit suicide at the age of thirty. But now we find that Ivan himself may be implicated in children's suffering by a willingness to share the pineapple compote of the psychopathological Liza, for Ivan, too, is "very ill"--physically, emotionally, and intellectually. The pitiful state to which Ivan is reduced at the end of *The Brothers Karamazov*--it is left vague, but it may be full-blown psychosis--is itself one of Dostoyevsky's arguments against atheism, and is presented by him in defense of Russian Orthodoxy's answer to the scandals embodied in children's torments and all other evils.

As we attempt to understand the grotesque interlude of Liza's mental disintegration, we should also recall that Liza tells Alesha that she wants to go on a binge of destruction:

> "Why do evil?"
>
> "So that everything might be destroyed. Ah, how nice it would be if everything were destroyed!" (550)[176]

The above passage can be understood as a polemic against the Russian nihilists--against those whom Dostoyevsky accuses of wishing to destroy all order for the purpose of achieving a state in which, in keeping with the etymology of the word "nihilism," *nothing* remains, and in which nothing is of value. Let us recall what Dostoyevsky himself avows is the aim of *The Brothers Karamazov* when he writes to Nikolai Liubimov on May 10,

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[175] "А потому свой билет на вход спешу возвратить обратно" (*PSS* 14: 223; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4).

[176] "--Зачем делать злое?

"--А чтобы нигде ничего не осталось. Ах, как бы хорошо, кабы ничего не осталось!" (*PSS* 15: 22; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3).

1879 (this statement is so critical that it merits being quoted once again): "The blasphemy of my hero [i.e., Ivan Karamazov] will be solemnly refuted in the next chapter (to appear in your June number), and I am working on it now in fear, awe, and reverence, since I consider my task (the crushing of anarchism) as a civic duty" (Frank and Goldstein 465).[177] Dostoyevsky's "anarchism" must have included nihilism, and especially nihilism concretely expressing itself in terrorism. Consider how distressed Dostoyevsky (and most Russians) must have been when attempts were made on the life of Tsar Alexander II (1855-81) by Russian revolutionaries. An attempt occurred in April 1879, not long after the first installment of *The Brothers Karamazov* had appeared in print, and another attempt took place in a bomb attack just beneath the monarch's dining room in the Winter Palace itself on February 5, 1880 (Frank, *Mantle of the Prophet* 407, 478).

By rendering the new personality of Liza so repellent, and by linking her with the concept of total destruction, her literary creator is once again using the technique that he employs in *The Devils* to attack anarchism, nihilism, and terrorism: pejorative association. For Dostoyevsky, these currents of thought are all ideological and political manifestations of the scandal of evil. Viewed from this perspective, Liza's demonic behavior and comments come into better focus. We can view Liza as yet another instance of the literary kinship between Camus and Dostoyevsky, for both writers deal with terrorism, and both condemn it as a political and moral evil--although Dostoyevsky gives much more emphasis to evils that are not largely political.

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[177] "Богохульство же моего героя будет торжественно опровергнуто в следующей (июньской) книге, для которой и работаю теперь со страхом, трепетом и благоговепием [sic], считая задачу мою (разбитие анархизма) гражданским подвигом" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 64).

Before leaving Liza Khokhlakova, let us consider--tentatively and conjecturally--an explanation for a plot development that cries out for adequate motivation: Liza's sudden, shocking transformation from a normal, happy fourteen-year-old girl into a psychiatric case.[178] She does *not* start out in the novel as a "little demon," which, again, is the title of chapter 3 of book 11. (Note that this key chapter is contained within a book that is named after Ivan: "Brother Ivan Fyodorovich.") Compare her first appearance (at the monastery) as a "sweet little, laughing little face" (*PSS* 14: 50)[179] with her subsequent transmutation into a manifestation of the Devil.[180] Note this especially: Liza, like the sexually abused Matresha in *The Devils*, now believes that she has committed the "greatest sin" (550).[181] In addition, she breaks off her engagement to Alesha. She also tells Alesha, who must be stupefied, that she wants to commit suicide out of hatred for everything (553).[182] Her physical appearance confirms her psychological unraveling: she speaks with "a strange fire in her eyes" (551),[183] and "she laughed at Alyosha's face, a

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[178] Liza's age is stated in the text (38; *PSS* 14: 43; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 3).

[179] "Миленькое, смеющееся личико" (pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 4; my translation).
Liza's face is "sweet," not merely "pretty," as in the Garnett-Matlaw translation (45). Liza flirts with Alesha, but innocently, in the manner of puppy love; she is not a seductress.

[180] Is Liza's six-month paralysis at the start of the novel the result of a clinical hysteria that hints at culpability and portends her eventual emotional breakdown? This does not seem to be the case. Dr. Herzenstube, the physician who examined Liza, says nothing to rule out an organic, as opposed to a psychosomatic, condition. Further, can "night fevers" [ночные лихорадки] (45; *PSS* 14: 49; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 4) be hysterical? Liza's symptoms seem consistent with poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis). One may totally recover, as Liza does, from this kind of paralysis. Dr. Peter Wingate states in *The Penguin Medical Encyclopedia*: "But even during an epidemic paralysis is rare in comparison with the numbers who either escape all symptoms or recover completely" (352). Perhaps Dostoyevsky's motive for introducing this temporary paralysis is to reflect Father Zosima's sanctity: the condition is cured after Father Zosima's prayer for healing.

[181] "самый большой грех" (*PSS* 15: 22; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3).

[182] *PSS* 15: 25; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3.

[183] "со сверкнувшими каким-то огоньком глазами" (*PSS* 15: 22; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3).

feverish malicious laugh" (553).[184] Nathan Rosen, in an article entitled "The Madness of Lise Khokhlakova in *The Brothers Karamazov,*" maintains that Dostoyevsky intends Liza's breakdown to be a projection of the evils repressed in Ivan's subconscious (160). Frank believes that Dostoyevsky's depiction of Liza's breakdown is his way of pointing to "the emotional perversity engendered even in the pure and unsophisticated by a life of total self-indulgence and an atmosphere of moral emptiness and futility" (*Mantle of the Prophet* 586).

The explanations of Rosen and Frank do not ring true. It seems to me more plausible that Dostoyevsky may be hinting that Ivan, during his clandestine visits to Liza, unhinged her by seducing--or even raping--her.[185] We must ask whether such a prelude is the reason why Liza screams to her mother: "I hate Ivan Fedorovich. I demand that you not welcome him, that you bar him from the house!" (*PSS* 15: 19).[186] Liza's alarmed--almost panicking--mother, after having burst into tears, speaks to Alesha about

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[184] "[. . .] она как-то злобно и воспаленно засмеялась Алеше в глаза" (*PSS* 15: 25; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3).

[185] Criminal law knows of the concept of statutory rape (i.e., sexual relations between an adult and a minor below the age of consent). Still, rape is distinct from seduction even in the case of minors, for rape connotes the use of physical force, and perhaps even a high degree of violence or the threat of death. Nonetheless, for Dostoyevsky's Russian Orthodoxy (as for Catholicism), this valid linguistic distinction is largely irrelevant from the standpoint of the natural moral law: "*Fornication* is carnal union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. It is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children. Moreover, it is a grave scandal when there is corruption of the young. [*La* fornication *est l'union charnelle en dehors du mariage entre un homme et une femme libres. Elle est gravement contraire à la dignité des personnes et de la sexualité humaine naturellement ordonnée au bien des époux ainsi qu'à la génération et à l'éducation des enfants. En outre c'est un scandale grave quand il y a corruption des jeunes*]" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 2353).

In the notebooks for *The Devils*, Dostoyevsky is aware of the foregoing linguistic distinction between rape and seduction, for he strikes out the word "rapes" in the following sentence (which foreshadows Stavrogin's sexual abuse of Matresha in the unpublished chapter "At Tikhon's"): "He is interested in everything including Captain Merzavtsev, 'and why didn't they report it,' and the Ward, and ~~rapes~~ seduces a 13-year-old, which creates an uproar. [Интересуется всем: и капитаном Мерзавцевым, и почему не донесли, и Воспитанницей, и ~~изнасиловал~~ соблазнил 13-летнюю, об чем пошел шум]" (182; *PSS* 11: 136).

[186] "Я ненавижу Ивана Федоровича, я требую, чтобы вы его не принимали, чтобы вы ему отказали от дома!" (547-48; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 2; my translation).

Ivan's "strange visits without my knowledge" (548).[187] Note the plural: "visits." Even the entertainingly flighty Madame Khokhlakova immediately realizes the troubling implications of Ivan's "strange visits." In an earlier chapter, Liza herself, even at the age of fourteen, is aware of these implications, for she tells Alesha that a mother has the right to spy on her daughter: "If she were listening to some ordinary worldly conversation, it would be meaningless, but when her own daughter is shut up with a young man . . ." (201).[188] And why is Ivan visiting Liza, given the fact that Liza has told Alesha that she does not like Ivan (202)?[189]

In the light of criteria which Ann Wolbert Burgess and Lynda Lytle Holmstrom discuss in an article entitled "Rape Trauma Syndrome" in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Liza's current mental state parallels that of a female who has been raped, especially since she exhibits violent ideation. According to this article, a woman who has been raped may experience dreams in which violence occurs (984). Liza, as we have seen, fantasizes about the crucifixion of a four-year-old boy. Moreover, in a study entitled "The Effects of Acquaintance Rape on the Female Victim" in a collection entitled *Acquaintance Rape: The Hidden Crime*, Christine A. Gidycz and Mary P. Koss report:

> [. . .] women raped by acquaintances felt significantly more self-blame than victims raped by strangers. Further, the victims who blamed

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[187] "странные визиты без моего согласия" (*PSS* 15: 20; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 2).

The "knowledge" of the Norton Critical Edition should be changed to "consent," which is what the Russian text actually says. Nonetheless, the reason why Madame Khokhlakova could not consent to these visits is that she had no knowledge of them.

[188] "Если б обыкновенный светский разговор какой-нибудь и я бы подслушивала, то это низость, а тут родная дочь заперлась с молодым человеком . . ." (*PSS* 14: 200; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 1).

[189] *PSS* 14: 201; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 1.

> themselves for the assault were more likely to have needed psychiatric hospitalization, to have been suicidal, and to have experienced low self-esteem postassault than women who did not blame themselves. (279)

So strikingly does Liza match these clinical descriptions that it seems as if Dostoyevsky is writing, not a chapter in a novel, but a psychiatric case study.[190] In this connection, we should note that Dostoyevsky devotes space in an article entitled "Apropos of a New Play" in the 1873 issue of *A Writer's Diary* to an extended discussion of Kishenskii's play *Strong Drink Every Day Keeps Fortune Away*, in which Masha wants to commit suicide after having been drugged and raped in her own house by a merchant (1: 250).[191]

If I am right in guessing that Ivan seduced or raped Liza, then Ivan also slanders her by later telling Alesha that her letter was an offer to throw herself at Ivan like a prostitute (568).[192] In my scenario, when Ivan rips the letter up, he is not expressing moral revulsion, but perhaps destroying evidence of his crime. Why should we be surprised that a twenty-three year old male who has the unbridled libido of Fedor Karamazov coursing through his veins, and who believes that "[e]verything is lawful," would take sexual advantage of a minor girl?[193] Is this not the same Ivan who agrees with Alesha that he, Ivan, may "sink into debauchery" (243)?[194] Is this not the same Ivan concerning whom his disciple Smerdiakov says: "If there is one of the sons that is like

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[190] Professor Mandelker has suggested to me a Freudian interpretation of the cutting off of the crucified boy's fingers: is this mutilation a phallic image of the punishment that a rape victim may wish to inflict on the male who has assaulted her?

[191] *PSS* 21: 103.

[192] *PSS* 15: 38; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 5.

[193] Ivan's age is stated in the text (12; *PSS* 14: 17; pt. 1, bk. 1, ch. 4).

[194] "потонуть в разврате" (*PSS* 14: 240; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5).

Fyodor Pavlovich in character, it is Ivan Fyodorovich" (662)?[195] And should we be shocked if he lies about having sexually abused Liza? We do not merely have to *deduce* that Ivan is lying through his teeth on at least one point: *he later tells Alesha that he lied when he calumniated a fourteen-year-old child* (619).[196] In my hypothesis, Ivan, because of his atheism and nihilism, is like the carrier of a pestilence: he brings destruction to others as well as himself. Furthermore, when Liza casts aspersions on Alesha's manhood, telling the latter that he is "not fit to be a husband" (549),[197] perhaps we should understand this reproach to mean: "Why didn't you protect me from your brother Ivan? Look at what he's done to me!" Moreover, in an interpretation involving the seduction or violation of Liza, there would be a clear parallelism between Ivan in *The Brothers*

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[195] "Если есть [. . .] который из сыновей более похожий на Федора Павловича по характеру, так это он, Иван Федорович!" (*PSS* 15: 127; pt. 4, bk. 12, ch. 6).

[196] "'What were you telling me earlier about Lisa?' Ivan began again. (He was becoming very talkative.) 'I like Lisa. I said something nasty about her. It was a lie. I like her . . .' [--Что ты мне давеча говорил про Лизу?--начал опять Иван. (Он становился очень словоохотлив.) --Мне нравится Лиза. Я сказал про нее тебе что-то скверное. Я солгал, мне она нравится . . .]" (*PSS* 15: 86; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 10).

The text of *The Brothers Karamazov* is so huge (735 pages in the Norton Critical Edition) that it is not easy to hold all its multitudinous details in one's head. When the conjecture about the reason for Liza's breakdown first dawned on me, I merely guessed that Ivan had been lying. It was only later that I found Ivan's confession of his slanderous lie. This discovery is favorable to the conjecture that Ivan seduced or raped Liza, thus destroying her psychologically. In physical science, a good working hypothesis is one that makes it possible to predict scientific phenomena. The same principle should hold for the interpretation of literary texts.

[197] The whole passage is worth quoting: "I've only just been reflecting for the thirtieth time what a good thing it is I refused you and shall not be your wife. You are not fit to be a husband. If I were to marry you and give you a note to take to the man I loved after you, you'd take it and be sure to give it to him and bring an answer back, too. If you were forty, you would still go on carrying my love letters for me. [Только что сейчас рассуждала опять, в тридцатый раз: как хорошо, что я вам отказала и не буду вашей женой. Вы в мужья не годитесь: я за вас выйду, и вдруг дам вам записку, чтобы снести тому, которого полюблю после вас, вы возьмете и непременно отнесете, да еще ответ принесете. И сорок лет вам придет, и вы всё так же будете мои такие записки носить]" (549; *PSS* 15: 21; pt. 4, bk. 11. ch. 3).

"The man I loved after you"--is it not possible that this man is Ivan, and that "love" is meant with bitter sarcasm? In any event, is it not astounding that, at the end of this chapter (554; *PSS* 15: 25; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3), accepting a letter from Liza to give it to another man is exactly what Alesha does--even *after* Liza has attacked his manhood on that basis? And the intended recipient of the letter is Ivan.

Again, recall the passage in which Ivan tells Alesha that the girl to whom Alesha had proposed marriage is no better than a prostitute (568; *PSS* 15: 38; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 5). Without wishing to condone violence (other than in a martial arts context), I cannot help being surprised that Ivan's calumniation of Liza does not provoke Alesha into throwing a punch at his brother.

*Karamazov* and Stavrogin in *The Devils*: both characters, having sinned against children who then suffer a mental crisis leading, or potentially leading, to suicide, are punished by being tormented with a vision of the Devil or another demon.[198]

Objection: why does Dostoyevsky not tell us plainly that Ivan committed this crime, instead of forcing us to piece together subtle clues widely dispersed over several chapters? Response: Dostoyevsky may be engaging in deliberate authorial indirection, subtlety, and ambiguity.[199] He may be imitating his character Anna Andreievna in *The Insulted and Injured*: she habitually tells things to her husband, Nikolai Sergeich, "in hints" (161).[200] Then, too, Dostoyevsky had tried bluntness, even graphic bluntness, in Stavrogin's confession of his sexual abuse of young Matresha in *The Devils*, but Mikhail Katkov, publisher of *Russian Messenger*, considered the chapter too shocking and refused to print it (Frank, *Miraculous Years* 432). Perhaps Dostoyevsky wished to avoid a recurrence of this *contretemps*. In addition, guessing that Ivan seduced or raped Liza makes sense of a disturbing chapter--"A Little Demon"--that otherwise remains largely inexplicable. This guess also helps explain why Ivan himself finally descends into madness or near madness. Is the guilt that derives from whatever part he played in

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[198] In the suppressed chapter of *The Devils*, Bishop Tikhon asks Stavrogin: "And you actually see him? [--И . . . вы видите его действительно?]" Stavrogin goes on to tell the bishop, not only that he sees Satan, but also that he believes in the existence of a canonical and personal, not an allegorical, Devil (411-412; *PSS* 11: 9-10; pt. 2, ch. 9, sect. 1, in the 1991 Signet Classic edition).

[199] Dostoyevsky may wish the possibility of Ivan's having raped Liza to remain as ambiguous in the mind of the reader as is the paternity of Smerdiakov. It is wrong to be absolutely *certain* that Fedor Karamazov fathered Smerdiakov. Does Dostoyevsky not tell us through the narrator that Smerdiakov's father may have been the escaped convict Karp? The narrator says: "This conjecture sounded plausible, for it was remembered that Karp had been in the neighborhood just at that time in the autumn, and had robbed three people. [Догадка эта показалась правдоподобною, Карпа помнили, именно помнили, что в те самые ночи, под осень, он по городу шлялся и троих ограбил]" (89; *PSS* 14: 92; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 2).

[200] "*намеками*" (*PSS* 3: 280; pt. 2, ch. 8; italics in the Russian).

Smerdiakov's murder of Fedor Karamazov really a sufficient motivation for Ivan's own breakdown? Let us note what Dostoyevsky says when he explains to a reader why she should have realized, even early in the novel, that Dmitrii was not his father's murderer:

> It is not only the subject of a novel that is important to the reader, but also a certain understanding of the human soul (psychology), and every author has the right to expect this from his reader. (November 8, 1879, letter to E. Lebedeva; Frank and Goldstein 490)[201]

**Camus and the Children in Limbo**

Having dealt with suffering and dying children in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, let us now turn to Camus to analyze a divergent and unusual angle from which he approaches the suffering and death of children, because this angle will illuminate his approach to the entirety of the scandal of evil. Those who read only Camus's novels may be surprised to learn that their author also makes a point of commenting on the manner in which the dogma of original sin affects a special category

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[201] "Не один только сюжет романа важен для читателя, но и некоторое знание души человеческой (психологии), чего каждый автор вправе ждать от читателя" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 129).

Finally, I ask the reader to indulge me as I construct a fanciful outcome to defend my conjecture. Let us suppose that Ivan Karamazov, outraged over my accusing him of having possibly seduced or raped Liza, accuses me of slander and even prurience, and demands that the chancellor of The City University of New York refuse approval of this dissertation. I put *nothing* past Ivan; he himself says: "I am a scoundrel. [--Я подлец!]" (260; *PSS* 14: 255; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 7). If I were summoned to the chancellor's office, part of my defense would be to quote what another Dostoyevskian character says. In one version of the suppressed chapter of *The Devils*, Stavrogin asserts to Bishop Tikhon: "I see you're terribly keen to suspect the most disgusting things, just like all monks. Monks would make the best police investigators, I think. [Вам бы сейчас по-монашески, то есть самую что ни на есть мерзость прежде всего заподозрить. Монах был бы самым лучшим уголовным следователем!]" (421; *PSS* 12: 110; pt. 2, ch. 9, sect. 2, in the 1991 Signet Classic edition). I should then inform the chancellor that Stavrogin had sexually abused an eleven-year-old girl, who had thereafter hanged herself. I should also quote what the detective-like Masloboev tells Ivan Petrovich in reference to the latter's investigation of the history of the evil Prince Valkovskii in *The Insulted and Injured*: "I don't know for sure. What I tell you is what I've gathered from my own conjectures, and what I've concluded from other facts. [Наверно не знаю. Я ведь если и рассказываю тебе, то по собственным умозаключениям и соображениям из других данных]" (238; *PSS* 3: 336; pt. 3, ch. 6).

of children--children who die unbaptized. He went out of his way to raise this issue during the address that he gave on December 1, 1946, before the priests of the Dominican residence of boulevard de Latour-Maubourg in Paris.[202]

In this neglected talk, Camus makes a general statement foregrounding the suffering of children by appealing to Christians to join those who "plead today just about everywhere and without cessation, for children and for human beings" (*Essais* 375).[203] Then he adds these surprising remarks:

> By what right, moreover, could a Christian or a Marxist accuse me, for example, of pessimism? I was not the one to invent the misery of the human being or the terrifying formulas of divine malediction. I was not the one to shout *Nemo bonus* or the damnation of unbaptized children. (*Resistance* 72)[204]

It seems that we have no record of responses on the part of the Latour-Maubourg Dominicans to Camus's accusation of Catholic "pessimism" in connection with the evil of the damnation of unbaptized infants. Nonetheless, given the scope of this dissertation, let us consider the response that could have been made in the face of the French

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[202] The Pléiade edition of Camus's *Essais*, entitling this text "L'Incroyant et les chrétiens" ["The Unbeliever and Christians"], gives the year as 1948 on page 371, the first page on which extracts from the speech are printed. This year has to be incorrect, for Julien Green, novelist, French-American Catholic convert, and eventual member of the Académie Française, was present at Camus's address, and he states in his journal (4: 950) that it was delivered on the Sunday preceding December 3, 1946. This Sunday was December 1. The Pléiade edition of Camus's *Essais* gives the year correctly as 1946 on page 1965 in the *Tables des matières* ("Table of Contents").

[203] "*plaident aujourd'hui un peu partout et sans relâche, pour les enfants et pour les hommes*" (*Resistance, Rebellion, and Death* 74; my translation).

[204] "*De quel droit d'ailleurs un chrétien ou un marxiste m'accuserait-il par exemple de pessimisme. [sic] Ce n'est pas moi qui ai inventé la misère de la créature, ni les terribles formules de la malédiction divine. Ce n'est pas moi qui ai crié ce* Nemo bonus*, ni la damnation des enfants sans baptême*" (*Essais* 373).

novelist's having been scandalized by the Catholic concept of limbo--for this is the concept in question.

Let us begin our analysis of Camus's unexpected comment by noting that *Nemo bonus* is the Latin phrase that identifies *Mk* 10:18 in the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible: "*Iesus autem dixit ei: Quid me dicis bonum? Nemo bonus, nisi unus Deus*." In English, this passage reads: "Jesus answered him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. [. . .].'" This reply occurs in the episode in which Jesus reacts to an unnamed questioner, a wealthy young man who calls him "[g]ood teacher." Camus had earlier noticed this passage in his *diplôme d'études supérieures*, citing it as an illustration of Catholicism's contention that "[i]n sin man becomes aware of his wretchedness and his pride" (*Essais* 1234).[205]

Camus's second Catholic reference--to the "damnation of unbaptized children"--has to do with the doctrine of the necessity of the sacrament of Baptism for achieving salvation (in the sense of the enjoyment of the supernatural, direct vision of God in heaven, i.e., the "beatific vision"). This doctrine is based on another New Testament passage, one in which Jesus tells Nicodemus: "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit" (*Jn* 3:5).[206] From the viewpoint of the Catholic Church (represented by the Dominican priests who heard Camus's remarks), "entering the kingdom of God" means the removal of original sin**,** the forgiveness of "actual" sins (in the case of those capable of having committed such sins), and the attainment of the beatific vision. For the Church, the failure to receive the

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[205] "*Dans le péché l'homme prend conscience de sa misère et de son orgueil*" (my translation).

[206] "Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ."

sacrament of Baptism can be remedied by "baptism of desire," which means the conformity of a reasoning human being's will with the salvific will of God. For the infant or child below the age of full cognition, such conformity of will is impossible. Consequently, in Catholic belief, human beings in that pre-voluntary condition have available only two means of remitting original sin and securing the beatific vision: either martyrdom for Christ (as in the case of the martyred Bethlehem children known as the Holy Innocents), or else the reception of the sacrament of Baptism.[207] That this is not a negligibly abstruse theological issue is demonstrated by the fact that billions of human embryos and fetuses will never have the opportunity to be baptized given the astronomically large numbers of failed natural uterine implantations--to say nothing of miscarriages and abortions (both surgical and chemical).[208] For Catholicism, the dilemma of these billions of tiny children blocked from achieving their supernatural destiny represents a huge component of the scandal of evil, and Camus is thus justified in seizing on this difficulty in the Catholic approach to this scandal.

What Camus fails to do in his address to the Dominicans, however, is to note that Catholic theology, as it has developed through the centuries, has responded to this problem by encouraging the following speculation: those infants who fail to achieve the

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[207] In *La Chute*, Clamence blames Jesus for the deaths of the male children whom King Herod, in the incident reported in *Mt* 2:16-18, murdered in his attempt to kill the child Jesus (*Fall* 112-13; *Théâtre* 1533). For the theology of Baptism, see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, sections 1213-84, and Ott 350-60.

[208] A study published in *Clinical Reproduction and Fertility* reported a rate of early conceptus loss of 36 percent among healthy women trying to achieve conception; see Y. Cheng Smart et al., "Fertilization and Early Pregnancy Loss in Healthy Women Attempting Conception" (177). This percentage extrapolates to a total of billions of deaths for the entire human race throughout history. As William B. O'Brien, the father of the author of this dissertation, pointed out to him, *in vitro* fertilizations increase this total. In that regard, a study published in *Fertility and Sterility* in 2003 concluded that there were then nearly 400,000 embryos stored in laboratories in the United States alone; see David I. Hoffman et al., "Cryopreserved Embryos in the United States and Their Availability for Research" (1063). The worldwide number of *in vitro* embryos is likely to increase substantially and perhaps exponentially.

*supernatural* happiness of heaven through no fault of their own, simply by not having had the opportunity to be baptized, are nonetheless privileged to enjoy, for all eternity, *natural* happiness in a state called limbo (from the Latin *limbus*, which means "fringe" or "margin," limbo being considered the fringe, or outskirts, of hell).[209] This eternal outcome is viewed as happiness flowing from natural knowledge and love of the God who brought these children into existence. That this state fully merits being called happiness is clear in the teaching of St. Thomas, who maintains that the souls of the children in limbo are not even troubled by pointless regret over the loss of the supernatural beatitude that they are necessarily incapable of attaining (*On Evil*, ques. 5, art. 3; pp. 418-23).

Camus has another reference to limbo in *La Chute*, where he makes Clamence say: "Then you know that Dante accepts the idea of neutral angels in the quarrel between God and Satan. And he puts them in Limbo, a sort of vestibule of his Hell. We are in the vestibule, *cher ami*" (*Fall* 83-84).[210] But Clamence and his unnamed interlocutor are *not* in limbo: unbaptized children are in limbo, and, unlike Clamence, they are--so Catholic theologians have maintained for centuries--happy.[211] (Note that Clamence's "vestibule" remark echoes Dmitrii Karamazov's battle between God and the Devil.)

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[209] Two excellent treatments of limbo are those of A. Gaudel in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* [*Dictionary of Catholic Theology*] (9, pt 1: 760-72) and Paul James Hill in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (8: 762-65).

[210] "*Vous savez donc que Dante admet des anges neutres dans la querelle entre Dieu et Satan. Et il les place dans les Limbes, une sorte de vestibule de son enfer. Nous sommes dans le vestibule, cher ami*" (*Théâtre* 1518).

[211] By targeting the concept of limbo in *La Chute* and in his speech to the Dominicans, Camus becomes at least the second modern *littérateur* to take aim at this aspect of Catholicism: as students of English literature should know, an early literary antagonist of limbo was Laurence Sterne. In *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne mocks what he regards as a "papist" and "Romish" controversy by citing the opinion of seventeenth-century Sorbonne theologians, who, disagreeing with St. Thomas, defended the legitimacy of resorting to

The idea of unending *natural* happiness in limbo--a happiness to which unbaptized children, from the Church's perspective, have no greater right (in the sense of a demand founded on strict justice) than baptized children have in the case of *supernatural* happiness--must, again from the Church's perspective, be considered a means whereby God manifests his omnipotence by bringing good out of evil, in accordance with the Augustinian dictum that St. Thomas uses to summarize his own reaction to the scandal of evil (*Summa theologiae*, pt. 1, ques. 2, art. 3, reply to obj. 1). In 1992, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* took the significant step of developing Catholic teaching by using formulations which, in view of the continuity and coherence of Catholic doctrine, have to be understood as referring, in the case of infants dying without Baptism, to the hope, not for the beatific vision, but for limbo, viewed as a kind of salvation:

> As regards *children who have died without Baptism*, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them," allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. All the

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an intrauterine injection to baptize a fetus trapped inside his or her mother during a dangerous parturition (*The Florida Edition of the Works of Laurence Sterne* 1: 64-70).

The Sorbonne document reproduced by Sterne erroneously cites the reference from the *Summa theologiae* of St. Thomas as pt. 3, ques. 88, art. 11. The correct reference is pt. 3, ques. 68, art. 11 ("Whether a Child Can Be Baptized WhileYet in Its Mother's Womb? [*Utrum in maternis uteris existentes possint baptizari*]" ). The *Florida Edition* of Sterne's works (2: 942 [footnote 8]) points out that Sterne's source also cites the incorrect section of the *Summa theologiae*. This citation error shows that the author of *Tristram Shandy* may never have bothered to read St. Thomas's entire discussion of the issue, and it supports this view expressed in *The Reader's Companion to World Literature*: "After his education at Cambridge, Sterne spent the rest of his life as a clergyman, an occupation in which he seems to have had no particular interest" (694).

> more urgent is the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism. (section 1261)[212]

Limbo, being a state of happiness, is *not* what Jesus calls "the eternal fire" of hell (*Mt* 18:8);[213] therefore, a soul finding itself in limbo is saved--saved from the positive punishments of hell. And, no, the new catechism should *not* be understood as saying that all children dying unbaptized will achieve the beatific vision, for otherwise the official analytical index of the 1997 Latin version of the catechism would not list "*Limbus*" ("limbo") and link it with section 1261. Accordingly, the Church, in the new catechism, can be considered to have replied to Camus's accusation that Catholicism, in its "pessimism," relegates billions of human beings, not responsible for their failure to receive the sacrament of Baptism, to the evil state of damnation. Granted, in a certain sense, the Church considers the unbaptized child to be damned--i.e., deprived of the beatific vision. Notwithstanding this, from a different but complementary standpoint, the Church says to Camus and other critics that this child is also saved--i.e., saved from the positive sufferings of hell, and also accorded a much lesser, though still real, kind of eternal happiness.

The scandal that Camus sees in limbo cannot be removed by asserting that all unbaptized children somehow attain the beatific vision. That this, from the Catholic perspective, would be a false solution to this aspect of the problem of evil is clear from

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[212] "*Quant aux* enfants morts sans Baptême*, l'Eglise ne peut que les confier à la miséricorde de Dieu, comme elle le fait dans le rite des funérailles pour eux. En effet, la grande miséricorde de Dieu «qui veut que tous les hommes soient sauvés» (1 Tm 2, 4), et la tendresse de Jésus envers les enfants, qui Lui a fait dire: «Laissez les enfants venir à moi, ne les empêchez pas» (Mc 10, 14), nous permettent d'espérer qu'il y ait un chemin de salut pour les enfants morts sans Baptême. D'autant plus pressant est aussi l'appel de l'Eglise à ne pas empêcher les petits enfants de venir au Christ par le don du saint Baptême*."

[213] "τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον" (my translation).

the fact that the Church has irrevocably committed herself to the position that the punishment for original sin is loss of the beatific vision. Pope Innocent III declared this in so many words in 1201 in his letter to Humbert, archbishop of Arles (Neuner-Dupuis, section 506),[214] and two general councils (Lyons II in 1274 and Florence in 1439) taught that those dying with unrepented mortal sin, or with original sin only, go to hell ("*infernum*"), there to be punished, however, "with different punishments" (Neuner-Dupuis, sections 26, 2309).[215] In the case of unbaptized infants, "hell" is only the deprivation of the beatific vision, not the "fire" of which Jesus speaks. The Church today cannot contradict these teachings: Catholic doctrine does develop over the centuries--this the Church admits--but by explication and shifts in terminology and emphasis, not by retraction.[216] Consequently, while limbo is not a Catholic dogma, but merely a theological hypothesis, it rests on an immensely solid logical and deductive basis,[217] and it safeguards the concepts of original sin and some kind of next-world penalty for those dying in original sin only. Those theses *are* dogmas: dogmas of the Catholicism that Camus refused--at least as far as we know for certain--to accept as he wrestled with the

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[214] "Further, the punishment of original sin is the loss of the beatific vision, but the punishment of actual sin is the torture of eternal hell. [*Poena originalis peccati est carentia visionis Dei, actualis vero poena peccati est gehennae perpetuae cruciatus . . .*]" (Latin in Denzinger-Schönmetzer, section 780).

[215] "*poenis [. . .] disparibus*" (Denzinger-Schönmetzer, sections 858, 1306).

[216] In 1950, about four years after Camus's attack on limbo, Pope Pius XII explicitly taught in section 16 of the encyclical *Humani generis* that the Church can alter her terminology without altering her doctrine. It is for that reason that I believe that it is legitimate to call the unending happiness of limbo a kind of salvation or a quasi-salvation. The Church has never taught that the word "salvation" must be reserved exclusively for the beatific vision. Again, the children in limbo are truly saved from the positive punishments of hell.

[217] Camus's compatriot and contemporary, eminent neo-Thomistic philosopher Jacques Maritain, says this: "This doctrine of limbo, disdained today by so many theologians who do not know what they are doing, ought to be regarded as a precious treasure by every intelligent Christian. [*Cette doctrine des limbes, dédaignée aujourd'hui par tant de théologiens qui ne savent pas ce qu'ils font, devrait être tenue pour un précieux trésor par tout chrétien intelligent*]" (*Le Paysan de la Garonne: Un Vieux Laïc s'interroge à propos du temps présent* [*The Peasant of the Garonne: An Old Layman Questions Himself About the Present Time*] 227-28 [footnote 4]; my translation).

scandal of evil, a scandal that affects both unbaptized children and all other human beings.[218]

In considering Camus's attack on limbo as a form of cruelty to children, it is instructive to reflect on a key point that St. Thomas makes: "The help bestowed on human beings by God, namely, original justice, was gratuitous [. . .]" (*On Evil*, ques. 5, art. 4, reply to obj. 1; p. 429).[219] In other words, the supernatural life that God gave to Adam and Eve, the protoparents of the human race, was a *gift*. Neither they nor their descendants had any right to it--any more than they had any right even to mere existence. God was not, according to the Church's faith, under any obligation to call anything, not even one speck of dust or a single fly, into existence. Both natural life in this world and supernatural life in this world and in the world to come are pure gifts.

At this juncture, we should explore further the vital Catholic distinction between natural life and supernatural life--a distinction without which it will be impossible to

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[218] On April 19, 2007, a group of Catholic theologians representing, *not* the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, but rather a body known as the International Theological Commission, issued a statement entitled *The Hope of Salvation for Children Who Die Without Being Baptised*. Its authors conclude that "the many factors that we have considered above give serious theological and liturgical grounds for hope that unbaptised infants who die will be saved and enjoy the Beatific Vision." In the light of the dogmatic authorities cited in this dissertation, the commission's conclusion carries no weight for Catholics.

Even the unbelieving Camus would have been scandalized by the statement of the International Theological Commission. In *L'Homme révolté*, he takes exception to the shifting party line of Soviet communism, contrasting it unfavorably with the immutability of the Catholic dogma of the Blessed Trinity (and, by implication, other dogmas). Camus says: "Year by year, sometimes month by month, *Pravda* corrects itself, and rewritten editions of the official history books follow one another off the presses. Lenin is censored, Marx is not published. At this point comparison with religious obscurantism is no longer even fair. The Church never went so far as to decide that the divine manifestation was embodied in two, then in four, or in three, and then again in two, persons. The acceleration of events that is part of our times also affects the fabrication of truth, which, accomplished at this speed, becomes pure fantasy. [*D'année en année, de moi en moi parfois, la* Pravda *se corrige elle-même, les éditions retouchées de l'histoire officielle se succèdent, Lénine est censuré, Marx n'est pas édité. À ce degré, la comparaison avec l'obscurantisme religieux n'est même plus juste. L'Église n'est jamais allée jusqu'à décider successivement que la manifestation divine se faisait en deux, puis en quatre, ou en trois, puis encore en deux personnes. L'accélération propre à notre temps atteint aussi la fabrication de la vérité qui, à ce rythme, devient pur fantôme*]" (*Rebel* 236-37; *Essais* 640).

[219] "*Ad primum ergo dicendum quod illud auxilium datum homini a Deo, scilicet originalis iustitia, fuit gratuitum [. . .]*" (428).

understand how the Dominicans could have rationally countered Camus's allegation. *Natural* life is what human persons automatically possess from the instant of their conception; it is the life of the rational animal, the psychosomatic composite known as man. On the other hand, the *supernatural* life is the life that God, in an act of love, freely gives to human beings to elevate them above their natural lives. This higher life is something really existing as a quality of the human soul--it is not just a metaphor--and it confers an actual, though finite, share in the life of God himself. (The supernatural life is designated by the technical term "sanctifying grace.") In the Dominicans' belief system, this supernatural life is (with the exception of a single human person, the Mother of Jesus) not granted at the moment of conception, but is acquired later in the human being's terrestrial journey, through prayer and the sacred rites known as the Mass and the seven sacraments. In fact, for the Catholic Church, the whole point of human existence is to obtain, preserve, and intensify the supernatural life, because, in its absence, it is impossible for human beings to achieve the only ultimate goal for which they were given the gift of existence in the first place: the eternal enjoyment of the direct vision and love of God.[220]

Camus's reference to the children who go to limbo is, as has been noted, unexpected. This leads one to wonder why he feels compelled to raise this question in his statement of reasons for rejecting Catholicism's viewpoint on the problem of evil. Perhaps--and this is, admittedly, mere speculation--the answer can be found by drawing

[220] An outstanding treatment of the concept of the supernatural life is to be found in a book that was first published in the same year in which Camus delivered his challenge to the Dominicans: Frank Sheed's *Theology and Sanity*. See especially the chapters entitled "The Testing of Angels and Men" (140-55), "The Fall of Man" (156-71) and "The Life of Grace" (347-63). The first edition of *Theology and Sanity* is superior to the revision, published in 1993.

an inference from a comment made by Beránková. In her provocative dissertation on Camus and Dostoyevsky, she has a surprisingly forthright footnote concerning Camus's personal life: "Indeed, faithful to his 'ethic of quantity,' Camus leads a quite hectic sexual life: in addition to a legal spouse, several intimate female 'friends' as well as one-night stands follow one another at a dizzying pace" (175 [footnote 490]).[221] McCarthy corroborates Beránková's remarks, but is more specific: "During the years after he broke with Simone [Camus's first wife] he slept with dozens of girls. He was good-looking and he encountered little resistance" (99). McCarthy adds the following later:

> His affair with Maria Casarès was public knowledge and he had less and less taste for domesticity. Friends who visited Paris were given the phone numbers of various young women in whose flats Camus could be reached. Often he fled to a little hotel near the Palais Royal where he could work and seduce in peace. Francine had to phone Gallimard to find out where he was and the more often she phoned the more Camus tried to escape her." (247)[222]

In view of these statements, one may wonder whether Camus is being self-referential when he has Clamence say in *La Chute*: "[. . .] my kingdom was the bed" (*Fall*

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[221] "*En effet, fidèle à son «éthique de la quantité», Camus connaît une vie sexuelle bien agitée: en dehors d'une épouse légale, plusieurs «amies» intimes, ainsi que des liaisons d'une nuit se succèdent à un rythme vertigineux.*"

Beránková is referring this sentence in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*: "What Don Juan realizes in action is an ethic of quantity, whereas the saint, on the contrary, tends toward quality. [*Ce que Don Juan met en acte, c'est une éthique de la quantité, au contraire du saint qui tend vers la qualité*]" (*Myth* 72; *Essais* 154).

In her Indiana University doctoral dissertation entitled *Polemics, Ideology, Structure, and Texture in A. Camus'* The Fall *and F. Dostoevskij's* Notes From Underground*,* Irene Kirk phrases Beránková's observation less directly: "Behind Albert Camus--whose commitment to sensuous life was equal to his concern for philosophical dilemmas--rises an image of pagan Greece, whose beauty forever haunted his mind" (62).

[222] Maria Casarès was a prominent actress. Francine, *née* Faure, was Camus's second wife. Gallimard was Camus's publisher and employer.

86).[223] One may ask, too, whether Camus applies to himself the professional designation that Clamence jocosely imagines might appear on the honest visiting cards of some of his contemporaries: "adulterous humanist" (*Fall* 47).[224] Given what Camus's private life appears to have been, is it unreasonable to ask whether, when speaking before representatives of Catholicism, he experienced, if only on a subconscious level, some concern regarding the eternal destiny of children whom he may have fathered but who were never born? A researcher does not have to be a depth psychologist to pose this question. If this suspicion is well founded, then we have here another confirmation of the fact that the scandal of evil is never a merely distant and abstract academic topic. On the contrary, it is always, by its very nature, deeply personal and concrete, and it touches everyone.

**Dostoyevsky's Chapter "Cana of Galilee": An Answer for Camus**

In analyzing Camus's polemic against limbo, I have emphasized the Catholic concept of human existence as an absolute gift. This concept is celebrated in a Russian Orthodox context in one of the greatest passages in Dostoyevsky--in fact, one of the greatest passages in Russian literature, and, indeed, world literature. It is the chapter entitled "Cana of Galilee" in *The Brothers Karamazov* (337-41).[225] In this title, Cana refers to the village in which Jesus, acceding to a request of his Mother, performed his first miracle by transforming water into wine at a wedding celebration (*Jn* 2:1-12). The

[223] "[. . .] *mon royaume était le lit*" (*Théâtre* 1519).

[224] "*humaniste adultère*" (*Théâtre* 1499).

[225] *PSS* 14: 325-28; pt. 3, bk. 7, ch. 4.

ability to appreciate this one chapter in its original language could, in the eyes of some readers, be considered sufficient justification for the enthusiastic, lifelong study of the Russian language. Toward the beginning of this dithyrambic segment, Dostoyevsky tells us that Alesha, having entered Father Zosima's cell to pray before the corpse of his deceased mentor, "[. . .] longed to pour out his thankfulness and love. . . ." (337).[226] Thankfulness for what? Thankfulness to whom? Are we to think *only* of gratitude to Father Zosima for his life and teaching? The subsequent part of the chapter develops the idea of Alesha's overpowering gratitude and supplies the answers, the full and ultimate answers, to these questions by concretely imaging Dostoyevsky's thinking on the utter giftedness of the human condition--a giftedness that represents, in the mind of Dostoyevsky, as well as in the Russian Orthodox viewpoint from which he is writing, one of the answers to the scandalous existence of evil.

This euphorically hopeful passage still emphasizes the terrible evil of death by vividly stressing the fact that Father Zosima's corpse, contrary to the expectations of the devout, has not been spared the indignity of decay: "'So the odor must have become stronger, if they opened the window,' thought Alesha. But even this thought of the odor of corruption, which had seemed to him so awful and humiliating a few hours before, no

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[226] "[. . .] ему так хотелось благодарить и любить . . ." (*PSS* 14: 325; pt. 3, bk. 7, ch. 4).

Readers who appreciate the magnificence of Dostoyevskian texts such as the "Cana of Galilee" chapter, and especially its climax, are responding to Dostoyevsky's open encouragement, delivered in Father Zosima's pastoral advice: "Love all men, love everything. Seek that rapture and ecstasy. Water the earth with the tears of your joy and love those tears. Don't be ashamed of that ecstasy, prize it, for it is a gift of God and a great one; it is not given to many but only to the elect. [ [. . .] всех люби, всё люби, ищи восторга и исступления сего. Омочи землю слезами радости твоея и люби сии слезы твои. Исступления же сего не стыдись, дорожи им, ибо есть дар божий, великий, да и не многим дается, а избранным" (301; *PSS* 14: 292; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. h).

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longer made him feel miserable or indignant" (337).[227] As Father Paisii, standing at Father Zosima's coffin, reads the Evangelist John's account of the participation of Jesus and Mary in the wedding celebration of an impoverished Galilean couple, Alesha falls asleep on his knees and dreams that he sees and hears Father Zosima. Referring to the eternal wedding feast of the next world, but also to the entire panorama of the transmission of human life from one generation to another throughout the ages in this world, Father Zosima addresses Alesha:

> Do not fear Him. He is terrible in His greatness, awful in His sublimity, but infinitely merciful. He has made Himself like unto us from love and rejoices with us. He is changing the water into wine that the gladness of the guests may not be cut short. He is expecting new guests, He is calling new ones unceasingly forever and ever. . . . (339-40)[228]

Soon Alesha, in rapture, rushes out of the monastic cell to throw himself, joyous and sobbing, on the earth--the earth that symbolizes, together with the stars and galaxies burning brightly in the sapphire-blue sky, the delights of God's cosmos. At this ecstatic moment, an instant that Dostoyevsky tells us Alesha remembered for the rest of his life, the novice monk, soon to leave the monastery for the world, is overwhelmed by the thought that the mere second-to-second existence of man and the universe is an

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[227] "«значит, дух стал еще сильнее, коли решились отворить окно»,--подумал Алеша. Но и эта мысль о тлетворном духе, казавшаяся ему еще только давеча столь ужасною и бесславною, не подняла теперь в нем давешней тоски и давешнего негодования" (*PSS* 14: 325; pt. 3, bk. 7, ch. 4).

[228] "--Не бойся его. Страшен величием пред нами, ужасен высотою своею, но милостив бесконечно, нам из любви уподобился и веселится с нами, воду в вино превращает, чтобы не пресекалась радость гостей, новых гостей ждет, новых беспрерывно зовет и уже на веки веков" (*PSS* 14: 327; pt. 3, bk. 7, ch. 4).

Since there can be no new guests at the eschatological wedding banquet unless new human beings are conceived and born, the centrality of children, which is such a prominent theme in Ivan Karamazov's atheistic discourse in book 5, is implied in the last sentence of this extract.

unspeakable gift--an unmerited invitation to the billions of guests summoned to the banquet of life, both temporal and eternal, both here and hereafter. It is precisely this idea that Camus neglects to address when he tells the Paris Dominicans that their faith is pessimism, since they believe that unbaptized infants will achieve only natural happiness, a natural happiness similar to that enjoyed by the married couple and the wedding guests whom Jesus and Mary visited in Cana. It is as if Dostoyevsky were replying to Camus in advance: "You may say 'only' natural happiness. Only? But even natural happiness is an ineffable gift." And that is why Alesha, recalling maxims uttered by both the saintly Father Zosima and the unsaintly Dmitrii, says to himself: "It was not men's grief, but their joy Christ visited, He worked His first miracle to help men's gladness . . . 'He who loves men loves their gladness, too' . . . *He* was always repeating that, it was one of his leading ideas. . . . 'There's no living without joy,' Mitya says. . . ." (338)[229]

But there is another Dostoyevskian passage that must be quoted in connection with Camus's having been scandalized by the Catholic hypothesis of limbo, and also in connection with Camus's failure to engage the Catholic conception of life as a stupendous, unmerited gift. It is a passage to be found, not in Dostoyevsky's novels, but in his voluminous, and revealing, correspondence. Shortly after the mock execution in which the Russian novelist and his fellow political prisoners had thought that they would be shot to death within minutes, Dostoyevsky writes the following to his brother Mikhail from his cell in the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg on December 22, 1849:

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[229] "Не горе, а радость людскую посетил Христос, в первый раз сотворяя чудо, радости людской помог . . . „Кто любит людей, тот и радость их любит . . ." Это повторял покойник поминутно, это одна из главнейших мыслей его была . . . Без радости жить нельзя, говорит Митя . . ." (*PSS* 14: 326; pt. 3, bk. 7, ch. 4).

"Mitya" is a nickname for "Dmitrii."

> When I turn back to look at the past, I think how much time has been wasted, how much of it has been lost in misdirected efforts, mistakes, and idleness, in living in the wrong way; and, however I treasured life, how much I sinned against my heart and spirit--my heart bleeds now as I think of it. Life is a gift, life is happiness, each minute could be an eternity of bliss. (Frank and Goldstein 53)[230]

Since these words spring from Dostoyevsky's own life, and not merely from that of a fictional character, they are all the more significant. Let us note this great irony: even for the Camus of his militantly absurdist phase (for we shall later consider his possible movement away from atheism toward faith), life is also a stupendous gift, but in a sense far different from the understanding of the ecstatic Dostoyevsky writing to his brother Mikhail from the Peter and Paul Fortress after the agony of the sadistic mock execution. True, that Albert Camus had been brought into a meaningless existence in an absurd cosmos is something that the absurdist Camus would have called a random event rather than a gift. Dostoyevsky, who had to fight a mania for gambling, might have phrased it as the luck of the roulette table. But even money won at gambling can be considered a kind of gift--only, in that case, there is no one to thank. And, on a much larger scale, the absurdist must consider the whole universe a kind of gift--but a gift without a giver--since there is no one who brought it into existence, and who keeps it in existence. In the atheistic vision of the absurdist, there is no God who *must* exist as the one necessary being, but who freely and generously gives existence to, and providentially

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[230] "Как оглянусь на прошедшее да подумаю, сколько даром потрачено времени, сколько его пропало в заблуждениях, в ошибках, в праздности, в неуменье жить; как не дорожил я им, сколько раз я грешил против сердца моего и духа,--так кровью обливается сердце мое. Жизнь--дар, жизнь--счастье, каждая минута могла быть веком счастья" (*PSS* 28, pt. 1; 164).

guides and oversees, all else that exists, including an Albert Camus. For Dostoyevsky in his later development as a novelist writing from the standpoint of Russian Orthodoxy, life is a gift in the plenary sense, because there *is* someone to thank. Even in the heartfelt letter written immediately after his escape from death, there is a foreshadowing of this later phase, for he goes on to say to his brother Mikhail:

> Now, at this turning point in my life, I am being reborn in another form. Brother! I swear to you that I will not lose hope and will keep my spirit and my heart pure. I shall be reborn to something better. (Frank and Goldstein 53)[231]

Reading the above sentences, anyone familiar with the Gospel of John cannot fail to think of the words of Jesus to Nicodemus: "Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above. [. . .] no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit" (*Jn* 3:3, 5).[232] This Gospel passage will figure in a fascinating conversation that Camus will conduct with an American Methodist clergyman stationed in Paris, but let us defer a discussion of that surprising exchange until chapter 7.

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[231] "Теперь, переменяя жизнь, перерождаюсь в новую форму. Брат! Клянусь тебе, что я не потеряю надежду и сохраню дух мой и сердце в чистоте. Я перерожусь к лучшему" (*PSS* 28, pt. 1: 164).

[232] "Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. [. . .] ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ."

The Greek ἄνωθεν can mean either "from above" or "again." Note, however, that someone who is born "from above" is by that very fact also born a second time.

# CHAPTER 3

## LET THEM GREET ME WITH CRIES OF HATE: THE PARADIGMATIC EVIL FOR DOSTOYEVSKY IS CHILD MOLESTATION; FOR CAMUS, CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Although both Dostoyevsky and Camus foreground the suffering and death of children as terrible evils, the truly paradigmatic evil for Dostoyevsky is a moral evil committed against children: the sexual abuse of minors. In keeping with his tendency to emphasize moral evil on the individual, personal, and sexual planes, rather than on the social, political, and economic planes, the Russian novelist makes the molestation of children a prominent motif that incessantly runs through his works. This major theme is particularly evident in crucial episodes in two of his major novels: the suppressed chapter of *The Devils* ("At Tikhon's" or "Stavrogin's Confession") and the prelude to Svidrigailov's suicide in *Crime and Punishment*.

There can be no doubt that the sexual abuse of minor children by adults is the paradigmatic moral evil for Dostoyevsky. I am using the characterization "paradigmatic" rather than "most serious," since Christian theology--as embodied, for example, in the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas--considers that "spiritual" sins are more grievous than "carnal" sins (*Summa theologiae*, pt. 1 of pt. 2, ques. 73, art. 5). In accord with St. Thomas is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: while conceding that passion, outside pressure, and pathological conditions can attenuate subjective culpability, the new catechism states that "[s]in committed through malice, by deliberate choice of evil, is the gravest" (section 1860).[233] Still, the voice of Christian tradition on the relative gravity of

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[233] "*Le péché par malice, par choix délibéré du mal, est le plus grave.*"

In the Catholic understanding, *subjective* culpability is really existing (not merely self-induced) personal guilt that arises because the person *knowingly* and *willingly* commits an *objective* evil. In this

sins does not at all contradict Dostoyevsky's voice, for his outlook largely reflects, not abstract philosophical discourse or pastoral needs (especially those relating to the administration of the sacrament of Penance), but rather his choice of a literary symbol of evil. (Dostoyevsky's persistence in dealing with child molestation may reflect something else as well, and that will be a major conjecture of this dissertation--a guess that I shall try to justify in this chapter.) Besides, the classic theology of sin has always emphasized that the seriousness of a contravention of the moral law may be greatly heightened by the circumstances under which it takes place. In the case of child molestation, the aggravating circumstances are evident. Moreover, Dostoyevsky, in focusing on sexual crimes against minors, can appeal to the words of Jesus:

> And whoever welcomes one child like this one in my name welcomes me.
>
> And if anyone scandalizes one of these little ones who believe in me, it is better that a millstone be hung around that person's neck and that he or she be drowned in the open sea. Alas for the world because of scandals, for it is a necessity that scandals happen, but alas for that person through whom the scandal happens. (*Mt* 18:5-7)[234]

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schema, one may escape subjective guilt for an objectively evil act by committing it without knowledge or consent. For example, if Stavrogin had been utterly psychotic and thus incapable of voluntary action, then he would not have been subjectively guilty of the objectively evil act of child molestation. See Connell, who calls an objective sin "formal" and a subjective sin "material" (50-51).

After Stavrogin has hanged himself at the end of *The Devils*, Dostoyevsky tells us through the narrator: "All this indicated that to the last second he was in full possession of his mental faculties and had acted with premeditation. "After the autopsy, all our medical experts rejected any possibility of insanity. [Всё означало преднамеренность и сознание до последней минуты. "Наши медики по вскрытии трупа совершенно и настойчиво отвергли помешательство]" (689; *PSS* 10: 516; pt. 3, ch. 8).

[234] "καὶ ὃς ἐὰν δέξηται ἓν παιδίον τοιοῦτο ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐμὲ δέχεται.

"Ὃς δ᾽ ἂν σκανδαλίσῃ ἕνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ, συμφέρει αὐτῷ ἵνα κρεμασθῇ μύλος ὀνικὸς περὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ καταποντισθῇ ἐν τῷ πελάγει τῆς θαλάσσης. οὐαὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἀπὸ τῶν σκανδάλων· ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἐλθεῖν τὰ σκάνδαλα, πλὴν οὐαὶ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ δι᾽ οὗ τὸ σκάνδαλον ἔρχεται" (my translation).

In fact, Dostoyevsky cites the above Bible passage in *The Devils* in Stavrogin's confession to Bishop Tikhon: "'There's no forgiveness for me,' Stavrogin said grimly. 'It says in your book here that there's no greater crime than to offend "one of these little ones," and there can be none!'" (440).[235] Camus has Stavrogin approximate this passage in *Les Possédés*, Camus's theatrical adaptation of *The Devils*: "There can be no forgiveness for me. It is written in your books that there is no greater crime than to outrage one of those small children" (*Théâtre* 1074).[236] Moreover, Father Zosima says the following in *The Brothers Karamazov*: "Love children especially, for they too are sinless like the angels; they live to soften and purify our hearts and as it were to guide us. Woe to him who offends a child!" (298).[237]

The above exposition is not contradicted by Dostoyevsky's making Makar say the following in *A Raw Youth*: "Suicide is the greatest human sin [. . .] but God alone is judge of it, for He alone knows all, every limit, every measure. We must pray without ceasing

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Let us grant, with the annotation in the New American Bible, that the primary meaning of "little ones" in the foregoing verses may be Jesus's humble followers in a collective sense, and not merely children; nonetheless, these statements are made in a context in which Jesus has just called a child out of the crowd and has told his listeners that they must all imitate the simplicity and openness of children (*Mt* 18:1-4). In such a context, how could the crowd have failed to assume that children are also being included--explicitly and prominently--among those who must be protected from those who commit the sin of scandal?

[235] "--Мне нет прощения,--мрачно сказал Ставрогин,--в вашей книге сказано, что выше преступления нет, если оскорбить «единого от малых сих», и не может. Вот в этой книге" (*PSS* 12: 119). *PSS* 11: 28 has a somewhat different text: "--Кстати, Христос ведь не простит,--спросил Ставрогин, и в тоне вопроса послышался легкий оттенок иронии,--ведь сказано в книге: «Если соблазните единого от малых сих»--помните? По Евангелию, больше преступления нет и не может <быть>. Вот в этой книге! ['By the way, Christ will not forgive, will he?' asked Stavrogin, and in the tone of his question there was heard a light note of irony. 'You know, it's said in the book: "If you seduce one of these little ones." Remember? According to the Gospel, there is no greater crime, nor can there be. It's here in this book!']" (my translation).

[236] "*Il ne peut y avoir de pardon pour moi. Il est écrit dans vos livres qu'il n'y a pas de plus grand crime que d'outrager un de ces petits enfants* " (my translation).

[237] "Деток любите особенно, ибо они тоже безгрешны, яко ангелы, и живут для умиления нашего, для очищения сердец наших и как некое указание нам. Горе оскорбившему младенца" (*PSS* 14: 289; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. g).

for such sinners" (417).[238] The perspective from which Makar and, presumably, Dostoyevsky utter this statement is a restricted one: both are thinking in Christian terms of the pragmatic difficulty of saving one's immortal soul. Obviously, from the viewpoint of Christian doctrine, nothing jeopardizes one's salvation as seriously as sinning in the very act of leaving this world for the next.

The exceptional persistence with which Dostoyevsky deals with the theme of adult sexual attraction to minors can be fully assessed by reviewing the table that I have constructed in response to a section in Avrahm Yarmolinsky's *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* (301-02).[239] I have added instances to Yarmolinsky's list as a result of observations made by William Woodin Rowe in *Dostoevsky: Child and Man in His Works* and Susanne Fusso in *Discovering Sexuality in Dostoevsky*. I have also made additions as a result of my own reading of Dostoyevsky's texts. My table 2, entitled "Adult Attraction to Minors in Dostoyevsky's Works (Expanded from a List in Avrahm Yarmolinsky's *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* [301-02])," is to be found on pages 129-43 of this dissertation.

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[238] "--Самоубийство есть самый великий грех человеческий [. . .] но судья тут--един лишь господь [sic], ибо ему лишь известно всё, всякий предел и всякая мера. Нам же беспременно надо молиться о таковом грешнике" (*PSS* 13: 310; pt. 3, ch. 3).

[239] In Yarmolinsky's *Dostoevsky: Works and Days*, his 1971 version of *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art*, this catalogue appears on pages 311-12. In the 1971 catalogue, he drops the reference to "The Little Hero"; I have retained this reference in my table.

Table 2
Adult Attraction to Minors in Dostoyevsky's Works (Expanded from a List in Avrahm Yarmolinsky's *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* [301-02]).

| Occur-rence Number | Work and Publication Year | Details, Including Researcher Who Noted Occurrence | English Text | Russian Text |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | "The Christmas Tree and the Wedding" (1848) | The financially grasping Iulian Mastakovich flirts with, and plans his marriage to, the daughter of a wealthy friend; she is a minor[240] about 11 years old. (Yarmolinsky) | He rubbed his hands and danced from place to place, and kept getting more and more excited. Finally, however, he conquered his emotions and came to a standstill. He cast a determined look at the future bride and wanted to move toward her, but glanced about first. Then, as if with a guilty conscience, he stepped over to the child on tip-toe, smiling, and bent down and kissed her head. (*Best Russian Short Stories* 100)[241] | [. . .] он потирал себе руки и не мог постоять на месте. Это волнение увеличилось до nec plus ultra, когда он остановился и бросил другой, решительный взгляд на будущую невесту. Он было двинулся вперед, но сначала огляделся кругом. Потом, на цыпочках, как будто чувствуя себя виноватым, стал подходить к ребенку. Он подошел с улыбочкой, нагнулся и поцеловал ее в голову. (*PSS* 2: 97-98) |
| 2 | "A Little Hero" (1849) | A woman flirtatiously vexes a 10-year-old boy. (Yarmolinsky) | In the eyes of all those beautiful women I was still the small, undefinable creature whom they occasionally liked to caress and with whom they could play as with a little doll. One of them in particular, a ravishing blond, with very thick, luxuriant hair, whom I had never seen before and shall probably never see again, seemed to have taken a vow never to leave me in peace. (177)[242] | На глаза всех этих прекрасных дам, я всё еще был то же маленькое, неопределенное существо, которое они подчас любили ласкать и с которым им можно было играть как с маленькой куклой. Особенно одна из них, очаровательная блондинка, с пышными, густейшими волосами, каких я никогда потом не видел и, верно, никогда не увижу, казалось, поклялась не давать мне покоя. (*PSS* 2: 269) |

[240] In this table, a minor is a child under the age of sixteen.

[241] Except for occurrence 22, which I have translated myself, English translations in this table are taken from the translations listed in the bibliography. All Russian excerpts are taken from *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972-90). If Yarmolinsky, Rowe, or Fusso do not list an occurrence, I have emphasized its number by enlarging, italicizing, and bolding it.

[242] Since the relative pronoun каких (*kakikh*) is plural and thus refers, not to the blond lady herself, but to her hair, David Magarshack's translation should be corrected: "with very thick, luxuriant hair that I never saw, and shall probably never see, again."

Table 2
Adult Attraction to Minors in Dostoyevsky's Works (Expanded from a List in Avrahm Yarmolinsky's *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* [301-02]).

| Occur-rence Number | Work and Publication Year | Details, Including Researcher Who Noted Occurrence | English Text | Russian Text |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | *The Insulted and Injured* (1861) | Ivan Petrovich may be sexually attracted to Nelli, who is about 11, 12, or 13 years old.[243] (Fusso 17-22) | I did my utmost to conciliate her, and Ì don't know how it was she attracted me so much. There was something beside pity in my feeling for her. (127; pt. 2, ch. 3) | Я убеждал ее горячо и сам не знаю, чем влекла она меня так к себе. В чувстве моем было еще что-то другое, кроме одной жалости. (*PSS* 3: 255) |
| ***4*** | *The Insulted and Injured* (1861) | Madame Bubnova, a procuress, almost got into trouble because of a minor girl. (O'Brien) | But I really do know something about Mme. Bubnov. [. . .] She's a nasty woman! She's in an unmentionable line of business. (142-43; pt. 2, ch. 5)<br><br>This Bubnov has long been notorious for some shifty doings in the same line. She was almost caught over a little girl of respectable family the other day. (152; pt. 2, ch. 7) | А об мадам Бубновой я действительно кой-что знаю. [. . .] Скверная баба! Непозволительными делами занимается. (*PSS* 3: 266)<br><br>Эта Бубнова давно уж известна кой-какими проделками в этом же роде. Она на днях с одной девочкой из честного дома чуть не попалась. (*PSS* 3: 273). |
| 5 | *The Insulted and Injured* (1861) | Nelli is almost raped by Archipov. (Yarmolinsky) | Suddenly the door was violently flung open and Elena rushed into the room with a white face and dazed eyes in a white muslin dress, crumpled and torn, and with her hair, which had been carefully arranged, disheveled as though by a struggle. (155; pt. 2, ch. 7) | Вдруг с силой отворилась дверь и Елена, бледная, с помутившимися глазами, в белом кисейном, но совершенно измятом и изорванном платье, с расчесанными, но разбившимися, как бы в борьбе, волосами, ворвалась в комнату. (*PSS* 3: 276) |

[243] Nelli's age is never stated definitively. On first meeting Nelli, Ivan Petrovich thinks that she is about twelve or thirteen (65; *PSS* 3: 208; pt. 1, ch. 10). Later, however, he tells Masloboev that, from her face, he would say that she is about thirteen (152; *PSS* 3: 273; pt. 2, ch. 7). Sometime later, Masloboev tells Aleksandra Semenovna that Nelli is around twelve or eleven (235; *PSS* 3: 333; pt. 3, ch. 6). Translator Constance Garnett incorrectly omits adverbs of approximation in giving these ages. When the numeral *follows* the Russian word лет (*let* or "years") instead of *preceding* it, the age indicated is approximate, not precise. See *Colloquial Russian*, by William Harrison, Yelena Clarkson, and Stephen Le Fleming (229-30). Consequently, Nelli could be even younger than eleven.

Table 2
Adult Attraction to Minors in Dostoyevsky's Works (Expanded from a List in Avrahm Yarmolinsky's *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* [301-02]).

| Occur-rence Number | Work and Publication Year | Details, Including Researcher Who Noted Occurrence | English Text | Russian Text |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | *The Insulted and Injured* (1861) | Masloboev is attracted to Nelli. (Fusso 21) | But it struck me that Masloboev had purposely come when I was out, in order to find Nellie alone. "What did he do that for?" I wondered. (221-22; pt. 3, ch. 5) | Мне показалось только, что Маслобоев нарочно заходил без меня, чтоб застать Нелли одну. «Для чего ему это?»--подумал я. (*PSS* 3: 323) |
| 7 | *The Insulted and Injured* (1861) | Prince Valkovskii tells Ivan Petrovich about an exhibitionist who exposed himself in front of children in Paris. (Fusso 9-10) | But whenever he met anyone in a lonely place where there was no one else about, he walked up to him in silence, and with the most serious and profoundly thoughtful air suddenly stopped before him, threw open his cloak and displayed himself in all the . . . purity of his heart! That used to last for a minute, then he would wrap himself up again, and in silence, without moving a muscle of his face, he would stalk by the petrified spectator, as grave and majestic as the ghost in Hamlet. That was how he used to behave with everyone, men, women, and children, and that was his only pleasure. (275; pt. 3, ch. 10) | Но лишь только случалось ему встретить какого-нибудь прохожего, где-нибудь наедине, так чтоб кругом никого не было, он молча шел на него, с самым серьезным и глубокомысленным видом, вдруг останавливался перед ним, развертывал свой плащ и показывал себя во всем . . . чистосердечии. Это продолжалось одну минуту, потом он завертывался опять и молча, не пошевелив ни одним мускулом лица, проходил мимо остолбеневшего от изумления зрителя важно, плавно, как тень в Гамлете. Так он поступал со всеми, с мужчинами, женщинами и детьми, и в этом состояло всё его удовольствие. (*PSS* 3: 362-63) |
| 8 | *The Insulted and Injured* (1861) | The doctor calls Nelli his future wife. (Fusso 21) | At last the old man solemnly got up from his chair, took out a box of sweets and as he handed it to Nellie invariably added: "To my future amiable spouse." (299; pt. 4, ch. 3) | Наконец старик торжественно подымался со стула, вынимал коробочку с конфетами и, вручая ее Нелли, непременно прибавлял: «Моей будущей и любезной супруге». (*PSS* 3: 377) |
| ***9*** | *The Insulted and Injured* (1861) | Prince Valkovskii chooses a 14-year-old bride. (O'Brien) | He looked out for his bride when he was here last year; she was only fourteen then. (380; epilogue) | Невесту он себе еще в прошлом году приглядел; ей было тогда всего четырнадцать лет [. . .]. (*PSS* 3: 439) |

Table 2
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| Occur-rence Number | Work and Publication Year | Details, Including Researcher Who Noted Occurrence | English Text | Russian Text |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Plot of unfinished story reported to Anna Korvin-Krukovskaia (1865) | A middle-aged man recalls that he had raped a 10-year-old girl. (Yarmolinsky)[244] | | |
| ***11*** | *Crime and Punishment* (1866) | Raskol'nikov spots a stalker following a drunken girl, maybe only 15 or so, in the street. The girl has already been sexually abused by another man. (O'Brien) | Look, her dress is torn; look how it is put on; clearly she didn't dress herself, she was dressed by somebody else, and dressed by unskilful [sic] hands, masculine hands. That is plain. And now look over here; that overdressed scoundrel that I was trying to fight is a stranger to me, this is the first time I have seen him, but he saw her as well, just now, this drunken girl, in no condition to take care of herself, and now he is aching to come and get hold of her--since she is in such a state--and take her off somewhere. (40-41; pt. 1, ch. 4)[245] | Посмотрите, как разорвано платье, посмотрите, как оно надето: ведь ее одевали, а не сама она одевалась, да и одевали-то неумелые руки, мужские. Это видно. А вот теперь смотрите сюда: этот франт, с которым я сейчас драться хотел, мне незнаком, первый раз вижу; но он ее тоже отметил дорогой, сейчас, пьяную-то, себя-то не помнящую, и ему ужасно теперь хочется подойти и перехватить ее,--так как она в таком состоянии,--завезти куда-нибудь . . . (*PSS* 6: 41) |
| 12 | *Crime and Punishment* (1866) | Svidrigailov sexually assaults a deaf and mute girl about 14 or 15; she then hangs herself. (Yarmolinsky) | One day the girl was found hanged in the attic. The verdict was that she had committed suicide. There, after the usual proceedings, the matter ended, but later, information was laid that the child had been . . . cruelly abused by Svidrigaylov. (252; pt. 4, ch. 2) | Раз она найдена была на чердаке удавившеюся. Присуждено, что от самоубийства. После обыкновенных процедур тем дело и кончилось, но впоследствии явился, однако, донос, что ребенок был . . . жестоко оскорблен Свидригайловым. (*PSS* 6: 228) |

[244] The age of the girl is taken from David Magarshack's biography entitled *Dostoevsky* (188).

[245] In the Russian, Raskol'nikov, in defiance of his nihilism, actually says: "the fop I wanted to fight." Given what Camus is reported to have said about his existentialist critics in a moment of pugnacious anger--I have already quoted it from McCarthy (259)--I can imagine Camus saying in this context: "the pansy whose mug I wanted to smash."

Table 2
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| Occur-rence Number | Work and Publication Year | Details, Including Researcher Who Noted Occurrence | English Text | Russian Text |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | *Crime and Punishment* (1866) | Svidrigailov gets engaged to a girl not yet 16. (Yarmolinsky) | [. . .] what does it matter that I am fifty and she is not yet sixteen? Who will consider that? (405; pt. 6, ch. 4) | [. . .] ну что ж, что мне пятьдесят, а той и шестнадцати нет? Кто ж на это смотрит? (*PSS* 6: 369) |
| ***14*** | *Crime and Punishment* (1866) | Svidrigailov invites a girl of about 13 and her mother to his home after having met them in a dance hall. (O'Brien) | 'I like all children. I like them very much,' laughed Svidrigaylov. 'Apropos of that, I could tell you a very curious story, that is not finished yet. [. . .] I chanced one evening on a so-called dance--it was in a horrible den (but I like my sewers filthy), and, of course, there was a *cancan* of an unheard-of kind, such as there never was in my day. Yes, sir, there has been progress there. Suddenly, I looked and saw a little girl of about thirteen, very nicely dressed, dancing with an expert, and with another *vis-à-vis*. Her mother was sitting in a chair by the wall. Well, you can imagine what that *cancan* was like! The little girl was confused and blushing, and at last, feeling herself insulted, she began to cry.' (407; pt. 6, ch. 4) | --Детей я вообще люблю, я очень люблю детей,--захохотал Свидригайлов. --На этот счет я вам могу даже рассказать прелюбопытный один эпизод, который и до сих пор продолжается. [. . .] Попал я на один танцевальный так называемый вечер--клоак страшный (а я люблю клоаки именно с грязнотцой), ну, разумеется, канкан, каких нету и каких в мое время и не было. Да-с, в этом прогресс. Вдруг, смотрю, девочка, лет тринадцати, премило одетая, танцует с одним виртуозом; другой пред ней визави. У стенки же на стуле сидит ее мать. Ну можете себе представить, каков канкан! Девочка конфузится, краснеет, наконец принимает себе в обиду и начинает плакать. (*PSS* 6: 370) |

Table 2
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| Occur-rence Number | Work and Publication Year | Details, Including Researcher Who Noted Occurrence | English Text | Russian Text |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | *Crime and Punishment* (1866) | Svidrigailov dreams about the wake of a 14-year-old-girl who drowned herself after having been sexually abused. (Yarmolinsky) | Svidrigaylov knew her. There were no lighted candles, no holy icons, beside the coffin, and no prayers were heard; she was a suicide, drowned. She was no more than fourteen, but that heart had been broken, and had destroyed itself, savagely wounded by the outrage that had amazed and horrified her young childish conscience, overwhelmed her soul, pure as an angel's, with unmerited shame, and torn from her a last cry of despair, unregarded, but defiantly shrieked into the dark night, into the blackness, the cold, the torrents of spring, while the wind howled . . . (429; pt. 6, ch. 6) | Свидригайлов знал эту девочку; ни образа, ни зажженных свечей не было у этого гроба и не слышно было молитв. Эта девочка была самоубийца--утопленница. Ей было только четырнадцать лет, но это было уже разбитое сердце, и оно погубило себя, оскорбленное обидой, ужаснувшею и удивившею это молодое, детское сознание, залившею незаслуженным стыдом ее ангельски чистую душу и вырвавшею последний крик отчаяния, не услышанный, а нагло поруганный в темную ночь, во мраке, в холоде, в сырую оттепель, когда выл ветер . . . (*PSS* 6: 391) |
| 16 | *Crime and Punishment* (1866) | Svidrigailov has a dream in which a girl no older than 5 is transformed into a French prostitute. (Yarmolinsky) | But now she had ceased to control herself at all, and it was a laugh, a downright laugh; an impudent invitation gleamed from that unchildlike face; it was corruption, it was the face of a courtesan, the brazen face of a mercenary French harlot. (431; pt. 6, ch. 6) | Но вот уже она совсем перестала сдерживаться; это уже смех, явный смех; что-то нахальное, вызывающее светится в этом совсем не детском лице; это разврат, это лицо камелии, нахальное лицо продажной камелии из француженок. (*PSS* 6: 393) |
| ***17*** | *The Idiot* (1868) | Totskii may have begun his sexual abuse of Nastas'ia Filippovna when she was about 12-years-old. (O'Brien)[246] | The younger child died of whooping cough, and little Nastasya was left alone. Totsky lived abroad and soon completely forgot her existence. Five years later it occurred to him on his way elsewhere to look in on his estate, and he noticed in the family of his German steward a charming child, a girl about twelve, playful, sweet, clever and promising to become extremely beautiful. On that subject | Вскоре осталась одна только девочка, Настя, а младшая умерла от коклюша; Тоцкий же вскоре совсем и забыл о них обеих, проживая за границей. Лет пять спустя, однажды, Афанасий Иванович, проездом, вздумал заглянуть в свое поместье и вдруг заметил в деревенском своем доме, в семействе своего немца, прелестного ребенка, девочку лет двенадцати, резвую, милую, умненькую и |

[246] Fusso notes this occurrence, but she seems to disagree with me on the time of the beginning of Totskii's sexual relationship with Nastas'ia Filippovna: "Totskii's message is: 'I am not a pedophile; I waited until you were sexually mature before disgracing, offending, inflaming, and debauching you'" (29).

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Adult Attraction to Minors in Dostoyevsky's Works (Expanded from a List in Avrahm Yarmolinsky's *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* [301-02]).

| Occur-rence Number | Work and Publication Year | Details, Including Researcher Who Noted Occurrence | English Text | Russian Text |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Afanasy Ivanovitch was an unerring connoisseur. He only spent a few days on his estate, but he made arrangements for a great change in the girl's education. A respectable and cultivated elderly Swiss governess, experienced in the higher education of girls and competent to teach various subjects besides French, was engaged for her. She was installed in Totsky's country house, and little Nastasya began to receive an education on the broadest lines. (38; pt. 1, ch. 4)<br><br>"Did you really think I meant it?" laughed Nastasya Filippovna, jumping up from the sofa. "Ruin a child like that? That's more in Afanasy Ivanovitch's line: he is fond of children! Come along, Rogozhin! Get your money ready! Never mind about wanting to marry me, let me have the money all the same. Perhaps I shan't marry you after all. You thought if you married me, you'd keep your money? A likely idea! I am a shameless hussy! I've been Totsky's concubine. . . ." (163; pt. 1, ch. 16) | обещавшую необыкновенную красоту; в этом отношении Афанасий Иванович был знаток безошибочный. В этот раз он пробыл в поместье всего несколько дней, но успел распорядиться; в воспитании девочки произошла значительная перемена: приглашена была почтенная и пожилая гувернантка, опытная в высшем воспитании девиц, швейцарка, образованная и преподававшая, кроме французского языка, и разные науки. Она поселилась в деревенском доме, и воспитание маленькой Настасьи приняло чрезвычайные размеры. (*PSS* 8: 35)<br><br>--А ты и впрямь думала?--хохоча вскочила с дивана Настасья Филипповна. --Этакого-то младенца сгубить? Да это Афанасию Иванычу в ту ж пору: это он младенцев любит! Едем, Рогожин! Готовь свою пачку! Ничего, что жениться хочешь, а деньги-то все-таки давай. Я за тебя-то еще и не пойду, может быть. Ты думал, как сам жениться хотел, так пачка у тебя и останется? Врешь! Я сама бесстыдница! Я Тоцкого наложницей была . . . (*PSS* 8: 142-43) |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | *The Eternal Husband* (1870) | Tusotskii plans to propose marriage to a 15-year-old girl. (Yarmolinsky) | "You're engaged to the eldest?"<br>"N-no, I . . . no, not to the eldest; you see, I'm proposing for the sixth, the one who is still at the high school."<br>"What?" said Velchaninov, with an involuntary smile. "Why, you say she's only fifteen!" (605; ch. 11) | --Вы к старшей посватались?<br>--Н-нет-с, я . . . не к старшей; я вот к этой шестой посватался, вот которая еще продолжает учение в гимназии.<br>--Как?--невольно усмехнулся Вельчанинов. --Да ведь вы же говорите, ей пятнадцать лет! (*PSS* 9: 67) |
| 19 | *The Eternal Husband* (1870) | Vel'chaninov is attracted to Tusotskii's intended fiancée. (Rowe 17-18) | But Velchaninov still refused, and the more stubbornly because he was conscious of an oppressive and malignant impulse. This evil impulse had been faintly stirring within him from the very beginning, ever since Pavel Pavlovitch had talked of his future bride: whether it was simply curiosity, or some other quite obscure prompting, he felt tempted to consent. (606; ch. 11) | Но Вельчанинов всё еще отказывался, и тем упорнее, что ощущал в себе одну какую-то тяжелую, злобную мысль. Эта злая мысль уже давно зашевелилась в нем, с самого начала, как только Павел Павлович возвестил о невесте: простое ли это было любопытство, или какое-то совершенно еще неясное влечение, но его тянуло--согласиться. (*PSS* 9: 68). |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***20*** | *The Devils* (1872) | Stepan Verkhovenskii may have molested 10- or 11-year-old Nikolai Stavrogin. (O'Brien) | We may assume that the tutor was to some extent responsible for upsetting his pupil's nerves, for when the boy was sent to boarding school at the age of fifteen, he was puny, pale, and strangely withdrawn. (Later, however, he was noted for his remarkably powerful physique.) We may assume that the two friends' tears, when they sobbed in each other's arms at night, were not always caused by domestic intrigues. Mr. Verkhovensky had managed to touch the deepest-seated chords in the boy's heart, causing the first, still undefined, sensation of the undying, sacred longing that a superior soul, having once tasted, will never exchange for vulgar satisfaction. (There are even people who value that longing more than the most radical fulfillment, even when it is possible.)<br>Anyway, it seemed a good idea finally to separate the teacher and his pupil, even though it was rather late. (43-44; pt. 1, ch. 2, sect. 1) [247] | Надо думать, что педагог несколько расстроил нервы своего воспитанника. Когда его, по шестнадцатому году, повезли в лицей, то он был тщедушен и бледен, странно тих и задумчив. (Впоследствии он отличался чрезвычайною физическою силой.) Надо полагать тоже, что друзья плакали, бросаясь ночью взаимно в объятия, не всё об одних каких-нибудь домашних анекдотцах. Степан Трофимович сумел дотронуться в сердце своего друга до глубочайших струн и вызвать в нем первое, еще неопределенное ощущение той вековечной, священной тоски, которую иная избранная душа, раз вкусив и познав, уже не променяет потом никогда на дешевое удовлетворение. (Есть и такие любители, которые тоской этой дорожат более самого радикального удовлетворения, если б даже таковое и было возможно.) Но во всяком случае хорошо было, что птенца и наставника, хоть и поздно, а развели в разные стороны. (*PSS* 10: 35) |

[247] David Magarshack's "the boy's heart" should be "his friend's heart," and his "people who value" should be "connoisseurs who value." The Russian noun for "connoisseurs" is любители (*liubiteli*) which is not the word for sexual partners, but it does come from the Russian verb meaning "to love."

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| ***21*** | *The Devils* (1872) | Shatov asks Stavrogin whether he sexually abused children in St. Petersburg. (O'Brien) | "Hm," Shatov said with a fierce snort, "and is it true that in Petersburg you belonged to some secret society that practiced the most bestial sensuality? Is it true that you could have given some tips to the Marquis de Sade himself? Is it true that you used to entice children and abuse them?" (241; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 7) | --Гм. А правда ли, что вы,--злобно ухмыльнулся он,--правда ли, что вы принадлежали в Петербурге к скотскому сладострастному секретному обществу? Правда ли, что маркиз де Сад мог бы у вас поучиться? Правда ли, что вы заманивали и развращали детей? (*PSS* 10: 201) |
| 22 | *The Devils* (1872) | In the suppressed chapter ("At Tikhon's"), Stavrogin confesses to Tikhon that he sexually abused Matresha, whose age is either 11 or about 14.[248] (Yarmolinsky) | I again started to kiss her hands, and, having drawn her to my knees, I kissed her face and feet.[249] When I kissed her feet, she completely drew back and smiled, as if from shame, but with a certain crooked smile. Her entire face became red with shame. I was continually whispering something to her. At last, suddenly, something so strange occurred, something that I shall never forget and that | Я опять стал целовать ей руки, взяв ее к себе на колени, целовал ей лицо и ноги. Когда я поцеловал ноги, она вся отдернулась и улыбнулась как от стыда, но какою-то кривою улыбкой. Всё лицо вспыхнуло стыдом. Я что-то всё шептал ей. Наконец вдруг случилась такая странность, которую я никогда не забуду и которая привела меня в удивление: девочка обхватила меня за шею руками и начала вдруг |

[248] I have translated the Russian text for occurrence 22 myself. This excerpt is from the censored chapter of *The Devils*--a chapter that was never published during Dostoyevsky's lifetime. Called "At Tikhon's" or "Stavrogin's Confession," it was, according to Frank, first published in 1922 (*Miraculous Years* 432).

Frank indicates that Dostoyevsky wrote at least two versions of Stavrogin's confession: the original, more explicit, version, which his editor refused to publish because he considered it unacceptably graphic, and a revised version, in which Stavrogin tells Tikhon that there was no molestation, but only a misunderstanding on Matresha's part (*Miraculous Years* 431-34).

*PSS* has a version of this crucial chapter in 11: 5-30; variants for this version appear in *PSS* 12: 108-33. In my translation, I have adhered to the text in *PSS* 11: 5-30. The editors of *PSS* say that the version in volume 11 is essentially the one that "was prepared by the author for printing in *Russian Messenger* [была подготовлена автором для печатания в «Русском вестнике»]" (*PSS* 11: 414).

*PSS* 11: 13 gives Matresha's age as "about fourteen [лет четырнадцати]," whereas *PSS* 12: 109 and *PSS* 12: 123 give the child's age as "in her twelfth year [уже был двенадцатый год]," which--it should be noted--is the same as saying that she is eleven years old.

[249] The Russian word ноги (*nogi*) can mean either "feet" or "legs."

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | startled me: the little girl embraced me by my neck with her hands, and she herself suddenly began kissing me madly. Her face reflected utter euphoria. I almost got up and left--this was so offensive to me in such a little child--out of pity. But I overcame the sudden feeling of my fear and remained.<br>After everything was over, she was embarrassed. (my translation; 420-21 and pt. 2, ch. 9, in the 1991 printing of the Signet Classic edition) | ужасно целовать сама. Лицо ее выражало совершенное восхищение. Я чуть не встал и не ушел--так это было мне неприятно в таком крошечном ребенке--от жалости. Но я преодолел внезапное чувство моего страха и остался.<br>Когда всё кончилось, она была смущена. (*PSS* 11: 16) |
| 23 | *A Writer's Diary* (1873) | Dostoyevsky comments on Kishenskii's play *Strong Drink Every Day Keeps Fortune Away,* in which Matresha, beginning perhaps at age 12, is a victim of debauchery. (Rowe 26) | The poor girl! She has practiced debauchery from the age of twelve, perhaps, and she herself scarcely knows that she is debauched. ("Apropos of a New Play"; 1: 243) | Бедная девочка! она развратничает, может быть, уже с двенадцатилетнего возраста и--почти не знает сама, что развратна. (*PSS* 21: 98) |
| 24 | *A Raw Youth* (1875)--notebooks | Versilov molests his 13-year-old stepdaughter, precipitating her suicide by hanging. (Yarmolinsky) | | |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | *A Raw Youth* (1875) | Prince Sokolskii, speaking with Versilov's son, attributes to Versilov attraction to young girls. (Yarmolinsky) | "Well, what then?" The old Prince's face suddenly changed again. "He'll preach religion as before and . . . and . . . maybe run after little girls, unfledged girls, again. He, he! There's a very funny little story about that going about even now. He, he!" (36; part 1, ch. 2) | --Ну и что ж,--изменилось вдруг всё лицо князя,--проповедует бога [sic] по-прежнему, и, и . . . пожалуй, опять по девочкам, по неоперившимся девочкам? Хе-хе! Тут и теперь презабавный наклевывается один анекдот . . . Хе-хе! (*PSS* 13: 31) |
| 26 | *A Writer's Diary* (1876) | Dostoyevsky discusses an incident in which a little Bulgarian girl was raped and another abducted. (Rowe 27) | But cruel people came and by the wall they burned her old man to death, butchered her fine children, raped a young girl, and carried off another one, a beauty [. . .]. (July-August 1876; "An Odd Summer for Russia"; 1: 594) | И пришли мучители и сожгли у стены ее старика, перерезали соколов ее детей, изнасиловали малую девочку, увели с собой другую, красавицу [. . .]. (*PSS* 23: 100) |
| 27 | "The Meek One: A Fantastic Story" (1876) | The narrator proposes marriage to a 15-year-old girl. (Rowe 61) | Oh yes, and I also recall an impression. What I mean is the main impression, the synthesis of everything: she seemed terribly young, so young she might have been fourteen. Whereas in actual fact she was only a few months short of sixteen. (*A Writer's Diary*, November 1876; 1: 679)[250] | Да; помню и еще впечатление, то есть, если хотите, самое главное впечатление, синтез всего: именно что ужасно молода, так молода, что точно четырнадцать лет. А меж тем ей тогда уж было без трех месяцев шестнадцать. (*PSS* 24: 7) |
| 28 | "The Meek One: A Fantastic Story" (1876) | A shopkeeper wishes to marry the 15-year-old girl. (Rowe 61) | He started courting her and negotiating with the aunts. On top of everything else, he was a man of fifty; she was horrified. (*A Writer's Diary*, November 1876; 1: 684) | Присватался, стал сговариваться с тетками, к тому же--пятьдесят лет ему; она в ужасе. (*PSS* 24: 10) |

[250] The Russian text says that "she was already three months short of sixteen."

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) --notebooks | Dostoyevsky considered making Dmitrii guilty of sexually abusing a child. (Yarmolinsky)[251] | | |
| ***30*** | *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) | In the dining room of the Father Superior, Fedor Karamazov calls Maksimov a von Sohn. Von Sohn had been murdered in a brothel after having been lured there by the promise of access to a 15-year-old girl.[252] (O'Brien) | "But I am not von Sohn either. I am Maximov."<br>"No, you are von Sohn. Your reverence, do you know who von Sohn was? It was a famous murder case. He was killed in a house of harlotry." (77-78; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 8) | --Да ведь и я не фон Зон, я Максимов.<br>--Нет, ты фон Зон. Ваше преподобие, знаете вы, что такое фон Зон? Процесс такой уголовный был: его убили в блудилище [. . .]. (*PSS* 14: 81). |
| ***31*** | *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) | Alesha proposes marriage to 14-year-old Liza--but their marriage will be delayed until she reaches the legal age. (O'Brien) | Her daughter, a girl of fourteen, was partially paralyzed. (38; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 3)<br><br>"You are insulting me!"<br>"Not at all. As soon as I read it, I thought that all that would come to pass, for as soon as Father Zosima dies, I am to leave the | Четырнадцатилетняя дочь ее страдала параличом ног. (*PSS* 14: 43)<br><br>--Вы меня оскорбляете!<br>--Нисколько. Я как прочел, то тотчас и подумал, что этак всё и будет, потому что я, как только умрет старец Зосима, сейчас должен |

[251] Perhaps the following entry in the notebooks for *The Brothers Karamazov* is Yarmolinsky's source: "Ilinsky [a prototype of Dmitrii] in his cell says that he will not permit them to lecture him aloud about the child ~~and for~~ the orgy in town. [*Ильинский* в келье говорит, что он еще не позволит читать ему наставления вслух за ребенка [~~и за~~]. Кутеж в городе" (Wasiolek's edition 30; *PSS* 15: 203).

[252] See Wasiolek's edition of the notebooks for *The Brothers Karamazov* (35 [footnote 49]). *PSS* 15: 539 (endnote for *PSS* 14: 81) lists additional references to the von Sohn affair in Dostoyevsky's texts (*PSS* 9: 124; *PSS* 9: 498; *PSS* 12: 8; *PSS* 12: 217-18).

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| | | | monastery. Then I shall go back and finish my studies, and when you reach the legal age we will be married. I will love you. Though I haven't had time to think about it, I believe I couldn't find a better wife than you, and Father Zosima tells me I must marry." (167; pt. 2, bk. 4, ch. 4) | буду выйти из монастыря. Затем я буду продолжать курс и сдам экзамен, а как придет законный срок, мы и женимся. Я вас буду любить. Хоть мне и некогда было еще думать, но я подумал, что лучше вас жены не найду, а мне старец велит жениться . . . (*PSS* 14: 167) |
| ***32*** | *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) | Ivan Karamazov may have seduced or raped Liza Khokhlakova. Ivan makes visits to Liza without her mother's knowledge, and he later alleges that Liza has wantonly thrown herself at him. After Ivan's clandestine visits, the formerly innocent, well-adjusted girl experiences a sudden mental breakdown reminiscent of demonic possession, and she threatens to commit suicide. Did Ivan unhinge Liza by committing an act of sexual aggression against her? | Well, I was pleased, I thought I had amused her and the fits would pass off, especially as I wanted to refuse to see Ivan Fyodorovich anyway on account of his strange visits without my knowledge, and meant to ask him for an explanation. (548; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 2).<br><br>I shall kill myself, because I loathe everything! I don't want to live, because I loathe everything! I loathe everything, everything. (553; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 3)<br><br>"Oh, while I think of it, I have a letter for you," said Alyosha timidly, and he took Lisa's note from his pocket and held it out to Ivan. They were just under a lamp post. Ivan recognized the handwriting at once.<br>"Ah, from that little demon!" he laughed maliciously, and, without opening the envelope, he tore it into bits and threw it in the air. The bits were scattered by the wind.<br>"She's not sixteen yet, I believe, and already offering herself," he said contemptuously, striding along the street | Ну я рада, думаю, что рассмешила ее, и припадки теперь пройдут, тем более что я сама хотела отказать Ивану Федоровичу за странные визиты без моего согласия и потребовать объяснения. (*PSS* 15: 20)<br><br>Я убью себя, потому что мне всё гадко! Я не хочу жить, потому что мне всё гадко! Мне всё гадко, всё гадко! (*PSS* 15: 25)<br><br>--А вот, чтобы не забыть, к тебе письмо,-- робко проговорил Алеша и, вынув из кармана, протянул к нему письмо Лизы. Они как раз подошли к фонарю. Иван тотчас же узнал руку.<br>--А, это от того бесенка!--рассмеялся он злобно и, не распечатав конверта, вдруг разорвал его на несколько кусков и бросил на ветер. Клочья разлетелись.<br>--Шестнадцати лет еще нет, кажется, и уж предлагается!--презрительно проговорил он, опять зашагав по улице. |

Table 2
Adult Attraction to Minors in Dostoyevsky's Works (Expanded from a List in Avrahm Yarmolinsky's *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* [301-02]).

| Occur-rence Number | Work and Publication Year | Details, Including Researcher Who Noted Occurrence | English Text | Russian Text |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | (O'Brien) | again.<br>"How do you mean, offering herself?" exclaimed Alyosha.<br>"As wanton women offer themselves, to be sure." (568; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 5) | --Как предлагается?--воскликнул Алеша.<br>--Известно, как развратные женщины предлагаются. (*PSS* 15: 38) |

When one looks at table 2 as a whole, one sees that Dostoyevsky's works (including ideas that were never published) incorporate a huge number of instances in which he presents either the sexual abuse of a minor child by an adult, or at least an untoward (or, according to current social norms, problematic) adult interest of this nature: a total of *thirty-two* instances when they are fully catalogued according to my reading of the texts.

My table contains a greater number of cases than those which Yarmolinsky, Rowe, and Fusso enumerate collectively. I have added the following ten occurrences to the twenty-two incidents listed by the aforementioned researchers: numbers 4, 9, 11, 14, 17, 20, 21, 30, 31, and 32. Here are brief descriptions of my ten additions: Madame Bubnova's near apprehension by the police over "a little girl" in *The Insulted and Injured* (occurrence 4), Prince Valkovskii's marriage proposal to a fourteen-year-old in the same novel (occurrence 9), the street stalker in *Crime and Punishment* (occurrence 11), Svidrigailov's invitation to the girl in the dance hall (occurrence 14), Totskii's sexual abuse of the young Nastas'ia Filippovna in *The Idiot* (occurrence 17), Stepan Verkhovenskii's possible sexual abuse of Nikolai Stavrogin during the latter's boyhood in *The Devils* (occurrence 20), Shatov's question to Stavrogin about the molestation of children in St. Petersburg (occurrence 21), Fedor Karamazov's calling Maksimov a von Sohn (occurrence 30), Alesha Karamazov's marriage proposal to fourteen-year-old Liza Khokhlakova (occurrence 31), and Ivan Karamazov's possible seduction or rape of Liza (occurrence 32). With respect to the relationship between Totskii and Nastas'ia Filippovna in *The Idiot*, it is difficult to understand why Yarmolinsky omits this relationship, especially in view of the accuracy of his description of it: "Carefully brought

up for his pleasure by a wealthy roué who made her his mistress in the first bloom of her youth, the sensitive, passionate woman carries about with her a burning sense of degradation, which drives her to willfully shameful behaviour" (*Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* 258). The text states that Nastas'ia first caught Totskii's attention when she was about twelve. Are we to suppose that he scrupulously waited until she had reached the Russian age of consent?

One of my additions (occurrence 20) is the one with which I dealt in my 1993 Hunter College master's degree thesis, entitled "Faces of the Possessed: Portraits of Revolutionaries in Dostoyevsky's *The Devils*" (15-40). In that thesis, I defend the hypothesis that there may be an innuendo of child molestation in the narrator's account of Stepan Verkhovenskii's tutoring of ten- or eleven-year-old Nikolai Stavrogin.[253]

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[253] Concerning my speculation about Stepan Verkhovenskii and Nikolai Stavrogin, I invite the reader to begin a consideration of this issue by attentively reading the *Devils* extract that I have transcribed in table 2.

Fusso agrees with me on seeing sexual content in the narration of Stepan's tutoring of the young Stavrogin. She writes: "It is implied early in the novel that Stavrogin's tutor, Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovenskii, initiated him into the practice [of masturbation] during nocturnal visits [. . .]" (37, 172 [endnote 30]).

In reference to Stavrogin's boyhood, I wish to take this opportunity to add some considerations to those discussed in my master's degree thesis. First, if Dostoyevsky did *not* intend this sexual innuendo concerning Stepan's tutoring of Nikolai despite the fact that this episode closely parallels a clinical description of child molestation, then, certainly, he would not be able to write this passage today without being aware that it would raise this question. Nor would today's readers allow Dostoyevsky to evade it.

Second, if John Joseph Lutz, author of the State University of New York at Stony Brook dissertation entitled *Ethics and History: Moral Progress in Marx, Dostoevsky and Camus*, is correct, then Dostoyevsky may intend the innuendo of pedophilia even if the *Devils* narrator himself is oblivious to the implications of what he is narrating. Without commenting on the tutoring passage, Lutz makes the following observation: "To the degree that the narrator would seem to have a vested interest in portraying Stepan in a favorable light, the more damaging ironical passages must be viewed as unintentional (and perhaps unconscious) on the narrator's part and yet a quite intentional aspect of Dostoevsky's narrative strategy" (98-99). Recall that the narrator is a friend of Stepan's. Lutz says: "Composed mainly of a patchwork of qualities which others attribute to him, Stavrogin, along with his hidden psychological motivation and inner life, remains largely a mystery" (160-61). I suggest that this mystery unravels to a great extent if he was the victim of sexual abuse in childhood.

In my master's degree thesis, in dealing with instances other than the *Devils* tutoring passage, I should have been more precise when using the word "pedophilic" (28). According to Dr. L. Fleming Fallon, Jr., in the *Gale Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders*, pedophilia properly refers only to sexual attraction to prepubescent children: "The focus of pedophilia is sexual activity with a child. Many courts interpret this reference to age to mean children under the age of 18. Most mental health professionals, however, confine the definition of pedophilia to sexual activity with prepubescent children, who are

Granted, there may be plausible objections to including certain instances in my table. For example, Iulian Mastakovich's interest in the young girl at the party in "The Christmas Tree and the Wedding" (occurrence 1) may be exclusively or primarily pecuniary rather than sexual. That seems arguable, but, in any event, Yarmolinsky is justified in including this instance in view of the cumulative effect of all the additional examples. Moreover, reacting to occurrence 31, someone may protest that twenty-year-old Alesha's proposal of marriage to fourteen-year-old Liza may not violate the mores of their society, especially since the couple plan to defer their wedding until Liza attains the legal age for marriage. It may be that this point should be conceded; nonetheless, including the interaction between Alesha and Liza is justified on the same grounds that permit us to include the young girl at the party in "The Christmas Tree and the Wedding."

Regardless of a handful of instances that some commentators may dispute, I ask the reader to reflect on this: given the total number of indubitable instances of adult sexual attraction to minors in the works of Dostoyevsky, it is impossible not to conclude that he seems to be haunted, and perhaps nearly obsessed, by this phenomenon. Moreover, one has to say--as both *The Devils* and *Crime and Punishment* emphatically bear witness--that Dostoyevsky chooses to make the sexual abuse of minors the paradigmatic moral evil of his universe. The most dramatic example of this paradigm is

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generally age 13 or younger" (2: 740). Throughout this chapter of my dissertation, the concept of pedophilia should be understood in conformity with this clinical definition.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that Dr. Wingate maintains in *The Penguin Medical Encyclopedia* that children attained puberty later in Dostoyevsky's time: "It is, however, true that the average age of puberty in Western Europe has decreased considerably in the past century--from over 15 to about 13 in girls, and a year or two later in boys. The reason is not known. It may simply be that the average child of a century ago was underfed and therefore underdeveloped; this would also explain why the average English boy now grows an inch or two taller than the average boy of a 100 years ago" (363).

Matresha's exclamation of utter despair after having been sexually abused by Stavrogin in *The Devils*: "I have killed God" (*PSS* 11: 16).[254]

The question, I suggest, that should naturally arise in the reader's mind at this point is "Why?" Why does Dostoyevsky select the crime of child molestation, and--as horrific as it is--elevate it to the level of the paradigmatic sin? (It is to be granted, in addition, that some of the thirty-two instances, being, as it were, only epiphenomena, do not rise to the level of rape or molestation. Still, even the lesser manifestations bring those crimes uncomfortably to mind.) Let me begin answering my question by posing a counter question: was Dostoyevsky himself a victim of sexual abuse in his childhood? Though not, of course, impossible, this hypothesis can be bypassed primarily for lack of evidence. Furthermore, as readers of Frank's biography of the novelist know, Dostoyevsky had a sheltered and deeply pious Russian Orthodox upbringing (*Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt, 1821-1849* 23-53). I hasten to emphasize the adjective "sheltered," since an environment permeated by religion would not of itself have prevented the outrage of child molestation, as is conspicuously, and shockingly, evident from the scandal of sexual abuse committed by priests against minors in the contemporary Catholic Church.[255] But it remains true that Dostoyevsky's childhood was

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[254] "бога [sic] убила" (421 [footnote] in the 1991 Signet Classic edition; pt. 2, ch. 9, sect. 2, in the Signet Classic edition; my translation).

[255] See *The Nature and Scope of the Problem of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States: A Research Study Conducted by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice*.

The statistics in this study make clear that this is one of the worst scandals in the entire history of the Catholic Church. Even Dostoyevsky, despite his fierce animus against Catholicism, may not have been able to envision the dimensions of this crisis.

In referring to this scandal, I cannot help citing the words of Pope Paul VI in his December 7, 1968, address to the superiors and students of the Pontifical Lombard Seminary: "The Church finds herself in an hour of disquiet, of self-criticism, one might even say of self-destruction. It is like an acute and complex interior upheaval, that no one expected after the Council" (English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* [*The Roman Observer*], December 19, 1968, p. 3; it should be noted that the entirety of the Pope's address as reported in that article is not a verbatim transcription). Pope Paul VI's words in his homily on

not spent in the Moscow slums or in a Dickensian orphanage**.** Moreover, of the thirty-two occurrences in table 2 in this dissertation, only four (occurrences 2, 20, 21, and 27) involve boys, a "child," or "children"; in 87.5 percent of the total number of occurrences, the minors involved are girls. Consequently, in the absence of evidence, it appears that we can defensibly set aside the conjecture that Dostoyevsky himself had experienced the evil of childhood sexual abuse.

**An Allegation Against Dostoyevsky**

After Dostoyevsky's death, a second potential answer for the motives behind this literary obsession or near obsession was given, and it is an acutely unpleasant one for Dostoyevsky's devoted readers--just as child molestation in general is an acutely unpleasant subject with which to deal, even when literary research makes it necessary to do so. That distasteful potential answer is contained in a notorious letter written by Dostoyevsky's colleague Nikolai Strakhov to Lev Tolstoy on November 28, 1883. Perhaps the best treatment of this letter is to be found in Magarshack's biography (182-89). In this letter, Strakhov accuses Dostoyevsky of having confessed to Professor V. S. Viskovatov that he had paid a governess to act as a procuress by bringing a young girl to a bathhouse so that our novelist might commit the crime of sexual abuse of a minor. A variant of this accusation is that Dostoyevsky confessed this offense to fellow novelist Ivan Turgenev.[256]

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the feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29, 1972, are even more arresting. On that occasion, Paul VI said that he felt that "Satan's smoke has made its way into the temple of God through some crack" (English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, July 13, 1972, p. 6). These are two of the most remarkable statements ever made by a Pope.

[256] For both accusations, the reader may also consult Frank (*Miraculous Years* 432; *Mantle of the Prophet* 504-05) and Yarmolinsky (*Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* 298-303).

Fortunately for Dostoyevsky's admirers--and for the novelist himself--these charges appear to have been rejected as slanders by most of Dostoyevskian scholarship. Frank cites a study by Soviet scholar V. N. Zakharov, who, Frank reports, establishes that the different accounts of the alleged confession to Turgenev are "inconsistent and contradictory" (*Miraculous Years* 432 [footnote]).[257] An angry Magarshack even castigates Strakhov as a calumniator vilely motivated by jealousy. As Frank, relying on Zakharov, indicates, it appears that the ugly bathhouse rumor arose, at least to some extent, because Dostoyevsky had read to a number of listeners the scandalous unpublished *Devils* chapter in which Stavrogin confesses to Bishop Tikhon his sexual abuse of eleven-year-old Matresha. Frank could also have mentioned that Dostoyevsky's wife Anna reports in *Dostoevsky: Reminiscences* (378-79) that her husband, after Mikhail Katkov's refusal to publish Stravrogin's confession, had written an alternative account in which Stavrogin and a governess were involved in a crime against a minor in a public bathhouse.

I am relieved to accept this reassuring verdict of Frank and other Dostoyevskian scholars concerning the purely fictional nature of Dostoyevsky's alleged bathhouse crime. A point which I should like to add to that scholarship is the lack of verisimilitude in Dostoyevsky's confessing such a shameful transgression to anyone other than a Russian Orthodox priest in the sacrament of Penance. Whereas Dostoyevsky has Raskol'nikov confess his murders to Sonia, to the police, and to St. Petersburg pedestrians in *Crime and Punishment*, he has Stavrogin confess his crime against the

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[257] In a footnote, Frank cites Zakharov's "Fakty Protiv Legendy" ["Facts Against Legends"] in *Problemy izucheniia Dostoevskogo: Ucheb. posobie po spetskursu* [*Problems of the Study of Dostoyevsky: School Textbook for Special Course*] (Petrozavodsk, Russia: PGU, 1978), 95-109.

eleven-year-old girl only in private to Bishop Tikhon, not to the authorities or to anyone else. In this respect, Dostoyevsky treats *this* sin, *this* crime, as much more heinous than murder, and it is for this reason that he seems to believe that it can be disclosed only to God through a priest representing the Russian Orthodox Church. It must be understood that Tikhon is not permitted to reveal Stavrogin's sin to anyone, despite the fact that the unbelieving Stavrogin's disclosure does not actually occur within the sacrament of Penance. Bishop Tikhon knows that the seal of the sacrament of confession has as its corollary the priest's strict obligation never to do anything that could even *appear* to violate confessional secrecy.

Observe, too, that Dostoyevsky does not have Stavrogin admit guilt to Shatov when Shatov asks Stavrogin whether he had sexually abused children in St. Petersburg. Stavrogin denies such crimes in response to the question from his erstwhile disciple, but the narrator informs us that Stavrogin enunciated this denial "after a silence that had lasted too long" (241).[258] Furthermore, we should note that Mouse[259] says the following

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[258] "но только после слишком долгого молчания" (*PSS* 10: 201; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 7).

My point is reinforced by the fact that Dostoyevsky discarded his original thought, expressed in the notebooks for *The Devils* (Wasiolek's edition 210), of having the "Prince" confess his rape of a child to Shatov. Dostoyevsky also drops the notion of having the Prince leave a copy of his confession with the "Ward" (same notebooks edition 178). Above all, Stavrogin never publicly distributes the printed confession that he hands to Bishop Tikhon.

[259] Why should the individual who narrates *Notes from Underground* be given the customary academic appellation "Underground Man"? It is not as if he were a tough resistance fighter intrepidly battling a tyrannical government or occupation army. An aficionado of action films might put it this way: "This guy is no Rambo." Michael R. Katz's translation uses the expression "we underground men" (26), but this rendering, influenced by the academic convention, is unfaithful to the original. An accurate translation would be: "[. . .] I'm convinced that it's necessary to restrain our underground brother. [ [. . .] я убежден, что нашего брата подпольного нужно в узде держать]" (*PSS* 5: 121; pt. 1, ch. 10; my translations here and throughout most of the rest of this footnote).

The title of this work, Записки из подполья (*Zapiski iz podpol'ia*), literally means "notes from the basement, from underneath the floorboards," i.e., from the dwelling places of rodents infesting the house. Above all, let us note that the narrator himself, in a moment of brutal honesty and self-disclosure, contrasts himself with a "real, normal man [настоящим, нормальным человеком]" (8; *PSS* 5: 104; pt. 1, ch. 3) and calls himself a "mouse": "[. . .] he himself, with his altogether keener consciousness, rightly considers himself a mouse, and not a man. [ [. . .] сам себя, со всем своим усиленным сознанием,

in *Notes from Underground*: "Every man has within his own reminiscences certain things he doesn't reveal to anyone, except, perhaps, to his friends. There are also some that he won't reveal even to his friends, only to himself perhaps, and even then, in secret" (28).[260] For all the preceding reasons, I am confident in concluding that Dostoyevsky did *not* confess the bathhouse incident to Professor Viskovatov, and that, lacking this foundation, it simply did not occur.

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добросовестно считает за мышь, а не за человека]" (8; *PSS* 5: 104; pt. 1, ch. 3). He later describes himself as a creature who can only "slink in shame back into his tiny floor chink" [постыдно проскользнуть в свою щелочку] (9; *PSS* 5: 104; pt. 1, ch. 3). If the narrator of *Notes from Underground* himself tells us that he is a mouse and not a man, then who are we to contradict him?

Consider, too, that the narrator's interaction with other men shows that, as an asthenic, possibly neurotic, intellectual, he feels insecure and inadequate as a male, and inferior to "men of action [деятели]" (8; *PSS* 5: 103; pt. 1, ch. 3; Katz's translation). One of these "men of action" is the officer who, in the tavern scene, casually humiliates the narrator by picking him up by his shoulders as if he were a ragdoll and displacing him to clear his path (34; *PSS* 5: 128; pt. 2, ch. 1). Furthermore, Mouse might, with greater justice, have called himself Rat in the light of the shocking *dénouement* of his behavior toward the prostitute Liza.

Nor is the name "Mouse" inappropriate on the ground that mice are sometimes regarded as endearing little creatures. This is especially true in modern times, to a large extent because of Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse, but it is not true in the Dostoyevskian context. In *Crime and Punishment*, the unrepentant Svidrigailov, before his pre-suicide nightmares that arise from his past sexual crimes against underage girls, is tormented, either in a dream or in reality, by a mouse that slips into his bed and under his shirt and races down his back. As the troubled Svidrigailov himself says, "[h]ow horrible! [Экая скверность!]" (428; *PSS* 6: 390; pt. 6, ch. 6). This striking episode means that we have to add mice to spiders and Jesuits as Dostoyevskian symbols of evil.

Given all these points, it seems ironically subversive of Dostoyevsky's intentions for commentators to elevate the narrator of *Notes from Underground* to the level of a *man* in the proper and full sense of that word. I believe that Camus would be sympathetic to these arguments, and that the street ethic of his hardscrabble Algiers neighborhood might well lead him to say of Mouse: "He's not a man. [*il n'est pas un homme*]." This phrase occurs in "L'Été à Alger" ["Summer in Algiers"] (*Lyrical* 87; *Essais* 72).

Except for Katz's phrase "men of action," I have done my own translations for this footnote for this reason: I believe that Katz obscures much of the import of part 1, chapter 3, of *Notes from Underground* by unjustifiably and countercontextually translating the Russian word человек as "person" instead of "man." As is the case with the English word "man," I suggest that человек is more androcentric than some translators realize.

[260] "Есть в воспоминаниях всякого человека такие вещи, которые он открывает не всем, а разве только друзьям. Есть и такие, которые он и друзьям не откроет, а разве только себе самому, да и то под секретом" (*PSS* 5: 122; pt. 1, ch. 11).

Mouse's expression "in secret" (literally, "under secrecy") parallels the "seal of secrecy" that protects the penitent from any disclosure of sins confessed to a priest. So stringent is this seal of secrecy that such sins are considered to be as if they had been kept within the conscience of the sinner and had never been disclosed to the priest. I wonder whether Mouse is subtly alluding to the sacrament of Penance.

But what about Yarmolinsky's suggestion that Dostoyevsky, though not having been guilty of the incident in the bathhouse, or of deliberate acts of pedophilia, nevertheless struggled with a strong temptation to commit pedophilic acts? Here are Yarmolinsky's words:

> The assumption that he was obsessed by a pedophilic craving, even though he did not satisfy it, would explain his preoccupation with the theme. He harped upon it for the same reason that the victim of a phobia constantly seeks to project the eventuality he fears; he kept returning to it, one surmises, for the sake of the vicarious experience and in obedience to the urge to confess. (*Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* 302-03)

In support of this hypothesis, Yarmolinsky cites Wilhelm Stekel and Havelock Ellis (*Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* 302). Stekel had been one of Freud's disciples, and both Stekel and Ellis had written extensively on sexuality. In *Conditions of Nervous Anxiety and Their Treatment*, Stekel associates what he calls "pseudo-epilepsy" with "strong criminality," the epileptic seizure being a replacement for "the crime, or, it may be, for a sexual act which is a crime [. . .]" (357). Applying this view to Dostoyevsky, Stekel says that "[t]his crime of the mighty poet seems to me to have been child-rape" (357 [footnote 1], but it is unclear whether he means actual rape or merely an ungratified impulse to commit this crime. Stekel does, however, immediately add this unsettling remark: "Evidences of this are to be found not only in 'Raskolnickow' but also in the fact that among his literary remains the detailed description of such a crime was found. This description is said to have been so realistic and horrible that his literary executor has not yet had the courage to publish the work" (357 [footnote 1]). Obviously, Stekel's

statement was written before the publication in 1922 of the suppressed *Devils* chapter known as "Stavrogin's confession."[261]

In *Impressions and Comments: Third (and Final) Series, 1920-1923*, Ellis, although he appears to have read this suppressed chapter, and although he believes that "the significance of that paidophilic [sic] and sadistic incident lies precisely in the peculiar hesitant mystery in which it is enveloped," states that "[i]t is not necessary to conclude that Dostoevski ever carried morbid impulse to completed action" (196). But Ellis does add a caveat for Dostoyevsky's readers, and I suggest that the speculation that I shall soon undertake in this chapter be considered against the background of Ellis's cautionary note: "Dostoevski was the Saint of Sinners, and all his work--to so complete a degree that many superficial readers have been thereby deceived--the Idealisation of Perversity" (197). To say that Dostoyevsky's writings are the idealization of perversion is wrong, but it is reasonable to warn readers against overlooking what may lie more or less hidden in the text. Nonetheless, with respect to Ellis's--and Yarmolinsky's--thesis of Dostoyevsky's alleged unfulfilled pedophilic impulse (in the contemporary clinical sense, already defined, of attraction to prepubescent minors, i.e., those aged thirteen or younger), this hypothesis does *not* appear to me to be any more solidly founded than is the accusation that Dostoyevsky abused a girl in the alleged bathhouse incident.

But we are still left with the puzzle of the *thirty-two* references to adult attraction to minors, extending in some instances to the crime of molestation, in Dostoyevsky's

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[261] Why does Stekel, referring to *Crime and Punishment*, mention Raskol'nikov rather than Svidrigailov? My guess is that Stekel has in mind the incident (occurrence 11 in table 2) in which Raskol'nikov asks the cop to intervene to prevent the girl (who is fifteen or so years of age) from being molested by the stalker**.** But Stekel's truncated and puzzling reference can be taken in more than one way. Stekel seems to be contending either that Raskol'nikov is trying to protect the girl from the stalker, or else that Raskol'nikov is trying to protect her *from himself*. In the second interpretation, Stekel may be implying that Raskol'nikov's conflicting impulses represent those of Dostoyevsky himself.

fictional works and writing plans. If he was not himself the victim of this crime, and if he was innocent of having committed the bathhouse incident, then why does this theme occur so often in his fiction, and why does he make child molestation the very emblem of all moral evil? To respond to these questions, Dostoyevsky's terrible emotional state in his twenties should be considered in conjunction with conjectures made by both Frank and Yarmolinsky. Frank guesses that the "local ailment"[262] for which Dr. Stepan Ianovskii treated his young friend Dostoyevsky for several months may have been a venereal disease (*Seeds of Revolt* 165). Yarmolinsky raises the same possibility of an "unmentionable ailment" (*Dostoyevsky: His Life and Art* 55), adding later that Dostoyevsky's status as an unmarried man does not (of course) mean that he lacked sexual experience, which may have been "of a kind that he looked back upon with shame" (58). Clearly, Yarmolinsky is implying that Dostoyevsky patronized prostitutes. How can we not raise this issue when two of Dostoyevsky's major works--*Notes from Underground* and *Crime and Punishment*--deal in a substantial manner with prostitution? Note, too, that the first work embodies an extended confession of such patronage, which constitutes a major element of the plot. Consider as well Mouse's long disquisition on the evils of the sex trade--delivered, in an exceptionally paradoxical context--while he lies on a prostitute's bed in a brothel (61-74).[263]

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[262] "местная болезнь" (Ianovskii in his article "Vospominaniia o Dostoevskom" ["Reminiscences of Dostoyevsky"] 1: 156).

[263] *PSS* 5: 152-63; pt. 2, ch. 6-ch. 7.

**Prostitution in St. Petersburg of the 1840's**

That Dostoyevsky, living the life of a young bachelor in St. Petersburg of the 1840's, frequented prostitutes is not a mere inference or speculation. In a letter dated November 16, 1845, the Russian novelist writes to his brother Mikhail as follows:

> The Minnas, the Klaras, the Mariannas, etc., have grown so much prettier that it is hard to believe, but they cost a frightful lot of money. A few days ago, Turgenev and Belinsky gave me hell for my disorderly life. (Frank and Goldstein 35)[264]

Frank and Goldstein append this comment: "'The Minnas, the Klaras, the Mariannas, etc.,' were evidently 'ladies of the evening,' who in Russia took German and French names" (35).[265] Anyone familiar with the young Dostoyevsky's constantly precarious

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[264] "Минушки, Кларушки, Марианны и т. п. похорошели донельзя, но стоят страшных денег. На днях Тургенев и Белинский разбранили меня в прах за беспорядочную жизнь" (*PSS* 28, pt. 1: 116).

In *The Insulted and Injured*, these ladies are also called "Josephines": Dostoyevsky has Alesha confess *to his lover and fiancée Natasha* that he has been unfaithful to her with "all sorts of Josephines and Minnas [разным Жозефинам и Миннам]" (85; *PSS* 3: 224; pt. 1, ch. 14). And Natasha's reaction? Believe it or not, "[. . .] for her fine nature there was a sort of infinite bliss in forgiving and being merciful; as though in the very process of forgiving Alyosha she found a peculiar, subtle charm. [ [. . .] для этого прекрасного создания было какое-то бесконечное наслаждение прощать и миловать; как будто в самом процессе прощения Алеши она находила какую-то особенную, утонченную прелесть]" (86; *PSS* 3: 225; pt. 1, ch. 14).

[265] In *Dostoevsky: Reminiscences*, Dostoyevsky's second wife, Anna Grigor'evna Dostoyevsky, quotes from this letter to discuss her husband's attitude toward Turgenev, and, at the same time, in dealing with Strakhov's accusations against Dostoyevsky, she says: "For my own part, I can testify to the fact that, notwithstanding his sometimes very graphic portrayal of base acts committed by characters in his novels, my husband was completely alien to 'dissoluteness' all his life" (379).

Anna Dostoyevsky had no way of achieving certitude on such a matter. Understandably, her categorical statement merely reflects burning devotion to the memory of her deceased husband. For these reasons, one has to wonder whether she ever read the entire letter to which she refers, or whether, somewhat naïvely, she failed to understand the reference to the "Minnas, the Klaras, the Mariannas, etc." An exceptional innocence on Anna Dostoyevsky's part might be inferred from the lack of realism in an argument that she invokes to refute Strakhov's accusation concerning the alleged bathhouse incident. She says that "the perpetration of a profligacy so refined requires large sums of money and is accessible only to the very rich--whereas my husband was in financial straits all his life" (379). Dostoyevsky's second wife, though a practical businesswoman, may have been quite unlike the twenty-year-old Nastas'ia Filippovna in *The Idiot*. Despite her youth, Nastas'ia "understood many things in their legal aspect and had a positive knowledge, if not of the world, at least of how some things are done in the world [. . .]. [юридически

financial situation can reasonably conclude that he may not always have been able to afford the luxury of prostitutes in the category of those who both took fancy foreign names and were exceptionally expensive. This signals the possibility that Dostoyevsky may have also have patronized prostitutes who had to charge less because they were outside the imperial Russian government's надзор (*nadzor* or "surveillance") system, which involved registration and medical examinations. Since they were unregistered, these less expensive prostitutes would be more likely to be carriers of venereal diseases, and also to be underage**.** In connection with the "Minnas" passage, it should be noted that Dostoyevsky also writes to his brother Mikhail right after the nightmare of the mock execution that "[l]ife in the casemate has already largely killed in me some demands of the flesh that were not quite pure; I hadn't guarded myself against them sufficiently before" (Frank and Goldstein 53).[266]

There is an objection from one of the major names in Dostoyevskian scholarship: Konstantin Mochulsky, author of *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work*. Mochulsky writes: "It would appear that 'those exquisite Minas, Klaras, and Mariannas' were also fanciful imaginings. More than likely they wandered in from the pages of Balzac's *Illusions*

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чрезвычайно много понимала и имела положительное знание если не света, то о том по крайней мере, как некоторые дела текут на свете [. . .] ]" (39; *PSS* 8: 36; pt. 1, ch. 4).

[266] "Казематная жизнь уже достаточно убила во мне плотских потребностей, не совсем чистых; я мало берег себя прежде" (*PSS* 28, pt. 1: 164).

Even though the "demands of the flesh" to which Dostoyevsky alludes in this quotation need not refer either exclusively or primarily to the desire to patronize prostitutes, that desire, too, may be subsumed under Dostoyevsky's generic expression. One should not object that prostitutes were in any case unavailable to the prisoners in that fortress. Dostoyevsky informs us that even the convicts during his Siberian каторга (*katorga* or "penal servitude") had access to prostitutes through bribery of the guards: "However, with money it is possible to do almost anything, and such journeys nearly always remain a secret. [Впрочем, за деньги всё можно сделать, и такие путешествия остаются почти всегда в тайне]" (*The House of the Dead* 69; *PSS* 4: 38; pt. 1, ch. 3). The Russian text has no word corresponding to McDuff's "almost;" consequently, Dostoyevsky's assertion is more forceful than McDuff's translation. I am grateful to Allan Rogg for having alerted me to this translation discrepancy.

*perdues* as the indispensable accessory to a dandy's erotic life" (45). Mochulsky goes on to quote Dostoyevsky's friend Dr. Igor Riesenkampf, who reports that the Russian novelist as a young man appeared indifferent to women. Reply: I see no reason for dismissing the "Minnas" passage as a literary fantasy or locker-room braggadocio. If the young Dostoyevsky *seemed* indifferent to *society* women and to the process of courting them with a view to marriage, that does not mean that he lacked all interest in the other sex. Nor does it signify that he would necessarily refuse to satisfy his libido with prostitutes.

In the case of the prostitutes of Dostoyevsky's St. Petersburg, no one can maintain that they all scrupulously complied with the minimum age--sixteen--for registration under the *nadzor*. Nor can we think that johns asked to see birth certificates. The minimum age for registration is cited in Laurie Bernstein's study entitled *Sonia's Daughters: Prostitutes and Their Regulation in Imperial Russia* (23). The very title of Bernstein's book reflects the prominent rôle that prostitution plays in Dostoyevsky's works, for "Sonia" refers to Sonia Marmeladova, the prostitute who is one of the main characters in *Crime and Punishment*. The fact that Sonia, pressured by her stepmother, Katerina Ivanovna, feels compelled to obtain the yellow passport of a legal prostitute to help her family survive economically is highly significant for what Geir Kjetsaa calls Dostoyevsky's "Christian socialism" (54), but which should instead be called Christian social concern or Christian social doctrine.[267] One gets the impression from Sonia's

[267] In an article entitled "The First Root" in the January 1881 issue of *A Writer's Diary*, Dostoyevsky writes approvingly of "Russian socialism," but he defines it as "*worldwide union in the name of Christ* [*всесветным единением во имя Христово* ]" (2: 1351; Dostoyevsky's italics; *PSS* 27: 19). It is plangently clear that Dostoyevsky would not want to be called a socialist in the true sense. Though a strident critic of the Catholic Church, he had no problem with the papacy's identification of socialism with explicit or implicit atheism. This equation underlies Pope Leo XIII's condemnation of socialism in the 1878 encyclical *Quod apostolici muneris*.

plight--and that of Raskol'nikov's sister, Dunia--that Dostoyevsky feels that *every* woman in a heartless, *laissez-faire* capitalist society is always at risk of being forced into prostitution, including the kind that occurs in a marriage rooted in economic coercion.

Anyone who both studies Dostoyevsky and consults Bernstein's treatise ought to confront the possibility that Dostoyevsky, along with other men frequenting prostitutes in St. Petersburg, may have been, at least unwittingly and occasionally, the customer of extremely young girls--even if not so young as to meet the clinical definition of pedophilia (which, as has already been pointed out, is adult sexual interest in minors aged

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The narrator of *The Brothers Karamazov* says the following of Alesha: "In the same way, if he had decided that God and immortality did not exist, he would at once have become an atheist and a socialist (for socialism is not merely the labor question or the so-called fourth estate, it is before all things the atheistic question, the question of the form taken by atheism today, the question of the tower of Babel built without God, not to mount to Heaven from earth but to set up Heaven on earth). [Точно так же если бы он порешил, что бессмертия и бога [sic] нет, то сейчас бы пошел в атеисты и в социалисты (ибо социализм есть не только рабочий вопрос, или так называемого четвертого сословия, но по преимуществу есть атеистический вопрос, вопрос современного воплощения атеизма, вопрос Вавилонской башни, строящейся именно без бога [sic], не для достижения небес с земли, а для сведения небес на землю)]" (20; *PSS* 14: 25; pt. 1, bk. 1, ch. 5). Camus quotes most of this passage in *L'Homme révolté* (60; *Essais* 469-70).

I have no doubt that Shatov is speaking for Dostoyevsky when he says in *The Devils* that France "[. . .] has now gone over to atheism--which they call socialism over there [. . .]. [ [. . .] ударилась в атеизм, который называется у них покамест социализмом [. . .] ]" (239; *PSS* 10: 199; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 7).

Notwithstanding the foregoing quotations and observations, I suggest that Dostoyevsky would not object to a remarkable passage in Camus's article entitled "Pour Dostoïevski," published in the autumn 1957-58 issue of *Témoins* [*Witnesses*]: "*L'homme qui a écrit «Les questions de Dieu et de l'immortalité sont les mêmes que les questions du socialisme mais sous un autre angle» savait que désormais notre civilisation revendiquerait le salut pour tous ou pour personne. Mais il savait que le salut ne pourrait être étendu à tous, si l'on oubliait la souffrance d'un seul. Autrement dit, il ne voulait pas d'une religion qui ne fût pas socialiste, au sens le plus large du mot, mais il refusait un socialisme qui ne fût pas religieux, au sens le plus large du terme.* [The man who wrote 'The questions of God and immortality are the same as the questions of socialism but under another angle' knew that from now on our civilization would demand salvation for everyone or no one. But he knew that salvation could not be extended to all if one forgot the suffering of a single person. In other words, he did not want a religion that was not socialist, in the broadest meaning of the word, but he refused a socialism that was not religious, in the broadest meaning of the term]" (*Théâtre* 1888; my translation).

The internal Dostoyevsky citation in the above Camus quotation is, I believe, the following statement of Alyosha's in *The Brothers Karamazov*: "Yes, for real Russians the questions of God's existence and of immortality, or, as you say, the same question turned inside out, come first and foremost, of course, and so they should [. . .]. [--Да, настоящим русским вопросы о том: есть ли бог [sic] и есть ли бессмертие, или, как вот ты говоришь, вопросы с другого конца,--конечно, первые вопросы и прежде всего, да так и надо [. . .] ]" (215; *PSS* 14: 213; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 3).

thirteen and below). Bernstein reports the following on child prostitution during the period of *nadzor* (from 1843 to 1917):

> Too young to register, child prostitutes could easily be found amid the ranks of Russia's clandestines. Urban neighborhoods such as Dumskaia Square in Kiev and Znamenskaia Square in St. Petersburg had reputations as centers of child prostitution. Entire hotels reportedly catered to pedophiles, with prepubescent girls openly soliciting customers and sometimes supplying their parents with the money they earned from prostitution. (42)[268]

In this context, it is pertinent to mention a scandal to which Bernstein refers: in 1912, a corrupt police officer in the Siberian town of Dmitrievsk was found to have protected a brothel in which the youngest prostitute "was 13 years old and entertaining up to twenty clients a night" (149). Maurice Paléologue, the French ambassador to the court of Tsar Nicholas II (1898-1917), writes in a 1916 diary entry that the prefect of police (presumably in Petrograd)[269] had told him the following about the estimated 40,000 female prostitutes in that city: "Generally, they begin very young, having hardly entered puberty (2: 189).[270] But Dostoyevsky himself can be cited as a source: in *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*, he writes that girls around twelve were soliciting in the

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[268] "Clandestines" are prostitutes who refused to register under the *nadzor*. Obviously, underage prostitutes were automatically clandestines. Bernstein's sources (which are omitted from the above quotation) refer to the early years of the twentieth century, but extrapolating backwards to Dostoyevsky's time seems justified given the very nature of the topic. The BBC reported that a 2006 United Nations report on child abuse had concluded that "[a]lmost six million children have been forced into work and many more have become prostitutes" (see "Child Abuse 'Widespread', UN Says" in the bibliography). Why should underage prostitution in Dostoyevsky's St. Petersburg have been much less of a reality than it is throughout the world today?

[269] Petrograd is the name that was given to St. Petersburg from 1914 to 1924.

[270] "*En général, elles débutent très jeunes, à peine nubiles*" (my translation).

Haymarket in London during his visit to that city (49).[271] Are we to say that this could never have happened in St. Petersburg?

**Did Dostoyevsky Ever Patronize Underage Prostitutes?**

In connection with the issue of the ages of prostitutes, it is interesting that Mouse asks Liza her age in *Notes from Underground* (62).[272] That is why we know how old she is (or says she is), for no one else tells him, and there is no omniscient narrator in this text. Why does Mouse pose this question? (Why does he care? After all, he does not bother to ask Liza her name until *after* they have had sexual relations.) *My* posing of this question is the springboard for an admittedly conjectural answer to the puzzle of Dostoyevsky's extraordinary persistence in raising the issue of the sexual abuse of minors**.** Although he was innocent of perpetrating the sexual abuse of the imaginary girl in the bathhouse, and although there is no evidence that he sexually abused prepubescent children altogether knowingly and intentionally, is it possible that Dostoyevsky *did* have one or more encounters with underage prostitutes above (or slightly below) the age of puberty? I am referring to girls in the age range of twelve to fifteen, i.e., from the age (more or less) of the onset of puberty to the minimum age for legal prostitution in nineteenth-century Russia. To obviate a possible misunderstanding, I emphasize that I am not asking whether the Russian novelist deliberately sought or habitually patronized juvenile prostitutes in that age category; I am referring instead to situations in which Dostoyevsky may have wondered about a prostitute's actual age at the time or after the

[271] *PSS* 5: 72; ch. 5.

[272] *PSS* 5: 153; pt. 2, ch. 6.

fact, without being sure of the girl's age. Dostoyevsky himself is aware of the uncertainty surrounding the actual ages of young prostitutes. In *The Insulted and Injured*, he has Masloboev ask Ivan Petrovich about Nelli's age.

> "How old is she?"
>
> "From her face I should say thirteen."
>
> "But small for her age. Well, this is how she'll [i.e., the procuress will] do, then. When need be she'll say she's eleven, and another time that she's fifteen." (152)[273]

If the later Dostoyevsky felt acutely guilty about his exploitation of prostitutes who were denizens of the St. Petersburg underworld, could this feeling of culpability have been accentuated by his eventual concern about the real ages of one or more of the females with whom he recalled having had sexual relations in this context? (Without wishing to associate herself with my hypothesis, Professor Beaujour used the apt phrase "retrospective horror" in this connection in an e-mail comment on the draft of this dissertation.) Furthermore, could not this accentuated guilt have contributed to wrecking his nerves and inducing the fainting attacks,[274] hallucinations, night terrors, hypochondria, and general neurasthenia that led to his repeatedly consulting St.

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[273] "Сколько лет девочке?

"--По лицу лет тринадцать.

"--А по росту меньше. Ну, так она и сделает. Коли надо, скажет одиннадцать, а то пятнадцать" (*PSS* 3: 273; pt. 2, ch. 7).

As has already been noted, Ivan Petrovich actually guesses that Nelli's age is *about* thirteen.

[274] The precise medical nature of these attacks is not clear. Dostoyevsky's friend Grigorovich reports Dostoyevsky's collapse on a St. Petersburg street in January 1845, adding that it represents a worsening of earlier symptoms. From this, Frank concludes concerning the prior events that "these were perhaps attacks of faintness or dizziness--not momentary loss of consciousness as in this case" (*Seeds of Revolt* 165). For Dostoyevsky's medical condition at this time, see Frank (*Seeds of Revolt* 164-68), Yarmolinsky (*Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* 54-62), and James L. Rice's *Dostoevsky and the Healing Art: An Essay in Literary and Medical History* (3-23, 43-65, 110-11).

Petersburg physician Stepan Ianovskii? So serious were the novelist's psychological symptoms that Yarmolinsky entitles the pertinent chapter "A Sick Soul" (*Dostoyevsky: His Life and Art* 52-62). Dostoyevsky himself states the following in his March 24, 1856, letter to Eduard Totleben:

> For two years running prior to that [Dostoyevsky's arrest on April 23, 1849] I had been suffering from strange mental ills. I lapsed into hypochondria. There were even moments when I would lose my sanity. (Frank and Goldstein 101)[275]

One has to think about the extent of the impact of Dostoyevsky's neurasthenia on his life and writing when one is confronted with the following startling report in Rice's study (9): Dr. Ianovskii wrote that Dostoyevsky, in his twenties, had visited him "regularly once or twice *daily* for nearly three years" (Rice's words). (No wonder that Dr. Ianovskii and his novelist patient became lifelong friends.) One also has to ask whether Dr. Ianovskii was serving his patient more as a psychotherapist than as a general practitioner. True, much, perhaps most, of the time that Dostoyevsky spent in his doctor's office may have been passed in friendly conversation of an intellectual and literary nature--one of the topics was religion "above all" according to Rice (110)--but is it not the case that even those kinds of exchanges may fall into the category of psychotherapy? Consider the extraordinary frequency and length of these consultations: according to Rice, these meetings took place every day over the course of three years

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[275] "Перед тем я был два года сряду болен, болезнию странною, нравственною. Я впал в ипохондрию. Было даже время, что я терял рассудок" (*PSS* 28, pt. 1: 224).

For the date of Dostoyevsky's arrest, see Yarmolinsky's *Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* (xi).

I believe that MacAndrew's translation of this passage can be clarified. I suggest this rendering: "Before that, I was sick for two years in a row, with a strange illness, a moral one. I fell into hypochondria. There was even a time when I lost my reason."

from 8:30 A.M. to 10 A.M. and from 9 P.M. to 11 P.M., with summer consultations taking place from 3 P.M. to 6 P.M. three times per week (110). Since only the extremely wealthy in our society can afford such a medical consultation schedule, the number of hours that Dostoyevsky spent with his physician is extraordinary.

In connection with what impels Dostoyevsky to return again and again to the theme of the sexual exploitation of minors, we should bear in mind this observation of Rice's: "Here is one of the most significant revelations about Dostoevsky's psychic disorder: that he *made use of it for writing*, and found his creative work not only accelerated but enhanced because of the nervous condition" (65). Rice quotes the August 27, 1849, letter in which Dostoyevsky (then only twenty-seven years old), referring to his eight-month pre-Siberian imprisonment in the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg, says the following to his brother Mikhail:

> I have nothing very good to say about my health. [. . .] My hemorrhoids have become aggravated to the nth degree, and I have pains in my chest such as I have never experienced before. On top of that, my sensitivity increases, especially as night comes on, and during the night I have long, outlandish dreams and also, of late, I have been under the impression that the floor is swaying under me, so that I feel as if I were in a ship's cabin in my cell. All this leads me to conclude that my nerves are going to pieces. Before, when such a nervous state came over me, I took advantage of it to write--I could always write better and much more in this state; now,

> however, I restrain myself from writing so as not to do myself in completely. (Frank and Goldstein 47)[276]

In drawing attention to the terrible state of the young Dostoyevsky's emotional health during his early years in St. Petersburg, I do not deny that a number of elements may have been in play. Nonetheless, we may ask whether an overwhelming feeling of guilt on Dostoyevsky's part over his patronizing of underage prostitutes who may have been little more than children was a factor that contributed to this emotional illness of his young adulthood. Is such anguish a major component of Dostoyevsky's whole approach to the scandal of evil, and did it help shape the *thirty-two* textual instances in table 2? Surely, such questions cannot be ruled out of order when we are dealing with the author of *The Insulted and Injured*, *Notes from Underground*, *Crime and Punishment, The Idiot*, *The Devils*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*.

We are certainly justified in posing this question given the fact that Dostoyevsky, as we have just seen, discloses to his brother Mikhail that there was, before his imprisonment, a close connection between his artistic creativity and his nervous illness. One should also think of what Dostoyevsky says to Mikhail, in a letter dated October 9, 1859, concerning the genesis of *Notes from Underground*:

> In the first place, it will be striking, passionate; in the second, all my heart

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[276] "О здоровье моем ничего не могу сказать хорошего. [. . .] Геморрой мой ожесточился до последней степени, и я чувствую грудную боль, которой прежде никогда не бывало. Да к тому же, особенно к ночи, усиливается впечатлительность, по ночам длинные, безобразные сны, и сверх того, с недавнего времени, мне всё кажется, что подо мной колышется пол, и я в моей комнате сижу, словно в пароходной каюте. Из всего этого я заключаю, что нервы мои расстроиваются [sic]. Когда такое нервное время находило на меня прежде, то я пользовался им, чтоб писать,--всегда в таком состоянии напишешь лучше и больше,--но теперь воздерживаюсь, чтоб не доканать [sic] себя окончательно" (*PSS* 28, pt. 1: 159).

It appears that расстроиваются (*rasstroivaiutsia*) is a typographical error for расстраиваются (*rasstraivaiutsia* or "are going to pieces"), and that доканать (*dokanat'*) is a typographical error for доконать (*dokonat'* or "to do in").

> and soul will go into this novel. I conceived of it during my years of imprisonment, lying on a bunk bed, at a painful moment of grief and disintegration. * * * *Confession* will establish my name once and for all. (Katz's translation in the Norton Critical Edition of *Notes from Underground*, "Backgrounds and Sources," 95).[277]

If Dostoyevsky poured his *whole* "heart and soul" (literally, "my entire heart and blood") into *Notes from Underground*, a large part of which deals with prostitution, then it is not overreaching to think that he may thereby have poured his own personal experience with prostitutes into this confessional work, thus making it Dostoyevsky's own confession as well as Mouse's.

In this connection, with no intention of accusing Dostoyevsky of deliberate pedophilia, I also think of Svidrigailov's pre-suicide nightmare of the five-year-old girl who is metamorphosed into a brazen French harlot in *Crime and Punishment*. (I shall discuss this nightmare later at length.) Given this episode, does not the hypothesis of the prominent rôle played by the double in Dostoyevsky's *oeuvre* tend to support the foregoing conjectures? If Svidrigailov is truly Raskol'nikov's double,[278] representing the darkest side of this nihilistic university student (who, like other students in his milieu, may have frequented prostitutes), then is it not possible that Svidrigailov may also represent, consciously or subconsciously, the darkest side of Dostoyevsky himself, thus

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[277] "Это будет, во-1-х, эффектно, страстно, а во-2-х) [sic], всё сердце мое, с кровью положится в этот роман. Я задумал его в каторге, лежа на нарах, в тяжелую минуту грусти и саморазложения. [. . .] «Исповедь» окончательно утвердит мое имя" (*PSS* 28, pt. 1: 351).

[278] In an article entitled "Dostoevsky in *Crime and Punishment*," Philip Rahv says of Svidrigailov: "It will not do to see him, in the fashion of most critics of Dostoevsky, as being merely Raskolnikov's double, representing the pole of self-will in his character" (rpt. in Norton Critical Edition of *Crime and Punishment* 554).

symbolizing those agonizing secrets that the novelist perhaps revealed only in sacramental confessions?

**Dostoyevsky and the Sacrament of Confession**

There are multiple indications from which the reader may infer, not only that Dostoyevsky's conscience may have been troubled by the possibility that he had sexually abused minors who were prostitutes, but also that his disturbed conscience, under the influence of his Russian Orthodox upbringing, may have led him to confess those sins in the sacrament of Penance. True, Dostoyevsky did not make a confession to the Russian Orthodox priest who ministered to the condemned members of the Petrashevskii circle in St. Petersburg's Semenovskii Square during the harrowing ordeal of their mock execution in 1849 (Frank, *Years of Ordeal* 54), but this does not mean that he never went to confession between childhood and the last confession that preceded his death. Perhaps he had nothing serious of which to be absolved at that critical moment of his life in Semenovskii Square, having already gone to confession on some previous occasion, maybe even before his imprisonment in the Peter and Paul Fortress. In his authoritative study entitled *The Orthodox Church*, Eastern Orthodox Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia (Timothy Ware) says that Russians are inclined to go to confession more frequently than Greeks (297). In the group scandal scene that takes place in the dining room of the Father Superior of the monastery in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoyevsky heightens his depiction of the offensively buffoonish conduct of Fedor Karamazov, a man in the grip of unbridled, unrepentant sensuality, by making Fedor exclaim: "Confession is a great

sacrament, before which I am ready to bow down reverently [. . .] (78).[279] In this scene, there would be no jarring paradox illustrating Fedor's enslavement to lechery unless the sacrament of confession were held in such great honor in Russian Orthodox culture. But to be sincere about holding this sacrament in great honor is simultaneously to venerate the concept of contrition--i.e., remorse over one's sins. Is it possible, then, that the remark that Dostoyevsky incongruously attributes to Fedor reflects his own experiences with the sacrament of confession?

Also noteworthy in connection with what may have been a component of Dostoyevsky's personal life in St. Petersburg in the 1840's is the fact that the novelist has Stepan Verkhovenskii make a sacramental confession, with what we may certainly believe was sincere contrition, at the end of his life in *The Devils*, in one of the most affecting segments in Dostoyevsky's works (674-77).[280] Stepan begins his confession even before the priest arrives: he tells Madame Ulitina: "My dear, I have lied all my life" (666).[281] While reading this scene, the reader should take into account the possibility that Stepan may have sexually abused Nikolai Stavrogin, his former pupil, during the latter's boyhood. In contrast with Stepan, however, Stavrogin himself is depicted as refusing to ask Bishop Tikhon to administer the sacrament of Penance to him, and instead theatrically hands Tikhon a long printed narrative that evidences no remorse, in the Christian sense, for his sexual crime against young Matresha in a St. Petersburg tenement (or for his other sins against minors). And the culmination is Stavrogin's suicide. Given

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[279] "Исповедь есть великое таинство, пред которым и я благоговею и готов повергнуться ниц [. . .]" (*PSS* 14: 82; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 8).

[280] *PSS* 10: 504-506; pt. 3, ch. 7, sect. 3.

[281] "--Друг мой, я всю жизнь мою лгал" (*PSS* 10: 497; pt. 3, ch. 7, sect. 2).

these contrasts, the Christian reader can hope for the salvation of Stepan's soul, but can only fear the worst in Stavrogin's case.[282]

As we consider Stepan's sacramental confession, and Stavrogin's non-sacramental confession, we should also consider the possibility that Dostoyevsky himself may have gone to confession while he was a prisoner in Siberia. Writing about his fellow convicts in an article entitled "Environment" in *A Writer's Diary* for 1873, he says: "[. . .] I saw them in church praying before confession [. . .]" (1: 139).[283] Furthermore, writing to his wife Anna on April 16/28, 1871, while still in thrall to his gambling mania, Dostoyevsky relates how he rushed madly through the streets of Wiesbaden in search of a Russian Orthodox priest with whom to talk "not as to a private person but as one does at confession" (Frank and Goldstein 354).[284] If gambling-induced guilt impelled him to seek a priest, a similar impulse may have led him to confession in connection with his visits to prostitutes. And, if Dostoyevsky sacramentally confessed his sexual encounters with prostitutes, a factor compounding his guilt may have been his suspicion that one or more of these prostitutes were of quite young ages.[285]

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[282] Nevertheless, the Catholic Church, while joining the Russian Orthodox Church in condemning suicide as a mortal sin, teaches as follows: "We should not despair of the eternal salvation of persons who have taken their own lives. By ways known to him alone, God can provide the opportunity for salutary repentance. The Church prays for persons who have taken their own lives. [*On ne doit pas désespérer du salut éternel des personnes qui se sont donné la mort. Dieu peut leur ménager, par les voies que Lui seul connaît, l'occasion d'une salutaire repentance. L'Eglise prie pour les personnes qui ont attenté à leur vie*]" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 2283). In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Father Zosima--and, presumably, Dostoyevsky--agree with the Catholic position: "For such as those I have prayed inwardly all my life, I confess it, fathers and teachers, and even now I pray for them every day. [О таковых я внутренно во всю жизнь молился, исповедуюсь вам в том, отцы и учители, да и ныне на всяк день молюсь]" (302; *PSS* 14: 293; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. i).

[283] "[. . .] я видал их в церкви молящихся перед исповедью [. . .]" (*PSS* 21: 18-19).

[284] "не как с частным лицом, а как на исповеди" (*PSS* 29, pt. 1: 198).

[285] Dostoyevsky's Russian Orthodox confessor would certainly have agreed with the following Catholic teaching concerning the added sin of scandal involved in frequenting prostitutes who are children or adolescents: "Prostitution is a social scourge. It usually involves women, but also men, children, and

It is at this point that we must note an arresting parallel between a Dostoyevskian text and the novelist's medical history. In the expurgated scene in which Stavrogin makes his non-sacramental confession of his sexual crime against an eleven-year-old girl, he tells Bishop Tikhon that he sees, and feels the close physical presence of, the Devil:

> And then, briefly and so abruptly that many words were almost unintelligible, he told Tikhon that he was subject to strange hallucinations, especially at night; that he seemed to see or feel close to him some evil creature, mocking and "rational," which took on a variety of personalities and characters, but which he knew was always the same creature--"and it always makes me furious." (411)[286]

This passage is startling if one knows that one of the manifestations of the nervous illness that plagued Dostoyevsky in his young adulthood was his feeling that a nonexistent person was sleeping in his apartment. In his invaluable medical study of Dostoyevsky, Rice states: "According to Dr. Riesenkampf, Dostoevsky's roommate briefly in the mid-1840's, F. M. would complain of someone snoring, apparently hallucinated" (47). If Stavrogin's visual hallucinations of the Devil are due to his conscience's tormenting him for the crime of having sexually abused eleven-year-old Matresha, and if Ivan

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adolescents (The latter two cases involve the added sin of scandal.). [*La prostitution constitue un fléau social. Il touche habituellement des femmes, mais aussi des hommes, des enfants ou des adolescents (dans ces deux derniers cas, le péché se double d'un scandale)*]" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 2355).

The scandal involved in juvenile prostitution provides an additional reason for the title and focus of this dissertation.

[286] "И вдруг он, впрочем в самых кратких и отрывистых словах, так что иное трудно было и понять, рассказал, что он подвержен, особенно по ночам, некоторого рода галлюцинациям, что он видит иногда или чувствует подле себя какое-то злобное существо, насмешливое и «разумное», «в разных лицах и в разных характерах, но оно одно и то же, а я всегда злюсь . . .»" (*PSS* 11: 9; pt. 2, ch. 9, sect. 1, in the 1991 Signet Classic edition).

MacAndrew incorrectly introduces a note of ambiguity into his translation of this passage: in the Russian text, Stavrogin does not say that he *seemed* to see the evil being, but that he definitely saw him, as the subsequent discussion between Stavrogin and Bishop Tikhon confirms.

Karamazov's nocturnal encounter with a devil results in part from Ivan's having seduced or violated fourteen-year-old Liza Khokhlakova, then is it not possible that Dostoyevsky's auditory hallucinations arose from a similar cause?

Given the totality of the preceding considerations, when one reads *Notes from Underground*, one should read it in the light of the possibility that one or more of the prostitutes with whom Dostoyevsky had sexual encounters during his twenties in St. Petersburg may have been juveniles. If this hypothesis is accepted as plausible--and I see no reason why we should reject it out of hand--then the somewhat cryptic features of that celebrated work become much less cryptic, and, indeed, the rationale for its confessional genre comes into focus much more clearly. In this scenario, it will seem justified to suppose that Mouse's conversation with Liza in the brothel is, to a large extent, Dostoyevsky's own literary parallel to confessions that he may have made before representatives of Russian Orthodoxy to ease his hurting conscience. His conscience may have been lacerated precisely because of his awareness of the additional sin involved in taking sexual advantage of adolescents.

If my hypothesis is valid, it will also seem reasonable to reject the contention that Mouse's impassioned condemnation of the evil of commercial sex, and his euphoric, even lyrical, exaltation of the beauty of marriage and child-rearing (61-74),[287] reflect nothing more than Mouse's hypocrisy, duplicity, or emotional disturbance. On the contrary, only an utter cynic or a nihilist could deny that, at least to a large extent, it is Dostoyevsky himself who, despite the lubricious context, is speaking in these remarkable paeans, and speaking from the heart, just as he is certainly speaking, almost in the manner

[287] *PSS* 5: 152-63; pt. 2, ch. 6-ch. 7.

of a ventriloquist, through the mouths of other characters in his works. Even if Mouse is utterly or partially hypocritical, that does not warrant our saying that Dostoyevsky himself is a hypocrite when he writes *Notes from Underground*.

Anyone who doubts my general statement about Dostoyevsky's ventriloquism--a point which was implicitly made earlier in reference to his equation of socialism with atheism--need only compare the incandescent expression of Russocentrism in the mouth of Shatov in *The Devils* with Dostoyevsky's own words in *A Writer's Diary* for June 1876 in an article entitled "The Utopian Conception of History." Compare Shatov's profession, which he "babbled in rapture (*PSS* 10: 200),"[288] of burning allegiance to the Russian Motherland with Dostoyevsky's own words. Shatov: "I believe in Russia, I believe in her Orthodoxy . . . I believe in the body of Christ . . . I believe that his new advent will happen in Russia . . . I believe . . . ." (*PSS* 10: 200).[289] Dostoyevsky: "And if believing in this 'new word,' which Russia at the head of a united Orthodoxy can utter to the world--if believing in this is a 'utopia' worthy only of derision, then you may number me among these utopians, and leave the ridicule to me" (1: 530).[290] The contents of these two emotional proclamations are so similar that Shatov's words could be spoken by Dostoyevsky, and Dostoyevsky's by Shatov, without any impairment of either text.

Nonetheless, is the above argument subverted by statements that Dostoyevsky

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[288] "залепетал в исступлении" (240; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 7; my translation).

[289] "--Я верую в Россию, я верую в ее православие . . . Я верую в тело Христово . . . Я верую, что новое пришествие совершится в России . . . Я верую . . ." (240; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 7; my translation).

[290] "И если верить в это «новое слово», которое может сказать во главе объединенного православия миру Россия,--есть «утопия», достойная лишь насмешки, то пусть и меня причислят к этим утопистам, а смешное я оставляю при себе" (*PSS* 23: 50).

makes to his brother Mikhail in a letter dated February 1, 1846? The topic is Dostoyevsky's recently published novel *Poor Folk*:

> Our public, like every crowd, has instinct, but not culture. They don't understand how it is possible to write in that style. They are accustomed to finding the author's mug in everything, whereas I don't show them mine. And they cannot grasp that it is Devushkin speaking and not me [sic], and that there's no other way Devushkin can talk. (Frank and Goldstein 36)[291]

No, Dostoyevsky's denial that his "mug" is present in the story of Devushkin does not destroy my argument regarding Mouse, the first reason for my negative response being that the subject of Dostoyevsky's remarks is *Poor Folk*, not *Notes from Underground*. But a weightier consideration is this: authors can pour much of themselves--much of their personalities, experiences, and outlooks--into their texts without making their characters slavishly imitate the styles in which their literary creators talk. Form is distinct from content. In keeping with this evident distinction, Dostoyevsky makes a highly significant comment in his August 7/19, 1879, letter to Nikolai Liubimov. Speaking of Father Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*, he says:

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[291] "В публике нашей есть инстинкт, как в всякой толпе, но нет образованности. Не понимают, как можно писать таким слогом. Во всем они привыкли видеть рожу сочинителя; я же моей не показывал. А им и невдогад, что говорит Девушкин, а не я, и что Девушкин иначе и говорить не может" (*PSS* 28, pt. 1: 117).

MacAndrew's "I don't show them mine [i.e., my mug]" should be changed to "I didn't show them mine" to conform to the Russian past tense form показывал (*pokazyval*). An accurate translation of this key sentence strengthens my argument for this reason: Dostoyevsky is not using the present tense to make a general statement applicable to all his works, past, present, and future, but merely commenting on one work of the recent past.

> And although I fully share the thoughts that he expresses, if I were to express them myself, *in my own name*, I would do so in another language and in another form. (Frank and Goldstein 477)[292]

Furthermore, the process whereby a writer imprints fictional characters with his or her own individuality admits of a broad gradation. Obviously, there is much more of Dostoyevsky in Mouse than there is in Devushkin--or in the murderers Raskol'nikov and Smerdiakov. We know from his own statement that Dostoyevsky patronized prostitutes, whereas, to the best of our knowledge, he never committed murder. Then, too, writers themselves may not be aware of the fact that they inevitably "show their mug" in everything they write. On this point, they may be confused, or even contradict themselves. Of *Madame Bovary* Gustave Flaubert says: "It is an utterly invented story; in it, I have put nothing of my feelings, nothing of my existence" (qtd. in Jacques Suffel's preface to *Madame Bovary* 16).[293] Yet Flaubert also says: "*Madame Bovary, c'est moi . . .*" (qtd. in Jacques Suffel's preface to *Madame Bovary* 16). Finally, can we ever rule out an author's *subconscious* motivation--the motivation of which the author himself or herself is not fully aware?

Thus, despite Dostoyevsky's "mug" quotation, it is conceivable that the bordello scene is one of the most autobiographical in all his works. This supposition is a tremendous aid for understanding the shocking *dénouement* of Mouse's final humiliation and degradation of both Liza and himself. I am referring to the scene in which Liza,

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[292] "Я же хоть и вполне тех же мыслей, какие и он выражает, но если б лично *от себя* выражал их, то выразил бы их в другой форме и другим языком" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 102).

[293] "*C'est une histoire totalement inventée; je n'y ai rien mis ni de mes sentiments, ni de mon existence*" (my translation).

having accepted Mouse's invitation to come to his apartment as a first step toward her abandonment of prostitution, gullibly allows him to engage in sexual relations with her out of his presumed, but viciously and cruelly feigned, affection, after which he commits one of the most egregious crimes in Russian literature by trying to force a blue five-ruble note into her hand as payment for having turned the additional trick (89).[294] Kimberly Sue Godwin, in her University of Virginia master's degree thesis entitled "*Notes from Underground* and *The Fall*," considers Mouse's crime against Liza so egregious that she accuses Mouse of an "attempt to humiliate her completely by essentially raping her" (48). The first-person confessional narration of this distressing culmination makes much more sense when viewed as a veiled act of contrition uttered by a self-condemning, now penitent, Dostoyevsky overwhelmed by the truth of what Mouse previously says to Liza while they lie side by side in pitch-black darkness on a snowy night amid the debasement of a St. Petersburg brothel:

> Pay no attention to the fact that I'm here. I'm no model for you. I may be even worse than you are. [. . .]
>
> [. . .] Now, tell me, what's so good about this place? Here you and I were . . . intimate . . . just a little while ago, and all that time we didn't say one word to each other; afterward you began to examine me like a wild creature, and I did the same. Is that the way people love? Is that how one person is supposed to encounter another? It's a disgrace, that's what it is! (65)[295]

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[294] *PSS* 5: 176-77; pt. 2, ch. 10.

[295] "--Ты не смотри на меня, что я здесь, я тебе не пример. Я, может, еще тебя хуже. [. . .]

At this juncture, a sharp difference should be noted between Dostoyevsky and Camus. Dostoyevsky ironically takes advantage of the context of Mouse's sexual encounter with a prostitute to express what can only be his own sincere respect for women and conjugal love. Camus, however, speaking from an unabashedly crude, androcentric viewpoint in his notebooks, says the following: "The woman, apart from love, is annoying. She does not know. You have to live with one and keep quiet. Or sleep with all and do. What is most important is elsewhere" (*Carnets II* 58).[296] In a note for a work that he never wrote, Camus makes Don Juan say: "I believe in courage, intelligence, and women" (*Carnets I* 214).[297] Are Don Juan and Camus saying that women are outside the categories of courage and intelligence? Given these comments, one wonders whether Camus would be accused of misogyny today and thereby denied the Nobel Prize.[298]

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"[. . .] Ну скажи, ну что тут хорошего: вот мы с тобой . . . сошлись . . . давеча, и слова мы во всё время друг с дружкой не молвили, и ты меня, как дикая, уж потом рассматривать стала; и я тебя также. Разве эдак любят? Разве эдак человек с человеком сходиться должны? Это безобразие одно, вот что!" (*PSS* 5: 155; pt. 2, ch. 6).

The earlier Dostoyevsky may not have shared what appears to be the latter Dostoyevsky's self-accusatory attitude toward prostitution. This is the conclusion that one may wish to draw from Natasha's reaction to Alesha's visits to a "Minna" in *The Insulted and Injured*. Natasha appears to regard these visits as a sign of manhood in her otherwise weak-willed, infantile lover (soon to be her former lover): "[. . .] it hurt me horribly, and yet at the same time I was somehow pleased at it. . . . I don't know why . . . the very thought that he was amusing himself--or no, it's not that--that, like a grown-up man together with other men he was running after pretty girls, that he too went to Minnas! I . . . what bliss I got out of that quarrel; and then forgiving him . . . oh, my dear one! [ [. . .] мне ужасно было больно, а в то же время как будто и приятно . . . но знаю, почему . . . одна уж мысль, что он тоже, как *большой* какой-нибудь, вместе с другими *большими* по красавицам разъезжает, тоже к Минне поехал! Я . . . Какое наслаждение было мне тогда в этой ссоре; а потом простить его . . . о милый!]" (330; *PSS* 3: 401; pt. 4, ch. 6). Yes, *The Insulted and Injured* was published in 1861 (Yarmolinsky xii), when Dostoyevsky was no longer a youth; but this did not necessarily prevent him from reflecting in it the attitudes that he had had when he was in his twenties.

[296] "*La femme, hors de l'amour, est ennuyeuse. Elle ne sait pas. Il faut vivre avec l'une et se taire. Ou coucher avec toutes et faire. Le plus important est ailleurs*" (my translation).

[297] "*Je crois au courage, à l'intelligence et aux femmes*" (my translation).

[298] If Camus's thinking was affected by misogyny, this may have been another obstacle inhibiting his return to Catholicism, which teaches that the most privileged human person is a woman. Not only does the

In any case, before leaving the startling scene in which Mouse degrades Liza by treating her like a prostitute after having induced her to believe that he intends to help rescue her from sexual exploitation, let us mention an example of Dostoyevskian influence on Camus. Dunwoodie contends that Mouse in Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground* and Clamence in *La Chute* resemble each other because, among other things, they both exhibit misogyny: "Let us note in passing several small analogies that are known: the characters are in their forties, have liver ailments, haughtily shun bribes, mistreat women, above all in debauchery" (147 [note 16]).[299] Actually, the parallels that Dunwoodie sees are not all "small," and he neglects to mention that Clamence's methodical punishment of the woman who had disparaged his virile prowess by gossiping to a third party may be viewed as an attenuated version of what Mouse does to Liza in his apartment. Clamence informs his listener: "I would give her up and take her back, force her to give herself at inappropriate times and in inappropriate places, treat her so brutally, in every regard, that eventually I attached myself to her as I imagine the jailor is bound to his prisoner" (*Fall* 64).[300] Clamence's abuse of the unnamed woman is essentially what

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Catholic Church accord to the Blessed Virgin Mary a special kind of veneration ("hyperdulia"), but the Church also regards her as the Mother of God and the spiritual mother, Queen, and Co-Redemptrix of the entire human race. See Ott (196-216).

As Co-Redemptrix, Mary, in Catholic thought, was associated with her Son in effecting the salvation of humanity, just as a man and a woman--Adam and Eve--were associated with each other in bringing about the Fall. In *L'Étranger*, is it merely a coincidence that the almost invisible woman in the life of Meursault, whom Camus himself calls a Christ (*Théâtre* 1928-29), is named Marie (*Stranger* 19; *Théâtre* 1138)?

[299] "*Rappelons en passant plusieurs petites analogies connues: les personnages ont la quarantaine, souffrent du foie, rejettent avec hauteur les pots de vin, maltraitent les femmes, surtout dans la débauche*" (my translation).

[300] "*Je l'abandonnais et la reprenais, la forçais à se donner dans des temps et des lieux qui ne s'y prêtaient pas, la traitais de façon si brutale, dans tous les domaines, que je finis par m'attacher à elle comme j'imagine que le geôlier se lie à son prisonnier*" (*Théâtre* 1508).

Mouse does to Liza, but Clamence transforms it into a slow-motion assault, reflecting the difference between a quick beating and prolonged torture.

We should also recognize that, from the viewpoint of the moral code of the Russian Orthodox Church, every john equivalently does to every prostitute what Mouse does to Liza at the freakish end of their ephemeral relationship, since reducing the conjugal act to a commodity is, under any circumstances, a "disgrace"--and a profanation. Even if he is not engaging in any sense in autobiography--a supposition that appears to me unlikely--Dostoyevsky is at least making this ethical observation. We can express Dostoyevsky's ethical argument against the evil of prostitution in his own words, put into Mouse's mouth: "Now I'd suddenly realized starkly how absurd, how revolting as a spider, was the idea of debauchery, which, without love, crudely and shamelessly begins precisely at the point where genuine love is consummated" (61).[301]

**Dostoyevsky Loves Spiders**

Note the reference to the spider, for this universally loathed and feared creature is a recurrent symbol of evil in Dostoyevsky's texts. In *The Insulted and Injured*, Ivan Petrovich, horrified at what the evil Prince Valkovskii is telling him in the restaurant, thinks that the prince is like "some huge spider" (270).[302] In *The House of the Dead*, the narrator views the convict Gazin, reputed to have tortured and murdered children, as "a huge, outsize spider, the size of a man" (72).[303] In *Crime and Punishment*, both

[301] "Теперь же мне вдруг ярко представилась нелепая, отвратительная, как паук, идея разврата, который без любви, грубо и бесстыже, начинает прямо с того, чем настоящая любовь венчается" (*PSS* 5: 152; pt. 2, ch. 6).

[302] "какого-то огромного паука" (*PSS* 3: 358; pt. 3, ch. 10).

[303] "огромного, исполинского паука, с человека величиною" (*PSS* 4: 40; pt. 1, ch. 3).

Raskol'nikov and Svidrigailov mention spiders in contexts in which these arachnids (not insects) are associated with evil. Raskol'nikov says: "Then I lurked in a corner like a spider" (352).[304] He also says that, at the moment in which he split the skull of the woman pawnbroker with an ax, it would not have mattered to him at all if he had subsequently, "[. . .] like a spider, spent the rest of my life catching everybody in my web and sucking the life-blood out of them [. . .]" (354).[305] In reference to the next world, Svidrigailov wonders: "What if there is nothing there but spiders or something like that?" (244).[306] And he asks whether eternity will be "one little room, something like a bath-house in the country, black with soot, with spiders in every corner" (245).[307] A spider is mentioned in Stavrogin's confession of his molestation of Matresha and the narrative of her suicide: "Then I began watching a tiny red spider on a geranium leaf and I dozed off" (425).[308] Stavrogin also sees a red spider after his dream of the Golden Age in the German hotel (429).[309] Also in *The Devils*, Kirillov, approaching both his suicide and madness (how close he is to the latter is anyone's guess), tells Stavrogin that he prays to the spider crawling on the wall (226),[310] and Liza tells Stavrogin that "[i]t always seemed to me that you'd take me off to some place where an enormous man-sized evil spider

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[304] "Я тогда, как паук, к себе в угол забился" (*PSS* 6: 320; pt. 5, ch. 4).

[305] "[. . .] всю жизнь, как паук, ловил бы всех в паутину и из всех живые соки высасывал [. . .]" (*PSS* 6: 322; pt. 5, ch. 4).

[306] "--А что, если там одни пауки или что-нибудь в этом роде" (*PSS* 6: 221; pt. 4, ch. 1).

[307] "одна комнатка, эдак вроде деревенской бани, закоптелая, а по всем углам пауки" (*PSS* 6: 221; pt. 4, ch. 1).

[308] "Затем [. . .] и стал смотреть на крошечного красненького паучка на листке герани и забылся (*PSS* 11: 19; pt. 2, ch. 9, sect. 2, in the 1991 Signet Classic edition).

[309] *PSS* 11: 22; pt. 2, ch. 9, sect. 2.

[310] *PSS* 10: 189; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 5.

lived, and that we'd spend all our lives looking at it and being afraid of it" (*PSS* 10: 402).[311] The conspirators in the same novel, fearing that Shatov is on the point of delating them to the authorities, "felt like so many flies caught in the web of some huge spider--they were furious, but trembled with fear" (569).[312] In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dmitrii, referring to his libido, calls himself a "vicious tarantula" (*PSS* 14: 105),[313] and Father Ferapont links spiders with the Devil and the other demons, who, in Christian teaching, are personal spiritual beings irremediably given over to moral evil (154, 314).[314]

**Ponder Svidrigailov's Last Dream**

In support of my conjecture regarding the reason for the major rôle that adult attraction to minors plays in Dostoyevsky's fiction, I ask the reader to read carefully the disturbing episode of Svidrigailov's last dream in *Crime and Punishment* (430-31).[315] Listed in table 2 as occurrence 16, this is the scene that takes place after Svidrigailov,

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[311] "Мне всегда казалось, что вы заведете меня в какое-нибудь место, где живет огромный злой паук в человеческий рост, и мы там всю жизнь будем на него глядеть и его бояться" (543; pt. 3, ch. 3, sect. 1; my translation).

[312] "Чувствовали, что вдруг как мухи попали в паутину к огромному пауку; злились, но тряслись от страху" (*PSS* 10: 421; pt. 3, ch. 4, sect. 2).

[313] "злому тарантулу" (pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 4; my translation). The Garnett-Matlaw translation has "venomous spider" (102).

A little earlier in this translation, Dmitrii also confesses to Alesha that he felt a spider biting at his heart when Katerina Ivanovna stood before him in his room in utter vulnerability (102; *PSS* 14: 105; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 4). Obviously, this is also a metaphor for his libido. In this place in the Russian text, however, the creature that bit Dmitrii is a фаланга (*falanga*), not a паук (*pauk* or "spider)." According to the dictionary of Vladimir Dal' (*Tolkovyi slovar' zhivogo velikorusskogo iazyka* [*Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great Russian Language*] 4: 531), a фаланга in this context is a сороконожка (*sorokonozhka*), which is a centipede. Garnett's translation in the Signet Classic edition has "centipede" (117).

[314] *PSS* 14: 154; pt. 2, bk. 4, ch. 1; *PSS* 14: 303; pt. 3, bk. 7, ch. 1.

[315] *PSS* 6: 391-93; pt. 6, ch. 6.

who had probably caused a girl of no more than fourteen to hang herself as a result of his having molested her, checks into a St. Petersburg hotel on the rainy, gloomy eve of his own suicide. In this nightmare, which Dostoyevsky skillfully delays labeling as one until Svidrigailov has awakened, the latter finds a small abandoned girl, around five years old, huddling and shivering in the hotel's corridor. Having taken her into his room and placed her in his bed to allow her to become warm, he watches in painful horror as her face is gradually, but unmistakably, metamorphosed into the brazen, lascivious visage of a French prostitute. Her lustful eye is now winking at him. But she was only an innocent little child a minute before!

Ponder this scene, which is constructed with the panoply of vivid touches that make Dostoyevsky a literary genius, and which anticipates Stavrogin's confession in *The Devil*s. Though now a part of the Russian literary canon, and thus too familiar to shock us, Svidrigailov's nightmare should shock us nonetheless, even in our century. One wonders what readers made of it in the middle of the nineteenth century. However Dostoyevsky's first readers reacted to this interlude, it seems that one conclusion that we should draw from it is that it may be colored by the experiences of a real-life person who now feels excruciating remorse over having taken advantage of the sexual innocence of one or more minor girls within the context of prostitution. In the light of the thirty-one additional instances of attraction to minors in the Dostoyevskian canon, and in view of the substantial presence of prostitution in both *Crime and Punishment* and *Notes from Underground*, I do not see how we can avoid raising this issue. To those who remain incredulous, I simply say this: think about Svidrigailov's final dream. Consider the possibility that the little girl transformed into a prostitute may be a symbol of what

happens when a john--in this case, Dostoyevsky--has a sexual encounter with a prostitute who is actually a child (in the sense of being a minor). In this hypothesis, Svidrigailov is experiencing in a dream what Dostoyevsky experienced in life. And think about this possible parallel against the background of Arkadii's erotic dream of Anna Andreievna in Dostoyevsky's novel *A Raw Youth*:

> Oh, how it pleased me that it was so shameful! I clutched her hands. The touch of her hands sent an agonizing thrill through me, and I put my lips to her insolent crimson lips that invited me, quivering with laughter.
>
> Oh, away with that vile memory? Accursed dream! [. . .] It was because I had the soul of a spider![316] It shows that all this had long ago been hatching in my corrupt heart, and lay latent in my desires, but my waking heart was still ashamed, and my mind dared not consciously picture anything of the sort. But in sleep the soul presented and laid bare all that was hidden in the heart, with the utmost accuracy, in a complete picture and in prophetic form. (412-13)[317]

As Dostoyevsky himself says through Arkadii, a dream may represent one's desires, even one's repressed desires. This is true, not only for fictional characters, but also for actual human beings, including novelists. And who is to say that these repressed

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[316] Another of Dostoyevsky's ubiquitous spiders!

[317] "О, как мне нравится, что это так бесстыдно! Я схватываю ее за руки, прикосновение рук ее мучительно сотрясает меня, и я приближаю мои губы к ее наглым, алым, дрожащим от смеха и зовущим меня губам.

"О, прочь это низкое воспоминание! Проклятый сон! [. . .] Это оттого, что во мне была душа паука! Это значит, что всё уже давно зародилось и лежало в развратном сердце моем, в *желании* моем лежало, но сердце еще стыдилось наяву, и ум не смел еще представить что-нибудь подобное сознательно. А во сне душа сама всё представила и выложила, что было в сердце, в совершенной точности и в самой полной картине и--в пророческой форме" (*PSS* 13: 306-07; pt. 3, ch. 2).

Inexplicably, the Constance Garnett translation places a question mark after "Oh, away with that vile memory." This should be an exclamation point.

desires may not be associated with actions that occurred in one's past life but which one now profoundly regrets? This is the point of citing Arkadii's dream as an aid to understanding what may be the full significance of Svidrigailov's dream in relation to Dostoyevsky's own life.

Granted, we cannot achieve certitude regarding what may be the deepest reason for Dostoyevsky's referring to adult attraction to children on *thirty-two* occasions in his writings and projected writings and for highlighting child molestation as the paradigmatic moral evil. We cannot make an apodictic statement about what may be one of the motives for his inclusion of the bordello scene and its astounding aftermath in *Notes from Underground* and for his unsettling presentation of pedophilia in Svidrigailov's pre-suicide nightmare about the small girl who is transformed into a French harlot. Admittedly, we are in the somewhat nebulous realm of speculation and conjecture. Nonetheless, the hypothesis of Dostoyevsky's possible occasional patronage of juvenile prostitutes has solid foundations, and it does a great deal to clarify some of the major works of the Russian canon.

If this speculation has hit on the truth, then it reflects the fact that evil, unlike other intellectual and academic topics, is never a merely impersonal issue. If this suggestion is valid, then it is even more understandable why Dostoyevsky has Father Zosima place such strong emphasis in *The Brothers Karamazov* on the Christian doctrine that there is *no* sin, no matter how horrible or shameful, that cannot be forgiven if the sinner is contrite. The following words spoken to the young peasant woman who had murdered her abusive husband assume a new dimension if Dostoyevsky is thinking of grievous sins against children in his own past life: "There is no sin, and there can be no

sin on all the earth, which the Lord will not forgive to the truly repentant! Man cannot commit a sin so great as to exhaust the infinite love of God" (43).[318] So intent is Dostoyevsky on stressing the possibility of forgiveness for any sin without exception that he has Father Zosima hammer this thought into the anxious woman's consciousness by reiterating it in fifteen additional sentences**.** These sentences should be considered in conjunction with the fact that Dostoyevsky, as he lay dying, requested that the parable of the prodigal son in the Gospel of St. Luke be read to his children (Frank, *Mantle of the Prophet* 748). What had been one of the sins of the younger son in that parable? In the angry words with which the older son confronts his father, the prodigal son had "wasted your livelihood with prostitutes" (*Lk* 15:30).[319]

**Reparation**

A final argument for my hypothesis concerning the reason for Dostoyevsky's repetitive references to the sexual abuse of minors is rooted in Dmitrii Karamazov's remarkable willingness to accept punishment for a crime that he did not commit. I believe that this willingness--which must seem bizarre to many in today's secularized atmosphere--implies Dmitrii's desire to do penance for sins that he *did* commit. Among the sins which Dmitrii confesses to Alesha is debauchery in "side paths, little dark back alleys behind the main road" (97),[320] i.e., the patronizing of prostitutes. Yes, Dmitrii later decides to escape from his future imprisonment (which is his moral right since he is

[318] "Да и греха такого нет и не может быть на всей земле, какого бы не простил господь [sic] воистину кающемуся. Да и совершить не может совсем такого греха великого человек, который бы истощил бесконечную божью любовь" (*PSS* 14: 48; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 3).

[319] "ὁ καταφαγών σου τὸν βίον μετὰ πορνῶν" (my translation).

[320] "переулочки [. . .] глухие и темные закоулочки, за площадью" (*PSS* 14: 100; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 4).

innocent of the crime of murder). Initially, however, he is in a state of exaltation when he tells Alesha that he will be joining his voice to the great hymn that arises from the convicts suffering in the Siberian mines, and that he will do so "[b]ecause we are all responsible for all" (560).[321] Note that Dmitrii, referring in this dithyrambic speech to the infant of his fire dream during the night of his arrest (478-80),[322] also says: "It's for the babe I'm going" (560).[323] This comment, combined with the religious tone of the entire declaration, which ends with Dmitrii's ecstatically and tearfully proclaiming his love for God, makes clear that Dmitrii is *not* merely saying: "I don't want to be a crybaby; I'm going to take this like man." It would, in fact, be a serious misunderstanding to construe Dmitrii's reaction in this passage as mere soldierly courage and resignation.

Instead, what Dmitrii and Dostoyevsky are reflecting in this singular passage is the Christian concept of doing penance for one's sins--and even for the sins of others. This idea is also known as *reparation*, and it underlies an entire segment of Father Zosima's final pastoral counsel. This is the concept that the dying monk presupposes when he tells his disciples: "If you can take upon yourself the crime of the criminal your heart is judging, take it at once, suffer for him yourself, and let him go without reproach" (300).[324] Father Zosima later says: "Go at once and seek suffering for yourself, as though

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[321] "Потому что все за всех виноваты" (*PSS* 15: 31; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 4).

The Garnett-Matlaw translation of this sentence should be corrected to: "Because all are guilty for all."

[322] *PSS* 14: 456-57; pt. 3, bk. 9, ch. 8.

[323] "За «дитё» и пойду" (*PSS* 15: 31; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 4).

[324] "Если возможешь принять на себя преступление стоящего пред тобою и судимого сердцем твоим преступника, то немедленно приими и пострадай за него сам, его же без укора отпусти" (*PSS* 14: 291; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. h).

you were yourself guilty of that wrong" (300-01).[325] In the Christian worldview, reparation is one of the major elements of the resolution of the scandal of evil as that scandal applies to suffering. From the standpoint of committed Christians, one reason why we must resign ourselves to any suffering that cannot be ethically avoided is that such acceptance is a way to compensate for our sins. It is also a way of sharing in the sufferings of Christ, in accordance with his words in *Mt* 10:38: "[. . .] whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me."[326] When the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that there is not a single aspect of the Church's faith that is not an answer to the problem of evil (section 309), the Church is including the whole theology of reparation in this statement.[327]

Does this concept of reparation explain why Dostoyevsky himself seems to have reconciled himself to his own incarceration and appears never in his private correspondence to become exceptionally bitter in lamenting his sufferings in prison? Perhaps Dostoyevsky believed that the tsarist government had been totally or partially unjust in exiling him to hard labor in Siberia for his aborted revolutionary activities. Nevertheless, did he, as a Russian Orthodox believer, accept his imprisonment as expiation for the sins of which he *was* fully guilty? Did he believe that he was atoning for his sins with prostitutes and the even more grievous sin of the sexual abuse of young

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[325] "[. . .] тотчас же иди и ищи себе мук так, как бы сам был виновен в сем злодействе людей" (*PSS* 14: 292; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. h).

[326] "[. . .] καὶ ὃς οὐ λαμβάνει τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ ὀπίσω μου, οὐκ ἔστιν μου ἄξιος."

[327] For the concepts of reparation, penance, and temporal punishment for forgiven sin--all presented as responses to the scandal of suffering--see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, sections 307, 618, 1459-60, 1472-73, 2100.

girls--girls who, like the infant of Dmitrii's nightmare, were children?[328] In connection with this possibility, we should ponder Camus's observation:

> Doubtless, a novelist conveys himself and betrays himself in all his characters at the same time: each one represents one of his tendencies or his temptations. (*Essais* 1143)[329]

**We All Face Capital Punishment**

But let us turn now to what, for Camus, is the paradigmatic evil: the death penalty. It is true that Camus asserts in "Le Temps de l'espoir" ["The Time of Hope"] that totalitarian subjugation is the "worst of evils": "War, and resistance, have taught us a lesson only about themselves, and maybe about ourselves. They were definitely enough to make us realize that totalitarian subjugation was the worst of evils, and to give us the inescapable decision to combat it no matter where it is to be found" (*Essais* 791).[330] Notwithstanding this categorical statement, we have to say that, in keeping with his emphasis on the social, political, and economic, rather than (as is the case with Dostoyevsky) the individual, personal, and sexual, manifestations of moral evil, Camus is ideologically revolted to an exceptional degree by capital punishment and all that it

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[328] Note that Dostoyevsky uses the term ребенок (*rebenok* or "child") for the deaf and mute girl, about fourteen or fifteen years old [девочка лет пятнадцати и даже четырнадцати], whom Svidrigailov sexually abuses in *Crime and Punishment* (252; *PSS* 6: 228; pt. 4, ch. 2).

[329] "*Sans doute, un romancier se traduit et se trahit dans tous ses personnages en même temps: chacun représente une des ses tendances ou de ses tentations*" ("Roger Martin du Gard," published in *Nouvelle Revue Française* in 1955; my translation).

[330] "*La guerre, et la résistance, ne nous ont rien appris que sur elles-mêmes, et peut-être sur nous. Elles ont suffi certainement à nous faire mesurer que l'abjection totalitaire était le pire des maux, et à nous donner la décision irréductible de la combattre partout où elle se trouve*" (my translation).

"Le Temps de l'espoir," as the Pléiade edition informs us (*Essais* 787), is Camus's preface to Alfred Rosmer's study of communism. The title of Rosmer's work is *Moscou sous Lénine: Les Origines du communisme* [*Moscow under Lenin: The Origins of Communism*].

embodies and symbolizes. Camus goes much farther in his treatment of the death penalty than does his Russian predecessor, for whom it is, primarily, a personal trauma because of the sadism of the mock execution that he experienced at the age of twenty-eight. This is evident in *The Idiot* and, to a lesser extent, in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. For Camus, capital punishment is an all-important *leitmotiv*, because it symbolizes death *per se,* and because mortality, in an absurd universe, is the supreme evil. Accordingly, Camus says in *L'Homme révolté* that "Ivan Karamazov sides with mankind and stresses human innocence. He affirms that the death sentence which hangs over them is unjust" (*Rebel* 55).[331] Moreover, Camus's elevation of the death penalty to the status of *the* emblematic evil has implications for his political stance. In that connection, it should be pointed out that one of the reasons why Camus condemns totalitarian subjugation is that it encompasses state-sponsored executions.

When, in November 1980, the Catholic Bishops of the United States issued their *Statement on Capital Punishment*, in which they urged governments to refrain from imposing the death penalty, they were influenced by Camus's arguments. Their statement represents a departure from the immemorial Catholic tradition that concedes to legitimate governments the right to inflict the death penalty on those guilty of heinous crimes. Whether this departure was advisable is open to debate, even among committed Catholics. In any event, there can be no doubt about Camus's impact on the bishops' document, for they go so far as to cite Camus's 1957 essay entitled *Réflexions sur la guillotine* [*Reflections on the Guillotine*], which vies with Victor Hugo's *Le Dernier jour d'un condamné* [*The Last Day of a Condemned Man*] for being, at least in a superficial

[331] "*Ivan Karamazov prend le parti des hommes et met l'accent sur leur innocence. Il affirme que la condamnation à mort qui pèse sur eux est injuste*" (*Essais* 465).

sense, the most moving plea for the abolition of the death penalty (Hugh J. Nolan, ed., *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops* 4: 432 [footnote 5]).

It is somewhat odd that the bishops appeal to Camus's opposition to capital punishment, for it is clear that his condemnation of it is inextricably linked to his atheistic, absurdist philosophy. For Camus, capital punishment mirrors the very core of absurdity, which is mortality. Indeed, from the Camusian vantage point, death is the cynosure of the scandal of evil; hence, we must say that Camus is scandalized by capital punishment. The final sentence of his anti-death penalty essay leaves no doubt about Camus's position: "There will be no lasting peace either in the heart of individuals or in social customs until death is outlawed" (*Resistance* 234).[332] Note the two senses in which the word "death," as used in this sentence, can be understood: whatever the author's conscious or subconscious intention, "death" could mean both capital punishment and mortality at one and the same time--as if legislatures and parliaments could annul the law of nature. If the dual meaning is deliberate, such an arresting ending exhibits Camus's exceptional rhetorical powers. Another instance of the essential rôle that denunciation of the death penalty plays in Camus's outlook is this statement in *L'Homme révolté*:

> From Paul to Stalin, the popes who have chosen Caesar have prepared the way for Caesars who quickly learn to despise popes. The unity of the world, which was not achieved with God, will henceforth be attempted in defiance of God.

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[332] "*Ni dans le coeur des individus ni dans les moeurs des sociétés, il n'y aura de paix durable tant que la mort ne sera pas mise hors la loi"* (*Essais* 1064).

> But we have not yet reached that point. For the moment, Ivan offers us only the tortured face of the rebel plunged in the abyss, incapable of action, torn between the idea of his own innocence and the desire to kill. *He hates the death penalty because it is the image of the human condition* [. . .]. (*Rebel* 61; my italics)[333]

But it must be said that Camus, like Ivan Karamazov, also hates the death penalty because it is the image of the human condition. In Camus's thought, capital punishment is an absurd sign and actualization of an absurd universe. For Camus, indeed, an execution can be considered a sacrament of absurdity, in addition to being a concretization of evil. Why? For two reasons: not only because every human being dies, but also because--and this is Camus's tacit premise--every human being can be thought of as being executed by God, the God who stands behind the persona of the bloodthirsty Emperor Caligula in Camus's play of that name. In his notebooks, Camus summarizes his attitude toward capital punishment in a sententious entry:

> We must serve justice because our condition is unjust, and must add to happiness and joy because this universe is unhappy. Likewise, we must not condemn to death since we have been made people condemned to death.

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[333] "*De Paul à Staline, les papes qui ont choisi César ont préparé la voie aux Césars qui ne choisissent qu'eux-mêmes. L'unité du monde qui ne s'est pas faite avec Dieu tentera désormais de se faire contre Dieu.*

"*Mais nous n'en sommes pas encore là. Pour le moment, Ivan ne nous offre que le visage défait du révolté aux abîmes, incapable d'action, déchiré entre l'idée de son innocence et la volonté du meurtre. Il hait la peine de mort parce qu'elle est l'image de la condition humaine [. . .]*" (*Essais* 471).

> The doctor, enemy of God: he struggles against death. (*Carnets II* 129)[334]

In fairness to Camus, it has to be recognized that Christian dogma does proclaim that death, from which man would have been spared had the protoparents of the human race not committed the first sin, is a punishment--a form, as it were, of capital punishment. Death is a punishment for original sin, in accordance with St. Paul's blunt dictum: "For the wages of sin is death [. . .]" (*Rom* 6:23).[335] The Apostle Paul's religion also teaches that even children and infants die as a result of original sin. Earlier in the same epistle, he says that "[. . .] death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin after the pattern of the trespass of Adam, who is the type of the one who was to come" (*Rom* 5:14).[336] Everyone from Adam to Moses died--even children and babies. For Camus in his full-fledged absurdist phase, however, there can be no question of original sin and its punishment. For him, every death is an injustice and a scandal. Moreover, mortality, this most terrible of all the forms of capital punishment, hangs over every human head like the guillotine blade that Prince Myshkin evokes so distressingly in *The Idiot* in a passage that we shall soon consider. For Dostoyevsky the Christian, life is a gift; for Camus the absurdist, life is a death penalty held in abeyance. Camusian man spends his whole life on the scaffold, his neck in the *lunette* (collar) of a guillotine, waiting for the blade to fall.

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[334] "*Nous devons servir la justice parce que notre condition est injuste, ajouter au bonheur et à la joie parce que cet univers est malheureux. De même, nous ne devons pas condamner à mort puisqu' on a fait de nous des condamnés de mort.*

"*Le médecin, ennemi de Dieu: il lutte contre la mort*" (my translation).

[335] "τὰ γὰρ ὀψώνια τῆς ἁμαρτίας θάνατος [. . .]."

[336] "[. . .] ἐβασίλευσεν ὁ θάνατος ἀπὸ ᾿Αδὰμ μέχρι Μωϋσέως καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς μὴ ἁμαρτήσαντας ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοιώματι τῆς παραβάσεως ᾿Αδάμ, ὅς ἐστιν τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος."

In attacking capital punishment in *Réflexions sur la guillotine*, Camus employs a series of arguments that do not rely directly on his absurdist conviction that the ethical evil of the death penalty is a symbol of the physical evil that hangs over everyone's head: the corporeal evil of death. Let us catalogue these non-absurdist arguments in a series of assertions (without necessarily implying their full validity), beginning with Camus's contention that society itself does not truly believe that capital punishment is a deterrent, for otherwise all executions would be public and widely publicized. There is, in addition, no proof that the death penalty has ever kept even one murderer from killing. It leads to unforeseeable and repellent consequences, such as the promotion of vengeance and cruelty. It does not intimidate murderers who kill without premeditation. The torture of waiting to be executed outweighs the horror of the murder that led to the sentence. The condemned criminal's loved ones are unjustly punished by his violent death. The society inflicting the death penalty is partially responsible for the crime that it is punishing. The death penalty kills those who are salvageable and even those who are innocent of the crime charged. Only a society that corporately believes in eternal life in another world can justify capital punishment. The death penalty fosters the false idea that the modern state is a god that has the right to kill the innocent for political motives. In connection with the last point, it is imperative to realize that Camus's reaction to the death penalty is very much colored by the fact of unjust executions and unjust wars carried out by modern governments--a point with which proponents of the legitimacy of capital punishment can resolutely concur**.** Referring to the "state terrorism" which he had already condemned in *L'Homme révolté* (*Rebel* 177-245),[337] Camus says:

[337] *Essais* 583-647.

> [. . .] for thirty years now, State crimes have been far more numerous than individual crimes. [. . .] But the number of individuals killed directly by the State has assumed astronomical proportions and infinitely outnumbers private murders. [. . .]
>
> Hence our society must now defend herself not so much against the individual as against the State. (*Resistance* 227)[338]

The condemnation of capital punishment in *Réflexions sur la guillotine* is anticipated by the long discourse that Tarrou delivers in the presence of Dr. Rieux ten years earlier in *La Peste* (*Plague* 244-56).[339] This is the remarkable narrative in which Tarrou not only recounts his past life, but also discloses to Dr. Rieux his hope of becoming a "saint without God" (*Plague* 255).[340] The would-be atheistic saint tells his physician friend the reason why he left his previously happy home: he learns that his lawyer father, a prosecutor, is sending convicted criminals to the guillotine. This discovery overwhelms the son, leading him to become nearly obsessed with abolishing capital punishment. Patrick Henry, who argues against the death penalty in "Camus on Capital Punishment," says: "From that moment onward, the death penalty becomes the central issue in the life of Tarrou" (365). Or, as Warren Ramsey puts it in an article entitled "Albert Camus on Capital Punishment: His Adaptation of *The Possessed,*" Tarrou "[. . .] decides to spend his life expiating the mornings when his father, the

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[338] "[. . .] *depuis trente ans, les crimes d'État l'emportent de loin sur les crimes des individus. [. . .] Mais le nombre des individus tués directement par l'État a pris des proportions astronomiques et passe infiniment celui des meurtres particuliers. [. . .]*
"*Ce n'est plus tant contre l'individu que notre société doit donc se défendre que contre l'État*" (*Essais* 1059).

[339] *Théâtre* 1419-28.

[340] "*un saint sans Dieu*" (*Théâtre* 1427).

solicitor-general, set his alarm early and went off to witness murders [. . .]" (640). The participle "expiating" is particularly apt since Tarrou is striving for sainthood, albeit in the absence of faith. This expiatory impulse results in turn in Tarrou's dedication to political activism--perhaps as a communist--in France and all over Europe. But this political activism ends in bitter disillusion when it dawns on Tarrou that his comrades are themselves willing to approve murder in the present to achieve their goal of utopia in the future. In Tarrou's trajectory, one sees a parallel with Camus's own intellectual and political odyssey, for Camus was a member of the Communist Party from autumn 1935 to November 1937 (Lottman 151).

In "Camus and Capital Punishment," Thomas Molnar responds to Camus's abolitionist stance as presented explicitly in *Réflexions sur la guillotine* and implicitly in Tarrou's discourse in *La Peste*. Molnar does not provide a sufficient answer to Camus's thesis, for he merely sketches, without adequately developing, the argument for the position that the death penalty *per se* is *not* the moral evil of murder. Nor does he seem to realize that the key component of this position is the reality of deterrence, regardless of the misuse of statistical studies which, by their very nature, cannot adequately evaluate the complexities of human motivation.[341] Molnar touches on, but does not sufficiently stress, the deterrent value of the fear of death. It is this factor that can be invoked against Camus to justify the execution of those who are guilty of grievous crimes against the lives and well-being of their brothers and sisters in the human family. The ethical

[341] A more adequate response to Camus's position on the death penalty is given in Thomas J. Higgins's *Man as Man: The Science and Art of Ethics* (510-14). Even Higgins's treatment, however, could be developed further.

principle underlying this appeal to deterrence is the right of blameless self-defense against the unjust aggressor by lethal means.

As for Camus's assertion that society does not really believe in the deterrent potential of the death penalty (*Resistance* 179-97),[342] it is paradoxical that some proponents of capital punishment agree with him, at least to some extent, inasmuch as they downplay deterrence as an ethical justification for executions. Thus, J. Budziszewski, in an article entitled "Capital Punishment: The Case for Justice," contends that retribution, not deterrence, is the primary reason for granting to the state the right to impose a sentence of death. He speaks in terms of restoring a "just order" that has been shattered (40). It is significant, however, that Budziszewski ends up speaking of retribution in terms that make it equivalent to deterrence. Commenting on the spread of a false compassion that would abolish capital punishment--and he would certainly consider Camus guilty of promoting this false compassion--he says: "Should this happen, then society would be even more at risk than it is now" (42). This conclusion is an implicit acceptance of the argument that the death penalty is a means whereby society exercises its right of self-defense by discouraging egregious crimes against its members. But this is the argument from deterrence. As a form of self-defense, then, the death penalty is an extrapolation, to the level of society, of what happens when an individual prefers his own life to that of a murderous knife-wielding thug in a dark alley by lethally turning the weapon against the thug and thrusting it into his heart. On what grounds is the potential murderer's life more sacred or valuable than one's own life? If I have at least an equal right to continue living, may I not prefer my own life to that of my would-be

[342] *Essais* 1024-38.

murderer?[343] By the same token, may not a just, compassionate society give priority to the lives and well-being of its non-criminal citizens in instances in which those great goods are imperiled by unjust aggressors?

At the cost of contradicting himself and undermining his whole essay, Camus, in a highly significant but neglected passage, seems to grant the validity of the argument from deterrence in the case of incorrigible criminals: "They must merely be kept from doing it again, and there is no other solution but to eliminate them. On this frontier, and on it alone, discussion about the death penalty is legitimate. In all other cases the arguments for capital punishment do not stand up to the criticisms of the abolitionists" (*Resistance* 219).[344] This crucial concession fatally impairs Camus's case against capital punishment. If one grants that the death penalty is a deterrent in the case of hopeless sociopaths, then, logically, one may eventually be forced to accept the death penalty on a much broader basis, once one agrees to a full-fledged understanding of deterrence. The lives of prison guards and other inmates are indeed at risk from the irreformable murderer who, serving a life sentence, may murder again while in prison, but the lives of everyone else in society are also at risk. Not only are the lives of all citizens in danger should the irreformable murderer escape, but they are also in danger should *potential* murderers who are not incurable sociopaths not be deterred by the prospect of a prison sentence.

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[343] St. Thomas makes this point in the following words: "Nor is it necessary for salvation that a man omit the act of moderate self-defense in order to avoid killing the other man, since one is bound to take more care of one's own life than of another's. [*Nec est necessarium ad salutem ut homo actum moderatae tutelae praetermittat ad evitandum occisionem alterius, quia plus tenetur homo vitae suae providere quam vitae alienae*]" (*Summa theologiae*, pt. 2 of pt. 2, ques. 64, art. 7, body).

[344] "*Il faut seulement éviter qu'ils ne recommencent et il n'y a pas d'autre solution que de les éliminer. Sur cette frontière, et sur elle seule, la discussion autour de la peine de mort est légitime. Dans tous les autres cas, les arguments des conservateurs ne résistent pas à la critique des abolitionnistes*" (*Essais* 1053).

In addition to emphasizing the concepts of deterrence and the right of blameless self-defense by lethal means, those who contend that capital punishment is not murder and is not *per se* an evil can point to other problems in Camus's essay. As rhetorically impressive as it is, its appeal for abolition of the death penalty contains answers to its own arguments. For example, Camus, with justification, makes much of the gruesome physical details of the guillotine, but later he implicitly concedes that this is not an argument for condemning capital punishment, for this penalty can be carried out through the physically painless administration of lethal drugs. In fact, he urges the French government to adopt this method if it refuses to abolish the death penalty (*Resistance* 233).[345]

Of even greater significance as illustrating the shaky foundation of Camus's argumentation against the purported intrinsic evil of capital punishment is his implicit admission that the abolitionist case is closely tied to atheism. In *Réflexions sur la guillotine*, after having correctly observed that the Catholic Church has always conceded to the state the right to inflict the death penalty, Camus says the following:

> In fact, the supreme punishment has always been, throughout the ages, a religious penalty. Inflicted in the name of the king, God's representative on earth, or by priests or in the name of society considered as a sacred body, it denies, not human solidarity, but the guilty man's membership in the divine community, the only thing that can give him life. Life on earth is taken from him, to be sure, but his chance of making amends is left him. The real judgment is not pronounced; it will be in the other world. Only

[345] *Essais* 1064.

> religious values, and especially belief in eternal life, can therefore serve as a basis for the supreme punishment because, according to their own logic, they keep it from being definitive and irreparable. Consequently, it is justified only insofar as it is not supreme. (*Resistance* 222-23)[346]

It is inaccurate to say, as Camus does, that priests inflicted capital punishment: the Catholic Church has always forbidden the clergy to participate directly in executions. Nevertheless, Camus is perceptive in discerning an essential component of the rationale for accepting the legitimacy of capital punishment in Catholic tradition. Concerning conscientious public officials who are involved in morally justified executions, Cardinal Avery Dulles, one of the most prominent theologians in the Church today, states the following in an article entitled "Catholicism and Capital Punishment":

> It seems to me quite obvious that such officeholders can carry out their duty without hatred for the criminal, but rather with love, respect, and

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[346] "*En fait, le châtiment suprême a toujours été, à travers les siècles, une peine religieuse. Infligée au nom du roi, représentant de Dieu sur terre, ou par les prêtres, ou au nom de la société considérée comme un corps sacré, ce n'est pas la solidarité humaine qu'elle rompt alors, mais l'appartenance du coupable à la communauté divine, qui peut seule lui donner la vie. La vie terrestre lui est sans doute retirée, mais la chance de réparation lui est maintenue. Le jugement réel n'est pas prononcé, il le sera dans l'autre monde. Les valeurs religieuses, et particulièrement la croyance à la vie éternelle, sont donc seules à pouvoir fonder le châtiment suprême puisqu'elles empêchent, selon leur logique propre, qu'il soit définitif et irréparable. Il n'est alors justifié que dans la mesure où il n'est pas suprême*" (*Essais* 1056).

In the first monastery scene in *The Brothers Karamazov* (55-57; *PSS* 14: 59-61; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 5), Dostoyevsky has Father Zosima deliver a discourse that has affinities with the above passage in Camus's attack on capital punishment in a secular state. Without pronouncing on the death penalty, Father Zosima contends that only a thoroughly Christian confessional state that appeals to the consciences of criminals and potential criminals can adequately protect its citizens by discouraging contraventions of the moral law.

In this exposition, Father Zosima can be said to be giving a Russian Orthodox formulation of "the traditional Catholic teaching on the moral duty of individuals and societies toward the true religion and the one Church of Christ [*la doctrine catholique traditionnelle sur le devoir moral des hommes et des sociétés à l'égard de la vraie religion et de l'unique Eglise du Christ*]" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, sect. 2105, which is quoting Vatican II's *Dignitatis humanae*, section 1). The core of this teaching--a core with which Father Zosima would certainly concur--is social and political recognition of the kingship of Christ: "Thus, the Church shows forth the kingship of Christ over all creation and in particular over human societies. [*L'Église manifeste ainsi la royauté du Christ sur toute la création et en particulier sur les sociétés humaines*]" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, sect. 2105).

> compassion. In enforcing the law, they may take comfort in believing that death is not the final evil; they may pray and hope that the convict will attain eternal life with God. (34)

Paradoxically, Camus reinforces Cardinal Dulles's point--or they reinforce each other's point--when Camus writes as follows, also in *Réflexions sur la guillotine*:

> But Catholic faith is not nourished solely by the personal teaching of Christ. It also feeds on the Old Testament, on St. Paul, and on the Church Fathers. In particular, the immortality of the soul and the universal resurrection of bodies are articles of dogma. As a result, capital punishment is for the believer a temporary penalty that leaves the final sentence in suspense, an arrangement necessary only for the terrestrial order, an administrative measure which, far from signifying the end for the guilty man, may instead favor his redemption. I am not saying that all believers agree with this, and I can readily imagine that some Catholics may stand closer to Christ than to Moses or St. Paul. I am simply saying that faith in the immortality of the soul allowed Catholicism to see the problem of capital punishment in very different terms and to justify it. (*Resistance* 224)[347]

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[347] "*Mais la foi catholique ne se nourrit pas seulement de l'enseignement personnel du Christ. Elle s'alimente aussi à l'Ancien Testament comme à saint Paul et aux Pères. En particulier l'immortalité de l'âme, et la résurrection universelle des corps sont des articles de dogme. Dès lors, la peine capitale reste, pour le croyant, un châtiment provisoire qui laisse en suspens la sentence définitive, une disposition nécessaire seulement à l'ordre terrestre, une mesure d'administration qui, loin d'en finir avec le coupable, peut favoriser au contraire sa rédemption. Je ne dis pas que tous les croyants pensent ainsi et j'imagine sans peine que des catholiques puissent se tenir plus près du Christ que de Moïse ou de saint Paul. Je dis seulement que la foi dans l'immortalité de l'âme a permis au catholicisme de poser le problème de la peine capitale en des termes très différents, et de la justifier*" (*Essais* 1057).

This much must be conceded to Camus: without denying that every state, even the explicitly or implicitly atheistic modern state, has the right to defend the lives and welfare of its citizens through the use of capital punishment, the death penalty is more immediately intelligible in a country whose government publicly and officially acknowledge God as the source of all order, including the juridical order, and where the state corporately professes a religion (such as Catholicism) that teaches the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, thus denying that death is the supreme evil. It is for this reason that Donald Lazere, in an article entitled "Camus and His Critics on Capital Punishment," offers a perceptive, telling observation when he poses the following question in Camus's defense: "How can a society like the United States, for example, whose present gods are the pursuit of wealth and consumption of commodities, rock music stars and professional athletes, suddenly lay claim to being the steward of divine order when it comes to executions?" (375-76). Or in the words of Camus in "Remarque sur la révolte" ["Remark on Revolt"], published in *L'Existence* [*Existence*] in 1945: "The apparent relativity of the problem of revolt thus resides in the fact that today entire societies have distanced themselves from the sacred and that the spectacle of revolt presents itself to us on a historic scale" (*Essais* 1688).[348]

[348] "*La relativité apparente du problème de la révolte tient ainsi dans le fait qu'aujourd'hui des sociétés entières ont pris leur distance par rapport au sacré et que le spectacle de la révolte nous est donné à l'échelle historique*" (my translation).

**The Death Penalty in Dostoyevsky's Works**

In departing from traditional Catholic thinking on capital punishment--which, with the requisite corrections,[349] Camus accurately reflects in the above quotation referring to Christ, St. Paul, and Moses--the American Catholic bishops also cite Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot* in the aforementioned footnote of their 1980 pastoral statement. They are referring to Prince Myshkin's powerful narration in the Epanchins' drawing room. In this segment, the prince first recounts the traumatizing experience of the condemned political prisoner who, for fifteen or twenty minutes before his sudden reprieve, believes that he is going to be executed by a firing squad:

> Twenty moments later a reprieve was read to them, and they were condemned to another punishment instead. Yet the interval between those two sentences, twenty minutes or at least a quarter of an hour, he passed in the fullest conviction that he would die in a few minutes. I was always eager to listen when he recalled his sensations at that time, and I often questioned him about it. He remembered it all with extraordinary distinctness and used to say that he never would forget those minutes. (56)[350]

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[349] When Christ tells Pontius Pilate that Pilate would have no power over him unless he had received it "from above [ἄνωθεν]" (*Jn* 19:11), it is possible that at least one of the meanings of this verse is that a state's right to impose a just death sentence comes from God, the source of all political authority.

[350] "Минут через двадцать прочтено было и помилование и назначена другая степень наказания; но, однако же, в промежутке между двумя приговорами, двадцать минут или по крайней мере четверть часа, он прожил под несомненным убеждением, что через несколько минут он вдруг умрет. Мне ужасно хотелось слушать, когда он иногда припоминал свои тогдашние впечатления, и я несколько раз начинал его вновь расспрашивать. Он помнил всё с необыкновенною ясностью и говорил, что никогда ничего из этих минут не забудет" (*PSS* 8: 51-52; pt. 1, ch. 5).

What is especially noteworthy about this passage is that it reflects a life-shattering event in Dostoyevsky's own biography: his mock execution on December 22, 1849, in Semenovskii Square in St. Petersburg after his conviction for participation in activities considered a threat to the Russian government.

Another gut-wrenching passage on capital punishment occurs in *Crime and Punishment*. When Raskol'nikov meets the thirty-or-so-year-old pockmarked woman in a tavern--probably a victim of abuse at the hands of a pimp or sexual partner--he begins to muse about how every human being, even the condemned criminal facing death in an hour's time, exhibits the invincible impulse for physical survival, the mad attachment to life. Only with difficulty could one improve on the nightmarish image that Dostoyevsky conjures, clearly drawing from the anguish that engulfed his own psyche as he stood near the firing squad that morning in Semenovskii Square. Reading this passage, a reader familiar with the plays of Aeschylus may think of the doomed rebel Prometheus, whom Zeus punishes by mercilessly issuing this command to Hephaestus: "to clamp this miscreant upon the high-beetling crags in shackles of binding adamant that cannot be broken" (*Prometheus Bound*, lines 4-6).[351] This is the image that may be evoked by the following words of Raskol'nikov:

> 'Where was it,' Raskolnikov thought, as he walked on, 'where was it that I read of how a condemned man, just before he died, said, or thought, that if he had to live on some high crag, on a ledge so small that there was no more than room for his two feet, with all about him the abyss, the ocean,

[351] "τόνδε πρὸσ πέτραισ ὑψηλοκρήμνοισ τὸν λεωργὸν ὀχμάσαι ἀδαμαντίνων δεσμών ἐν ἀρρήκτοισ πέδαισ" (Loeb 1: 214-15).

> eternal night, eternal solitude, eternal storm, and there he must remain, on a hand's-breadth of ground, all his life, a thousand years, through all eternity--it would be better to live so, than die within the hour? Only to live, to live! No matter how--only to live! . . . How true! Lord, how true!' (135)[352]

In *The Idiot*, the second of Dostoyevsky's death penalty passages begins with the words "I have seen an execution" (59),[353] and it goes on immediately to draw a word picture of the terrible final minutes of the man whose death by guillotine Myshkin had witnessed in Lyons. The prince suggests to the Epanchins' daughter Adelaida, an artist, that she paint the face of the criminal as he stands on the scaffold just moments before his decapitation. The climax of this passage (59-62) merits transcription:

> It's strange that people rarely faint at these last moments. On the contrary, the brain is extraordinarily lively and must be working at a tremendous rate--at a tremendous rate, like a machine at full speed. [. . .] it must be like that up to the last quarter of a second, when his head lies on the block and he waits and . . . *knows*, and suddenly hears above him the clang of the iron! He must hear that! If I were lying there, I should listen on purpose and hear. It may last only the tenth part of a second, but one would be sure to hear it. And only fancy, it's still disputed whether, when the head

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[352] "Где это,--подумал Раскольников, идя далее,--где это я читал, как один приговоренный к смерти, за час до смерти, говорит или думает, что если бы пришлось ему жить где-нибудь на высоте, на скале, и на такой узенькой площадке, чтобы только две ноги можно было поставить,--а кругом будут пропасти, океан, вечный мрак, вечное уединение и вечная буря,--и оставаться так, стоя на аршине пространства, всю жизнь, тысячу лет, вечность,--то лучше так жить, чем сейчас умирать! Только бы жить, жить и жить! Как бы ни жить--только жить! . . Экая правда! Господи, какая правда!" (*PSS* 6: 123; pt. 2, ch. 6).

[353] "--Я видел смертную казнь" (*PSS* 8: 54; pt. 1, ch. 5).

> is cut off, it knows for a second after that it has been cut off! What an idea! And what if it knows it for five seconds! (61-62).[354]

The third reference to the death penalty in *The Idiot* is to be found in Lebedev's dramatic narration of the fate of the Countess du Barry, who, just before being guillotined, asks for a respite: "*Encore un moment, monsieur le bourreau, encore un moment!* [One more moment, Mr. Executioner, one more moment!]" (190).[355]

When the American Catholic bishops referred to *The Idiot*, they chose powerful Dostoyevskian texts on capital punishment. These dithyrambic passages reflect the traumatized psyche of the novelist himself, who personally lived through the agony endured by those who await execution. Still, these texts have a rival in an account that Ivan relates in *The Brothers Karamazov* in the chapter entitled "Rebellion." It is significant that this account is narrated by an atheist and nihilist; this may indicate that Dostoyevsky, despite his own mock execution, associates Ivan's position on this issue with unbelief. In any event, Ivan's narrative concerns Richard, the former abused child who had become a murderer. Despite his having repented and been converted to Christ, and despite his being enveloped in the brotherhood and affection of the Christians of Geneva, Richard is not spared execution by a judicial system which, according to Ivan,

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[354] "Странно, что редко в эти самые последние секунды в обморок падают! Напротив, голова ужасно живет и работает, должно быть, сильно, сильно, сильно, как машина в ходу [. . .] это так до самой последней четверти секунды, когда уже голова на плахе лежит, и ждет, и . . . *знает*, и вдруг услышит над собой, как железо склизнуло! Это непременно услышишь! Я бы, если бы лежал, я бы нарочно слушал и услышал! Тут, может быть, только одна десятая доля мгновения, но непременно услышишь! И представьте же, до сих пор еще спорят, что, может быть, голова когда и отлетит, то еще с секунду, может быть, знает, что она отлетела,--каково понятие! А что если пять секунд! . ." (*PSS* 8: 56; pt. 1, ch. 5).

[355] *PSS* 8: 164; pt. 2, ch. 2.

conflicts with the love and compassion of Richard's new friends, to say nothing of the love and compassion of the founder of their religion:

> At the scaffold they call to Richard: 'Die, brother, die in the Lord, for even thou hast found grace!' And so, covered with his brothers' kisses, Richard is dragged on to the scaffold, and led to the guillotine. And they chopped off his head in brotherly fashion, because he had found grace. (221)[356]

The apparent contradiction involved in Richard's beheading is all the more unsettling inasmuch as the religious devotion of the condemned man's new family--the family that he never had previously--is depicted by Dostoyevsky as utterly sincere and touching.

It is clear that Dostoyevsky wishes in the Richard passage to underscore the problematic nature of the death penalty. But is it more than merely problematic for Dostoyevsky? Is it, as it is for Camus, an evil *per se*? The issues are whether Dostoyevsky is opposed on principle to the death penalty and whether he considers it to be murder. Certainly, we cannot say that the Russian Orthodox novelist views the state's power to inflict death as a very emblem of evil. As a believer, the Russian novelist affirms the immortality of the soul and the existence of another world--elements that do not, and cannot, figure in Camus's philosophy of absurdism. This is the major point dividing Dostoyevsky's approach to the death penalty from that of Camus. Because of this divergence, and because (unless I am mistaken), Dostoyevsky, unlike Camus, never actually calls on governments to abolish the death penalty, it can be said that capital

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[356] "Вот достигли эшафота: «Умри, брат наш,--кричат Ришару,--умри во господе [sic], ибо и на тебя сошла благодать!» И вот покрытого поцелуями братьев брата Ришара втащили на эшафот, положили на гильотину и оттяпали-таки ему по-братски голову за то, что и на него сошла благодать" (*PSS* 14: 219; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4).

punishment does not play the same rôle in the Russian novelist's approach to the scandal of evil as it does in the approach taken by the French novelist.

**Meursault's Supposed Culpability**

In the final sentences of Camus's novel *L'Étranger*, Meursault, as he anticipates the guillotine, says that he wants the crowd witnessing his execution to greet him with hostility:

> For everything to be consummated, for me to feel less alone, I had only to wish that there be a large crowd of spectators the day of my execution and that they greet me with cries of hate. (*Stranger* 123)[357]

Presumably, most of the people in that shouting crowd will consider capital punishment justified--for the right, or for the wrong, reasons. Most of them will also believe that Meursault deserves to have his head cut off because he is, in their eyes, guilty of murder. But is he guilty? In my view, the wording of the paragraph in which his shooting of the Arab on the beach is narrated (*Stranger* 58-59)[358] leaves the answer up in the air. In her indispensable study entitled *Camus*, Germaine Brée merely transcribes the pivotal paragraph without any comment beyond saying: "Then the revolver he had taken from Raymond goes off" (96). In Brée's description, it is as if the revolver, and not its possessor, were the agent responsible for the killing. Anne Hudson Jones, author of the University of North Carolina dissertation entitled *The Plight of the Modern Outsider: A Comparative Study of Dostoevsky's* Crime and Punishment*, Camus's* L'Etranger*, and*

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[357] "*Pour que tout soit consommé, pour que je me sente moins seul, il me restait à souhaiter qu'il y ait beaucoup de spectateurs le jour de mon exécution et qu'ils m'accueillent avec des cris de haine*" (*Théâtre* 1211-12).

[358] *Théâtre* 1167-68.

*Wright's* The Outsider, believes that the fist clenching that causes Meursault's gun to fire the first time is merely "reflexive" and the firing is "accidental" (66). In his study entitled *Camus*, Conor Cruise O'Brien says: "In practice, French justice in Algeria would almost certainly not have condemned a European to death for shooting an Arab who had drawn a knife on him and who had shortly before stabbed another European" (22).

I believe that there might have been no conviction either if Meursault and Raymond (the knifing victim) had also been Arabs. Let me apply O'Brien's words to my hypothetical situation: in such a case, too, the "[. . .] defence counsel would have made his central plea that of self-defence, turning on the frightening picture of the Arab with a knife" (Conor Cruise O'Brien 22). To appreciate this point, it is unnecessary to have faced a knife-wielding assailant or potential assailant; merely imagining such a lethal threat is enough. Perhaps Camus intends ambiguity in the scene of the shooting of the Arab in keeping with his views on the equivocal nature of individual, in contrast with social, responsibility for crime as those views are set forth in *Réflexions sur la guillotine*. The conclusion that Camus may have deliberately phrased the shooting scene in *L'Étranger* to hint that Meursault, having acted in self-defense, is not guilty of murder either morally or legally may be reinforced by the fact that Camus fails to raise the issue of homicide in the preface that he wrote for the American university edition of *L'Étranger*. In this preface, instead of discussing Meursault's putative culpability, Camus says that his protagonist is a hero who refuses to lie, and that he is convicted because he will not comply with society's charades, especially as existing in the criminal justice system: "I merely wanted to say that the hero of the book is condemned because

he does not play the game" (*Théâtre* 1928).[359] Indeed, Camus, in the same preface, goes so far as to write:

> It happened that I also said, and yet paradoxically, that I had tried to represent in my character [Meursault] the only Christ whom we may deserve. (*Théâtre* 1928-29)[360]

Camus underscores Meursault's status as a Christ figure by having Meursault end *L'Étranger* with the words "consummated" and "cries of hate," for Christ says that "[i]t is consummated!" (*Jn* 19:30)[361] during his execution at Golgotha, and he undergoes his Passion amid jeers of hatred from hostile onlookers:

> Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, [and] come down from the cross!" (*Mt* 27:39-40)[362]

Thus, we can say that both Jesus and Meursault are "greeted with cries of hate."

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[359] "*Je voulais dire seulement que le héros du livre est condamné parce qu'il ne joue pas le jeu*" (my translation).

Beránková is convinced that Meursault is guilty of murder (327). Note the difference between the analysis of Beránková (a woman) and Conor Cruise O'Brien (a man). If instructors teaching *L'Étranger* were to poll their students to discern a possible gender differential in their reaction to the shooting of the Arab, I suspect that a higher percentage of the male students might exonerate Meursault from murder, both legally and morally.

[360] "*Il m'est arrivé de dire aussi, et toujours paradoxalement, que j'avais essayé de figurer dans mon personnage le seul christ [sic] que nous méritions*" (my translation).

The present subjunctive clause in this sentence (*que nous méritions* or "whom we *may* deserve") may signal that Camus is not even totally certain that we deserve Meursault as our savior. Discussing the subjunctive in *French Reference Grammar for Schools and Colleges*, J. E. Mansion writes: "A shade of doubt, or 'softened affirmation,' is thus introduced into adjective clauses when the antecedent is restricted by an adjective in the superlative or by its equivalent (**le premier, le dernier, le seul, ne . . . que** [. . .]" (206).

[361] "Τετέλεσται" (Confraternity translation).

[362] "Οἱ δὲ παραπορευόμενοι ἐβλασφήμουν αὐτὸν κινοῦντες τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν καὶ λέγοντες, Ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις οἰκοδομῶν, σῶσον σεαυτόν, εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, [καὶ] κατάβηθι ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ."

The word within brackets appears within brackets in both the Greek and English texts.

In this connection, it is interesting that Hélène Carquain, in her University of Oklahoma master's degree thesis entitled "Parallel Between *Crime and Punishment* and *L'Etranger*," links Meursault with Raskol'nikov (without mentioning Meursault in this context) by contending that Raskol'nikov is also a Christ figure. Referring to what she believes is the motive for Raskol'nikov's murder of the pawnbroker--to obtain funds to launch himself on a career that will benefit society--Carquain says: "[. . .] he assumes the role of one who sacrifices himself and takes the sin upon himself in order to releave [sic] the rest of humanity and bring it the possibility of happiness" (67). [363]

Since condemnation of the penalty imposed on Meursault is so crucial to Camus's outlook both substantively and symbolically, and since he acknowledges in Catholicism a

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[363] Carquain is correct in calling Raskol'nikov a Christ figure, but I cannot accept her reason for making this statement. Raskol'nikov is *not* a Christ in his putative plan to benefit humanity by murdering and robbing the pawnbroker. In committing those crimes, Raskol'nikov is an Antichrist: that is one of the major points of the text, which is a polemic *against* nihilism. Besides, Raskol'nikov admits to Sonia that he did *not* commit his crimes to benefit even his mother, let alone mankind: "I did not commit murder to help my mother--that's rubbish! I did not commit murder in order to use the profit and power I gained to make myself a benefactor to humanity. Rubbish! [Не для того, чтобы матери помочь, я убил--вздор! Не для того я убил, чтобы, получив средства и власть, сделаться благодетелем человечества. Вздор!]" (354; *PSS* 6: 322; pt. 5, ch. 4). Raskol'nikov then goes on to explain that he committed murder merely to act out his nihilism.

Despite his nihilism and his crimes, and in keeping with the axiom that people are sometimes better than their principles, Raskol'nikov does appear as an authentic savior in six situations that foreshadow his eventual repentance and conversion from nihilism under Sonia's influence. He saves his sister, Dunia, from a marriage that he considers tantamount to prostitution (129-30; *PSS* 6: 118-19; pt. 2, ch. 5). He saves Katerina Ivanovna and her children from a worse immediate plight by giving her twenty rubles that he himself needs (159; *PSS* 6: 145; pt. 2, ch. 7). He saves the impoverished tubercular student and the latter's elderly father from additional suffering (453; *PSS* 6: 412; epilogue, ch. 1). Risking his own life, he saves the lives of the two little children from death in a fire (453; *PSS* 6: 412; epilogue, ch. 1). Above all, he saves the adolescent girl on the street from further molestation by alerting the cop to the stalker (39-43; *PSS* 6: 39-43*;* pt. 1, ch. 4). As a savior and, thereby, a Christ figure, Raskol'nikov contradicts in heroic *action* the false philosophy of the nihilism that has corrupted his *thinking*.

On the last occasion mentioned above, Raskolnikov engages in a joint mission with a co-savior: the dutiful police officer who has "a manly, soldier's face, with grey moustache and whiskers and a sensible expression [бравое солдатское лицо с седыми усами и бакенами и с толковым взглядом]" (40; *PSS* 6: 41; pt. 1, ch. 4). (Notice how deftly Dostoyevsky limns this character by merely describing his face.) Consciously or subconsciously, Dostoyevsky here links the concepts of savior, hero, soldier, and real man, while pejoratively associating the lecherous, foppish stalker with effeminacy. In the military outlook so congenial to Christianity, Christ the Savior is the paradigmatic soldier and hero, the one who conquers all the forces of evil by sacrificing his life. In this outlook, virtue, which, etymologically, is manliness, is the imitation of Christ the Savior and Hero. Note, too, that Christ, according to the dogma of the Incarnation, is "true man [*vrai homme*]" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 464).

major adversary of this outlook, it is logical to end this chapter with a comment on the American Catholic bishops' paradoxical commendation of Camus's *Réflexions sur la guillotine* in their 1980 statement opposing the use of capital punishment. The bishops' statement is paradoxical inasmuch as the doctrinal coherence and continuity of Catholicism make it impossible for the Church ever to teach that capital punishment is *per se* a moral evil, and a very symbol of the scandal of evil, as it is for Camusian absurdism. Contrary to a widespread misunderstanding, the Church's remarks on capital punishment in the 1992 and (revised) 1997 editions of her universal catechism--remarks based on earlier comments in section 56 of Pope John Paul II's 1995 encyclical *Evangelium vitae* [*The Gospel of Life*]--do *not* mean that the Church has ceased to teach officially that a legitimate state *has the right* to inflict the penalty of death in appropriate circumstances, i.e., when the person to be executed is actually guilty of a horrendous crime that threatens the social order. It is imperative to maintain the critical ethical distinction between the innocent and the guilty--just as it is imperative, above all in the era of modern scientific means of warfare, to maintain the critical ethical distinction between combatants and noncombatants. In response to Camus's utterly justified concern about state-sponsored killing in both executions and warfare, there can be no question of condoning purely political executions or morally unjustified wars; these, too, are crimes: crimes of state terrorism, to use Camus's phrase (*Rebel* 177).[364] Moreover, from the Catholic perspective, the concept of the amoral, atheistic state must be combatted as being in conflict with reason**.** Nonetheless, a morally justified execution is *not* a moral evil and is *not* murder as far as the Catholic Church is concerned.

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[364] *Essais* 583.

To mention a scenario that is by no means unthinkable, what if the infernal chaos ensuing after a nuclear war were to include massive bands of brutal, conscienceless marauders committing murder, robbery, rape, and looting? I am picturing a realization of the post-"Fire Deluge" catastrophe that Walter D. Miller presents in his frightening 1959 science fiction novel entitled *A Canticle for Leibowitz*. In such an emergency, would it not be necessary for those governments still existent to execute the marauders in order to ensure, through the deterrent effect of the fear of death, the very survival of the human race in a civilized condition?

Perhaps even Camus would concur with that conclusion. After all, in *Réflexions sur la guillotine*, he appears to admit that the death penalty is defensible in principle on the ground of deterrence. Moreover, he is acutely conscious of the unspeakable suicidal catastrophe toward which a nuclear-armed world may be hurtling.[365] In any event, Catholic teaching on capital punishment, all by itself, could be the topic of another entire dissertation, but it can be stated here that the conclusions that I have just expressed are buttressed by many considerations, not the least of them being the fact that the new catechism itself, while reflecting John Paul II's personal aversion to the death penalty and his commendation of clemency, also makes clear that "[. . .] the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way

[365] The threat, of course, has worsened since Camus's death in 1960. On January 17, 2007, the board of *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* issued a statement in which it said the following: "The five NPT-recognized [NPT is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] nuclear weapon states have failed in their obligation to make serious strides toward disarmament--most notably, the United States and Russia, which still possess 26,000 of the 27,000 nuclear warheads in the world. By far the greatest potential for calamity lies in the readiness of forces in the United States and Russia to fight an all-out nuclear war. Whether by accident or by unauthorized launch, these two countries are able to initiate major strikes in a matter of minutes. Each warhead has the potential destructive force of 8 to 40 times that of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945. In that relatively small nuclear explosion, 100,000 people were killed and a city destroyed; 50 of today's nuclear weapons could kill 200 million people."

of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor" (section 2267).[366] Clearly, then, for Catholicism, as well as for Dostoyevsky, the death penalty is *not* the paradigmatic moral evil that it is for Camus.

[366] "*L'enseignement traditionnel de l'Eglise n'exclut pas [. . .] le recours à la peine de mort, si celle-ci est l'unique moyen praticable pour protéger efficacement de l'injuste agresseur la vie d'êtres humains.*"

This teaching of the new catechism is one of the bases for a statement made in a letter that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) sent to Cardinal Theodore McCarrick and Bishop Wilton Gregory of the American hierarchy in or around June 2004. In this letter, which confirms the conclusions which I state above regarding Catholicism's reaction to the views of Camus and Dostoyevsky on the death penalty, Cardinal Ratzinger states: "While the Church exhorts civil authorities to seek peace, not war, and to exercise discretion and mercy in imposing punishment on criminals, it may still be permissible to take up arms to repel an aggressor or to have recourse to capital punishment."

Even though this document was intended as a confidential letter and was never officially published by the Vatican, it was published by the Italian weekly *L'espresso* (*Express*) in June 2004. The scholarly justification for quoting from this private letter here is that it has been posted on a number of responsible Internet sites without its authenticity ever having been denied by Cardinal Ratzinger or the Vatican.

# CHAPTER 4

## THERE IS BUT ONE TRULY SERIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM, AND THAT IS SUICIDE: DEATH IS A MONUMENTAL EVIL FOR BOTH NOVELISTS, BUT FOR CONTRASTING REASONS

The first sentence of Camus's *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*--"There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide" (*Myth* 3)[367]--is one of the most memorable sentences in his entire *oeuvre*, and in the whole corpus of French literature. Nonetheless, while immensely important for Camus's worldview, this sentence is a bit misleading, since the truly monumental evil for the French novelist--the one that towers over all other evils like the Eiffel Tower looming over Paris--is death itself, death in any form, whether by illness, accident, murder, war, execution, or suicide. It is the sheer fact of mortality that rivets the attention of Camus.

In his neglected 1936 academic thesis (*diplôme d'études supérieures*), entitled *Métaphysique chrétienne et néoplatonisme* [*Christian Metaphysics and Neo-Platonism*], on which he worked during his third year at the University of Algiers (Lottman 91),[368] Camus says of St. Augustine: "And he is haunted by the idea of death [. . .]" (*Essais* 1295).[369] This is the epitome of irony: it is rather Camus who is almost obsessed with death, making it the very linchpin of the entire philosophy of absurdism. In his eyes, the ultimate reason why the universe and life are absurd is that man cannot escape the finality of death, which Camus views as a kind of mass murder or mass execution carried out by

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[367] "*Il n'y a qu'un problème philosophique vraiment sérieux: c'est le suicide*" (*Essais* 99).

[368] The world of scholarship should sing a paean of gratitude to the editors of the Pléiade edition of Camus, for those editors conquered their doubts about making this crucial text available to the public, as Roger Quilliot informs us in the introduction (*Essais* 1220). The text's subtitle is *Entre Plotin et saint Augustin* [*Between Plotinus and St. Augustine*].

[369] "*Et il est poursuivi par l'idée de la mort [. . .]*" (my translation).

a nonexistent God who thus becomes the most evil criminal in the cosmos, the most hideous executioner imaginable, since all his victims are both innocent and utterly defenseless. In an article entitled "Albert Camus and the Christian Faith," Thomas L. Hanna puts this point neatly when he describes the Camusian perspective: "Given human evil and death, either God is innocent and men are guilty or else God is guilty and men are innocent" (53). It is impossible to overstate the significance of the motif of God as murderer, as supreme evildoer, in Camus's philosophy of the absurd.

Moreover, to draw the logical conclusions from Camus's premises, since we all perish in the end owing to the inescapable horror of mortality that hangs over our heads every second of our existence--this being the real sword of Damocles--life is meaningless. Because life is meaningless, freedom, ultimately, is useless. Camus asks: "What freedom can exist in the fullest sense without assurance of eternity?" (*Myth* 57).[370] This is why death is the only true existent, the alpha and the omega, the substitute for God, the ultimate good having been displaced by the ultimate evil: "Death is there as the only reality" (*Myth* 57).[371]

For Dostoyevsky the Russian Orthodox believer, however, the situation is dramatically different, for death cannot be the supreme evil for any Christian. Admittedly, it is a monumental evil, but not in an ultimate or utterly overwhelming sense. For Dostoyevsky, death is a monumental evil only when it is linked to the moral evils--to the sins--of murder and suicide. This emerges clearly from the plots of his major novels: *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Devils*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*. For

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[370] "*Quelle liberté peut exister au sens plein, sans assurance d'éternité?*" (*Essais* 141).

[371] "*La mort est là comme seule réalité*" (*Essais* 140).

example, the *physical* evil of the deaths of the pawnbroker Alena Ivanovna and her younger half-sister, Lizaveta, in *Crime and Punishment* are crucial plot elements only because they result from the *moral* evil of the murders that the nihilist Raskol'nikov perpetrates in accordance with his theory of his putative right to break the moral law. As for suicide, it is an extremely frequent element in Dostoyevsky's fiction and non-fiction: according to N. N. Shneidman, Dostoyevsky's texts contain 22 actual suicides, 6 attempted suicides, and 3 contemplated suicides. (These figures are taken from the helpful table constructed by Shneidman on page 103 of his *Dostoevsky and Suicide*.) As he stands on the Voznesenskii Bridge, Raskol'nikov himself is one of the Dostoyevskian characters who contemplate suicide: "Now he felt repelled . . .--'No, it's disgusting . . . water . . . no good,' he muttered to himself" (145).[372]

Among Dostoyevsky's suicides, especially remarkable, and all the more so within the context of this dissertation's discussion of the scandal of evil, is the bizarre suicide of Kirillov in *The Devils* (*The Possessed*). Kirillov's death is tied, not only to the moral evil of suicide itself, but also to the moral evil of atheism, which Dostoyevsky posits as one of the foundations of the Russian revolutionary movement, a movement saturated--in his understanding--with nihilism. In contrast, natural or accidental death--for example, the deaths of Marmeladov and Katerina Ivanovna in *Crime and Punishment* and that of Iliusha Snegirev in *The Brothers Karamazov*--are not as pivotal as plot elements, or even as philosophical statements--for they primarily illustrate the fact of mortality. It is true, however, that the death of Iliusha offers Dostoyevsky an outstanding occasion for professing his belief in the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church on the immortality

[372] "Ему стало противно. «Нет, гадко . . . вода . . . не стоит,--бормотал он про себя»" (*PSS* 6: 132; pt. 2, ch. 6).

of the soul and the resurrection of the body. These doctrines show that, for Dostoyevsky, death cannot be the greatest evil. For the Russian novelist, the physical evil of death has been conquered by the Redemption of the human race and by the resurrection of Jesus, both of which assure for every human being the possibility of unending beatitude beyond this world. This view of death is encapsulated in the words of the Apostle Paul: "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (*1 Cor* 15:55).[373] Nevertheless, Dostoyevsky impairs his presentation of the Christian perspective on death and resurrection by neglecting the dogma of original sin, according to which the universal physical evil of death is a punishment for the universal moral evil of sin. Dostoyevsky's belief in the resurrection of the body and his neglect of original sin will be discussed at length in chapter 6.

**Kirillov: Suicide as a Remedy for Death**

Concerning Kirillov's grotesque suicide, the first thing that must be remarked is that Camus is wrong when he says of Kirillov: "He is not mad, or else Dostoevsky is" (*Myth* 107).[374] *Au contraire*, Monsieur Camus! Kirillov is mad--at least philosophically mad, and probably in a clinical sense as well. Ask the average person outside the academic world--the average person walking along the street, or the typical commuter riding, say, the New York City subway system--whether someone is all there if he plans to commit suicide to prove (1) that death is not to be feared, (2) that life is meaningless, (3) that there is no God, and (4) that he himself is God. Tell the average woman or man

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[373] "**ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ νῖκος;**
**ποῦ σου, θάνατε, τὸ κέντρον;**"

[374] "*Il n'est pas fou ou alors Dostoïevski l'est*" (*Essais* 184).

in the street or the subway system that the intended suicide contends that he is doing all these things to teach the human race a lesson, and even to become its savior. These ideological elements all emerge from Kirillov's weird discourse with Petr Verkhovenskii on the night when Kirillov, at Petr's urging, finally fulfills his long-standing suicidal impulse by taking a pistol and blowing his brains out, after having signed a suicide note written to shift blame for Shatov's murder from Petr and his revolutionary comrades to Kirillov (*Possessed* 625-41).[375]

The passerby or subway rider might well tell you that anyone who would merely say the things that Kirillov says should seek counseling, or be sent to a psychiatric ward for observation, for he may well be a danger to himself and others. But before recommending this course of action, and without in any way minimizing the horror and tragedy of suicide, the interlocutor on the street or in the transit system might have laughed, or at least smiled, at the absurdity of Kirillov's thoughts. Even the serious Camus concedes this: "There remains a little humor in that position" (*Myth* 105).[376] Dostoyevsky, though as serious as Camus (but with a more developed sense of humor), might agree with his French successor on the comical features of Kirillov's exposition, and yet Dostoyevsky would also agree with the average person's evaluation of Kirillov's thinking as indicative of emotional disturbance. Indeed, what follows after Petr Verkhovenskii has pressured Kirillov into signing the self-incriminating suicide note clearly points in the direction of the latter's derangement. The would-be substitute redeemer of humanity, who has been consistently placid throughout *The Devils* till now,

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[375] *PSS* 10: 464-76; pt. 3, ch. 6, sect. 2.

[376] "*Il y a encore un peu d'humour dans cette position*" (*Essais* 183).

suddenly jumps up, rushes through an adjacent room to a third room, hides in the pitch-black darkness, and then lunges like a panther at the anxiously pursuing Petr, mercilessly biting Petr's little finger. The physical signs that Kirillov displays right before his assault and suicide suggest psychosis or a state approaching it: frozen limbs, eerie pallor, eyes gazing into infinite space, convulsive chin, and sick smile (640).[377] At this point, he seems ready for sedation, but this soon proves unnecessary, because, as Camus says, "[. . .] Kirilov's pistol rang out somewhere in Russia, but the world continued to cherish its blind hopes" (*Myth* 111).[378] The chief of these blind hopes is that life is worth living.

But Kirillov's philosophical state is more significant in Dostoyevsky's eyes than is his physical or psychological condition, for Kirillov plays the following rôle in Dostoyevsky's fierce polemic against nihilism: he is the personification of the principle that atheism itself, in addition to being evil, is madness. For the Russian novelist, if there were no God, then life would indeed be meaningless and pointless, and suicide would then be a logical course of action. Suicide would thus be absolved of moral evil, because it would then be a coherent response to the massive physical evils of mortality and futility. Lorenzo Pestelli, author of the Université de Montréal master's degree thesis entitled "De l'absurde à l'espérance: Camus et Dostoïevski" ["From the Absurd to Hope: Camus and Dostoyevsky"], is correct: "Undeniably, if one must consider Kirillov's lucubrations as aberrations, they are nonetheless at the origin of the philosophy of the absurd that reigns in our epoch" (69).[379] Or, as Kirillov himself puts it:

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[377] *PSS* 10: 475; pt. 3, ch. 6, sect. 2.

[378] "*[. . .] le pistolet de Kirilov a claqué quelque part en Russie, mais le monde a continué de rouler ses aveugles espoirs*" (*Essais* 187).

[379] "*Il est indéniable que s'il faut considérer les élucubrations de Kirillov comme des égarements, toutefois elles sont à l'origine de la philosophie de l'absurde qui règne à notre époque*" (my translation).

> To recognize that there's no God without recognizing at the same time that you yourself have become God makes no sense [. . .]. (635)[380]

This declaration of unbelief--we may call it an anti-Creed--reflects a major principle of Dostoyevsky's response to the scandal of evil: belief in God is the only answer to evil, for if God did not exist, then every mad Kirillov would be his own God, and that would be total insanity. And that, in fact, is the whole point of Kirillov's unforgettable characterization, as well as the point of his spectacular suicide.

Of the twenty-two actual suicides in Dostoyevsky's writing, there is an additional one that cries out for comment, and that is Stavrogin's suicide at the end of *The Devils*. I respectfully disagree with Lutz's contention that "Stavrogin's precise motivation for committing suicide is left unanswered at the close of the novel just as, in a concrete historical sense, there was no simple answer to the problem of Russia's future" (165). On the contrary, even though it may not always be possible to know in full and with certitude why an actual human being takes his or her own life, we *are* able to attain this certitude in the case of a fictional character whose creator discloses the motivation for the suicide.

By making clear in his correspondence that he intends *The Devils* as an attack on the Russian revolutionary movement and on what he regards as its demonically evil nihilism, Dostoyevsky is telling us that Stavrogin's suicide is the result of his lack of faith in God, in Christ, and in Russian Orthodoxy, and that it is also the outcome of his alienation from his native land, Russia, which is the "only God-bearing nation," to use the phrase of the perfervid Russian nationalist Shatov in *The Devils* (239).[381] Intensifying

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[380] "Сознать, что нет бога [sic], и не сознать в тот же раз, что сам богом [sic] стал, есть нелепость [. . .]" (*PSS* 10: 471; pt. 3, ch. 6, sect. 2).

[381] "Единый народ-«богоносец» [sic]" (*PSS* 10: 200; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 7).

Stavrogin's plight is the depraved aristocrat's tremendous burden of guilt, a burden that largely reflects his having sinned against the innocence of eleven-year-old Matresha and other, unnamed, children in St. Petersburg. By the same token, and again contrary to Lutz's view, there *is*--so Dostoyevsky contends--a concrete solution for Russia, and that is to adhere to Russian Orthodoxy and to fulfill her historical mission of spreading this religion throughout the world. This is why the nearly ecstatic Shatov, as we have previously noted, proclaims the following to Stavrogin during the latter's nocturnal visit:

> I believe in Russia, I believe in her Orthodoxy . . . I believe in the body of Christ . . . I believe that his new advent will happen in Russia . . . I believe . . . . (*PSS* 10: 200)[382]

Although the unusual circumstances surrounding the murder of Zagreus by Mersault in Camus's *La Mort heureuse* [*A Happy Death*] may make that murder also a suicide, it is not the most significant suicide in the works of Camus. (Note that *Mersault* is not the same character as *Meursault* in *L'Étranger*, and that their names are spelled differently.) Zagreus's death is not, in any case, a well-known Camusian suicide scene, since *La Mort heureuse*, regrettably, is not widely read. The most significant reference to suicide in the works of the French novelist is the episode in which a young woman, within earshot of the voluble narrator of *La Chute*, throws herself into the Seine from the Pont Royal in the small hours of a November night (*Fall* 69-71).[383] This suicide or suicide attempt[384] calls to mind Raskol'nikov's passively witnessing the attempted

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[382] "--Я верую в Россию, я верую в ее православие . . . Я верую в тело Христово . . . Я верую, что новое пришествие совершится в России . . . Я верую . . ." (240; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 7; my translation).

[383] *Théâtre* 1511.

[384] It is more accurate to call this a suicide attempt since Clamence informs us that he neglects to check the newspapers to learn whether the woman actually perished in the Seine (*Fall* 71; *Théâtre* 1511). Let us

suicide of Afrosiniushka in *Crime and Punishment*. The distraught woman in Dostoyevsky's scene jumps from the Voznesenskii Bridge in St. Petersburg but is rescued by a policeman who dives into the canal (144-46).[385] Like Raskol'nikov, Clamence does nothing to try to save the woman who jumps from the bridge, although Clamence is under an even greater obligation to do something, since he may be the only witness to her act, whereas there are so many witnesses to Afrosiniushka's unsuccessful suicide that Raskol'nikov is hemmed in by the crowd on the bridge. Should we say that Raskol'nikov displays his nihilism--or cowardice--by failing to jump into the canal ahead of the police officer to save Afrosiniushka? I doubt that we can say this--at least with assurance--since his brief contemplation of suicide by drowning may indicate that he could not swim. He could at least, however, have cried out for a good swimmer.

There is another possible Dostoyevskian intertext underlying Clamence's failure near the Pont Royal: in his University of Washington doctoral dissertation entitled *Camus the Adapter: An Analysis of Camus' Dramatization of Dostoevsky's Novel* The Possessed (180-86), Joachim Schutmann Ries draws a parallel between Clamence near the bridge and the scene in "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man: A Fantastic Story" (April 1877 issue of *A Writer's Diary*; 2: 944-45),[386] in which the narrator refuses to help the dying, or otherwise endangered, mother of a girl, about eight years old, who frantically approaches

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hope that a Marcel Cerdan stand-in happening on the scene in the nick of time unbeknownst to our anti-hero manages to save the poor woman. Moreover, she herself may have mercifully reversed her suicidal intention at the last minute: she shouts out after having jumped from the bridge (*Fall* 70; *Théâtre* 1511).

[385] *PSS* 6: 131-32; pt. 2, ch. 6. In an article entitled "The Bridges of St. Petersburg: A Motif in 'Crime and Punishment,'" Richard Gill identifies this bridge as the Voznesenskii Bridge (149), as does translator Jessie Coulson in the Norton Critical Edition (144), even though Dostoyevsky leaves it unidentified (*PSS* 6: 131).

[386] *PSS* 25: 104-19

him in the street. Note that both incidents--Clamence's bridge jumper and the Ridiculous Man's little girl in the street--both occur on a rainy or damp day in November.

What readers of *La Chute* will fail to know unless they read Lottman's biography of Camus is that Suzanne Agnely, Camus's secretary at Gallimard, told Lottman something highly relevant to the pivotal suicide scene:

> As for personal experience, she thought that she remembered that Camus told her, one night when he was quite drunk, that he had seen a suicide on the Pont des Arts and had felt remorse about not having saved the victim. But she also observed that the changes he was giving her regularly went in the direction of making *La Chute* less personal and more universal. (564)

If the adage *In vino veritas* applies in this instance, then Camus, by making the suicide scene the decisive event in Clamence's monologue, is not merely echoing passages in *Crime and Punishment* and "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man." Hence, the issue of culpability in *La Chute* becomes all the more prominent and all the more reflective of the author's own life.

There is a second reason for believing that *La Chute* is heavily tinged with Camus's own emotions toward the end of his life. The reader should know that Camus's second wife may have attempted suicide on two occasions by jumping, in one case from a balcony in Oran, in another instance from the second floor of the Saint-Mandé psychiatric hospital in which she was being treated for depression (Todd 586-88). It is reasonable to think that these suicide attempts were related, at least partially, to the humiliation and disorientation that Francine may have felt because of Camus's open marital infidelity. Given Francine's possible suicide attempts, Camus may have been overwhelmed by

feelings of guilt when he wrote the confessional narrative of Clamence, the "judge-penitent" (*Fall* 8)[387] who callously refuses even to try to save the life of the woman who jumps from the Pont Royal. Despite all critical theories that attempt in various ways to disconnect texts from their authors, one must wonder to what extent Clamence is Camus. The extent of this merging may be considerable.

**The Plague Is Death**

Let us turn now to another text reflecting Camus's obsession with the evil of death--which, for him, as has already been stressed, is the worst evil. That text is *La Peste*. Given Camus's metaphysical concerns, it seems that the interpretation that would unduly emphasize or even prioritize a parallel between Oran (occupied by the plague) and World War II France (occupied by the Germans) is too superficial and particularistic. That the plague is death should not be denied. What could be more illustrative of mortality than being imprisoned in a stringently quarantined city besieged by a lethal plague? Conor Cruise O'Brien, who gives priority to the analogy between the plague and the German occupation, still declines to exclude the broader interpretation: "The city of Oran in *La Peste* is of course a symbol for France under the occupation (as well as, more diffusely, for man's condition)" (45).

In Camus's novel, at the height of the devastating pandemic, the only way to leave Oran is to die, just as the only way to leave this world is to die. Hence arises the symbolic significance of Dr. Rieux's inability to join his wife. She had escaped from the city before the plague had manifested itself, but she eventually dies in a tuberculosis sanatorium--a clear allusion to an aspect of Camus's personal confrontation with physical

[387] "*juge-pénitent*" (*Théâtre* 1479).

evil in the form of that disease. Dr. Rieux's plight *vis-à-vis* his wife is paralleled by the journalist Rambert's attempt to flee from the pestilence-ridden port city. Like the terrified inhabitants of Oran, every human being is threatened at every moment of the day and night by the specter of mortality. And there is absolutely no escape from this menace: we are all trapped. Oran is the scene of an allegory--almost medieval, even biblical, in its resonances--designed to evoke the inevitability, the universality, and the horror of death. The suffering Algerian city operates as a microcosmic emblem of a macrocosm in which every human existence is ultimately destroyed. Jesus, explicating the parable of the diabolical enemy who sows weeds in the wheat field, tells his followers that "[. . .] the field is the world [. . .]" (*Mt* 13:38).[388] Camus could have said: "Oran is the world."

The analysis which, without denying echoes of the German occupation of France, also regards Camus's plague as an allegory for the inescapable reality of death is supported by no less an authority than Camus himself. Brée quotes this decisive passage from the novelist's notebooks:

> I wish to express, by means of the plague, the feeling of suffocation from which we all suffered and the atmosphere of threat and exile in which we lived. *At the same time I want to extend my interpretation to the notion of existence in general*. . . . The plague will give an image of those whose share during the war was meditation, silence, and moral suffering. (qtd. in *Camus* 128; my italics)[389]

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[388] "[. . .] ὁ δὲ ἀγρός ἐστιν ὁ κόσμος [. . .]."

[389] "*Je veux exprimer au moyen de la peste l'étouffement dont nous avons tous souffert et l'atmosphère de menace et d'exil dans laquelle nous avons vécu. Je veux du même coup étendre cette interprétation à la*

Moreover, in a *L'Homme révolté* passage in which he is discussing the entire human race and its experience of absurdity, Camus says: "The sickness that tested a single man becomes a collective plague" (*Essais* 432).[390] In view of Camus's own words, Brée seems justified in concluding as follows:

> The plague, therefore, in whatever context we consider it, symbolizes any force which systematically cuts human beings off from the living breath of life [. . .]. *In a very general way it is death* and, in human terms, all that enters into complicity with death: metaphysical or political systems, bureaucratic abstractions, and even Tarrou's and Paneloux's efforts to transcend their humanity. (*Camus* 128; my italics)

In this observation, Brée is surely agreeing that, on at least some level, the plague in Camus's novel is death itself.[391] *Of course* the plague in *La Peste* is death itself: the plot of the novel demands this conclusion. Dr. Rieux and Tarrou are portrayed as noble secular humanitarians battling courageously, without the consolation of faith in God or the hope of eternal life in the next world, to save human lives in this world from a terrifying physical evil. This evil is the plague that afflicts Oran. But what is the plague? The plague is a form of death. In view of this logic, Brée's original conclusion appears irrefutable.

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*notion d'existence en général. La peste donnera l'image de ceux qui dans cette guerre ont eu la part de la réflexion, du silence--et celle de la souffrance morale*" (*Carnets II* 72).
Contrary to Brée's English translation, there is no ellipsis in the French text.

[390] "*Le mal qui éprouvait un seul homme devient peste collective*" (*Rebel* 22; my translation).

[391] Brée published this comment in 1961. In 1985, she offered this somewhat contradictory view in her prologue to *Approaches to Teaching Camus's* The Plague, edited by Steven G. Kellman : "One cannot reduce *The Plague* to an abstract model, nor can one build an interpretation on the assumption that the plague itself 'stands for' some specific evil, though evil in human terms it certainly is" (16). I disagree with this later interpretation; I believe that Brée was right the first time.

Not only is Camus haunted by death in general, but he also gives exceptional prominence to murder--but not to the extent of Dostoyevsky's interest in murder. Whether Camus developed this interest on his own or on the basis of his saturation in the works of Dostoyevsky, it is a fact, as his former teacher Jean Grenier maintains, that Camus exhibits a "fixation on murder" (qtd. in Beránková 100 [footnote 258]).[392] Murder is a major plot element, not only in Camus's plays *Caligula* and *Le Malentendu* [*The Misunderstanding*], but also in his early novel *La Mort heureuse* and his stage adaptation, published late in his career, of William Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun* (in French, *Requiem pour une nonne*). Mersault, the protagonist of *La Mort heureuse*, replicates one of the ostensible plot elements of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* by murdering the wealthy Zagreus for his money. Imitating what originally appears to be Raskol'nikov's motive, Mersault considers the life of Zagreus, an invalid whose legs have been amputated, to be of lesser importance than Mersault's desire for the liberation that money provides. At this point in his intellectual development, Camus may agree with both Zagreus and Mersault in their attitudes toward money. Zagreus tells Mersault:

> What I'm sure of [. . .] is that you can't be happy without money. That's all. I don't like superficiality and I don't like romanticism. I like to be conscious. And what I've noticed is that there's a kind of spiritual snobbism in certain 'superior beings' who think that money isn't

[392] "*fixation au meurtre.*" Beránková cites Grenier's *Albert Camus: Souvenirs* [*Albert Camus: Reminiscences*] (Paris: Gallimard, 1968) 143.

> necessary for happiness. Which is stupid, which is false, and to a certain degree cowardly. (*A Happy Death* 43)[393]

To the extent to which Zagreus goes beyond the common-sense statement in the Sermon on the Mount--the statement in which Jesus, speaking about the urgency of having food, drink, and clothing, says that "your Father knows that you need all these things" (*Mt* 6:32)[394]--Zagreus's materialism coincides with the earliest, full-fledged state of Camus's absurdism. According to Roger Quilliot in his helpful Camus chronology, the writing of *La Mort heureuse* was completed in 1938 (*Théâtre* xxxi), even though it was not published until 1971. Camus's philosophy in 1938 incorporates an emphasis on the gratifications of the body, and on the body itself, in the setting of the sun-drenched cities and beaches of the Mediterranean coasts. In *Albert Camus et «L'Etranger»* [*Albert Camus and* The Stranger], Pierre-Georges Castex reports (37) that Camus's friend Emmanuel Robles disclosed that Mersault's name, like that of his successor, Meursault in *L'Étranger*, is meant to reflect the French word *mer* ("sea") and part of the French word *soleil* ("sun"). In Mersault--Mr. Sea-and-Sun**--**the early Camus adds a hedonistic element to his own nihilism, which is the same nihilism that underlies Raskol'nikov's murder and robbery of the pawnbroker in *Crime and Punishment*.

In connection with this hedonism, it must be said that, in the Camusian world, both the male and the female body are exalted, and the man rejoices in his possession of a

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[393] "*Je suis certain [. . .] qu'on ne peut être heureux sans argent. Voilà tout. Je n'aime ni la facilité ni le romantisme. J'aime à me rendre compte. Eh bien, j'ai remarqué que chez certains êtres d'élite il y a une sorte de snobisme spirituel à croire que l'argent n'est pas nécessaire au bonheur. C'est bête, c'est faux, et dans une certaine mesure, c'est lâche*" (*La Mort heureuse* 75).

[394] "[. . .] οἶδεν γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος ὅτι χρήζετε τούτων ἁπάντων" (Confraternity translation).

According to the above Greek text, it is the "heavenly" Father who knows man's material needs.

body that can respond to both the sensuous stimuli of nature and to the sensual attractions of women. For Camus as he describes Mersault, a man must have a "a wonderful sense of ease, a kind of inner awareness of his own elegance" (*A Happy Death* 22),[395] and "[. . .] a man's beauty represents inner, functional truths: his face shows what he can do" (*A Happy Death* 23).[396] But a Camusian man does not limit himself to an appreciation of his own masculinity. In a phrase that expresses, with striking verbal economy, the pleasure-seeking side of his thoroughgoing absurdist phase, Camus speaks in "L'Été à Alger" ["Summer in Algiers"] of "man's treasures: warmth of the water and the brown bodies of women" (*Myth* 142).[397] For Camus, these are the treasures that allow a man to confront his fear of death.

**Camus's Reaction to Death: Epicureanism and Stoicism**

Camus's outlook on death reflects the clear intellectual continuity between his absurdism and two of the prominent philosophical schools of the Greco-Roman world:

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[395] "*une aisance surnaturelle, comme une conscience intérieure de sa propre élégance*" (*La Mort heureuse* 51).

[396] "[. . .] *la beauté d'un homme figure des vérités intérieures et pratiques. Sur son visage se lit ce qu'il peut faire*" (*La Mort heureuse* 52).

[397] "*les trésors de l'homme: tiédeur de l'eau et les corps bruns des femmes*" (*Essais* 68).

"L'Été à Alger" is one of the essays in *Noces* [*Nuptials*].

In the exaltation of the male body in *La Mort heureuse*, Beránková detects same-gender attraction (289 [footnote 794]). She is referring to Zagreus's admiration for Mersault's physique, which, for Zagreus, is that of a "demi-god [*demi-dieu*]" (*A Happy Death* 39; *La Mort heureuse* 71). For Marthe, Mersault's girlfriend, Mersault's body is that of a "god [*dieu*]" (*A Happy Death* 28; *La Mort heureuse* 57). It is difficult to understand why Beránková sees homosexuality in Zagreus's remark, since Zagreus compliments Mersault only half as much as Mersault's girlfriend does. Moreover, Zagreus also had a liaison with Marthe. Note, too, that Camus draws a sharp distinction between male bonding and homosexuality in *La Chute*: after Clamence has mentioned that men in the Greek islands hold hands in public as a sign of friendship, Camus has Clamence ask his interlocutor: "But tell me, would you take my hand in the streets of Paris? [*Mais dites-moi, prendriez-vous ma main dans les rues de Paris?*]" (*Fall* 98; *Théâtre* 1525). Given these points, it does not seem that Camus would have gratuitously introduced same-sex attraction into one of his texts. Instead, it appears that Zagreus is merely regretting that his own truncated body, unlike that of his friend Mersault, can no longer serve as an instrument for deriving pleasure from women and sports.

Epicureanism and Stoicism. In fact, Camus's philosophy of the absurd may be described as a revival of Epicureanism, but with a tinge of Stoicism. It is Camus's exceptional emphasis on death that underlies the Stoic cast of his approach to human existence. The reason for stressing death is obvious: death puts an end to the possibility of enjoying any of the sensual or other pleasures of this world. For this reason, death is the highest evil, and must be the object of unrelenting hatred, protest, and revolt--a rebellion that can, and must, coexist with the agglomeration of as many pleasurable experiences as possible before death finally arrives to bring annihilation, an annihilation that must nonetheless be accepted with the virile tranquility and resignation with which the ancient Stoics opened their veins. Camus regards the pursuit of sensuous and sensual gratification as a means of fighting death in the primary *donnade* of life. For Camus, this kind of fistfight is superior to a passive capitulation to death's inevitability, and hedonism becomes an act of manhood.

Mersault in *La Mort heureuse* is an embodiment of the Camusian blend of Epicureanism and Stoicism. He is acutely aware of his actual situation as a man doomed one day to die, but at the same time he has the resources--bodily and mental--to accumulate pleasing experiences in advance of that unavoidable event. Among those resources--to speak from Mersault's perspective--is a willingness to identify ethics with his impulses, which is why he murders the crippled Zagreus and appropriates the latter's wealth. Perhaps Mersault regards this act, since it takes place in a meaningless world, as both a demonstration of a transcendent camaraderie and a merciful facilitation of suicide for an individual whose life, being, to use Zagreus' s own phrase, that of "only half a

man" (*A Happy Death* 5),[398] Mersault considers especially pointless. After the murder, Mersault continues to pile up the pleasurable moments that he has already been pursuing in sports, including those of the bedroom, and to those gratifications he now adds leisure and travel to Europe, since his newly acquired money has now freed him from the tedium and slavery of work. As before, he takes pleasure, above all, in his own existence, in his own bodily and emotional well-being, and in his own sense of himself. Later, when his personal and financial resources cannot prevent his early death from a disease (apparently tuberculosis), this prototypical Camusian man dies in his native Algeria in peace, satisfied with knowing that he has performed well in the only rôle that a man can play in the absurd drama of life.

The very title of Camus's early unpublished novel--*La Mort heureuse*--attests to his near obsession with death. The English translation of the title, however, should not be *A Happy Death*, but simply *Happy Death*. The ability of the French definite article to signal an abstract, universal concept justifies this translation. The title *A Happy Death* implies that there is only one death in the novel, but, in actuality, there are two: the death of Zagreus as well Mersault's. It is particularly appropriate to include Zagreus's exit in the meaning of the title since the amputee's death at the hands of Mersault has overtones of suicide and euthanasia. According to its Greek etymology, the word "euthanasia" means "good death."[399]

In addition to his interest in murder, Camus is concerned even more intensely with suicide, as the title of this chapter of this dissertation indicates, and as we have

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[398] "*ne [. . .] qu'une moitié d'homme*" (*La Mort heureuse* 27).

[399] Since the English translation of *La Mort heureuse* by Richard Howard uses the title *A Happy Death*, I use that English title in this dissertation.

already seen in the discussion of the suicide attempt of the bridge jumper in *La Chute* as a possible reflection of two suicide attempts on the part of Camus's wife Francine. But we should be aware that Camus himself experienced thoughts of suicide (Lottman 468, 483). Fortunately--for his own sake and that of the literature of France and the world--he fought off these thoughts. In chapter 7, we shall see why it is unnecessary to wonder whether his death in a car crash at the age of forty-six was a Kirillov-like suicide.

**Is Camus an Existentialist?**

Let us now address the relationship between absurdism and existentialism, because Camus's attitude toward death is a key to answering the question: "Is Camus an existentialist?" Since Camus is widely regarded as belonging to the existentialist movement along with Sartre, determining whether this view is correct is helpful for understanding Camus's way of grappling with the problem of evil as well as with other philosophical issues. Writing about Camus's novel *Le Premier Homme* in an article entitled "From Alexandria," Professor André Aciman says the following: "After World War II, during which he served in the French Resistance, Camus had become one of the luminaries of French intellectual life, associated not only with the Left in politics but with the Existentialist movement in art and philosophy" (683). Let us note, however, that Camus himself denies that he is an existentialist. This straightforward disavowal occurs in a November 15, 1945, interview with Jeanine Delpech of *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* [*Literary News*]:

> No, I am not an existentialist. Sartre and I are always surprised to see our names linked. We have even thought of publishing a short statement in

> which the undersigned declare that they have nothing in common with each other and refuse to be held responsible for the debts they might respectively incur. It's a joke, actually. Sartre and I published all our books, without exception, before we had ever met. When we did get to know each other, it was to realize how much we differed. Sartre is an existentialist, and the only book of ideas that I have published, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, was directed against the so-called existentialist philosophers. (*Lyrical* 345)[400]

Camus is consistent throughout his life in reiterating his unwillingness to be called an existentialist: the index in Lottman's biography lists no fewer than ten references under the heading "Existentialism, Camus's rejection of" (741). Todd's biography quotes an interesting example of this rejection, which is especially noteworthy because it is nuanced. In a letter dated February 23, 1956, to Harvard University student Nicolas Daniloff, Camus says: "I am not an existentialist *in the current meaning of the word* [. . .] Sartre's existentialism appears to me to be a contradictory philosophy in which confusions and bad faith abound" (646, 818 [endnote 16]; my italics).[401] In an article entitled "Talk With Albert Camus," Dominique Aury quotes Camus as having been shocked by the "extra dirty little trick" of the existentialists, the trick whereby they

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[400] "*Non, je ne suis pas existentialiste. Sartre et moi nous nous étonnons toujours de voir nos deux noms associés. Nous pensons même publier un jour une petite annonce où les soussignés affirmeront n'avoir rien en commun et se refuseront à répondre des dettes qu'ils pourraient contracter respectivement. Car enfin, c'est une plaisanterie. Sartre et moi avons publié tous nos livres, sans exception, avant de nous connaître. Quand nous nous sommes connus, ce fut pour constater nos différences. Sartre est existentialiste, et le seul livre d'idées que j'ai publié:* le Mythe de Sisyphe*, était dirigé contre les philosophes dits existentialistes . . .*" (*Essais* 1424).

[401] "*Je ne suis pas existentialiste au sens actuel du mot [. . .] l'existentialisme de Sartre me paraît une philosophie contradictoire où abondent confusions et mauvaise foi*" (my translation).

would indulge in the "mania for self-accusation, so that they can accuse others more easily." Shortly before his death, Camus throws a final punch at his former friends in the existentialist camp: in an interview published posthumously in the American magazine *Venture*, he says that "[e]xistentialism among us leads to a theology without a god and to a scholasticism in which it was inevitable that they would end by justifying inquisitorial régimes" (*Essais* 1926).[402]

Studies of existentialism tend to honor Camus's rejection of the existentialist label. Neither James Collins's *The Existentialists: A Critical Study* nor Marjorie Grene's *Introduction to Existentialism* devotes a chapter to Camus. In Collins's table of contents, one finds only these names: Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Edmund Husserl, Sartre, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, and Martin Heidegger (vii-viii). In Grene's table of contents, the only names are those listed by Collins, with the exclusion of Nietzsche and Husserl (vii). Walter Kaufmann, in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, reprints the last chapter of Camus's *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, but he says of Camus: "Partly owing to his association with Sartre, he was often called an existentialist, though many critics insist that this was an invidious error" (312). Intriguingly, Kaufmann does not say to whose disadvantage--Camus's or Sartre's--this "invidious" mistake redounded.

Camus reinforces his refusal to accept membership in the existentialist movement in a comment on Dostoyevsky in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*: "Consequently, it is not an absurd novelist addressing us, but an existential novelist" (*Myth* 111).[403] Clearly, Camus is implying that he himself, unlike the Christian Dostoyevsky, is an absurdist rather than an

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[402] "*L'existentialisme chez nous aboutit à une théologie sans dieu et à une scolastique dont il était inévitable qu'elles finissent par justifier des régimes d'inquisition*" (my translation).

[403] "*Ce n'est donc pas un romancier absurde qui nous parle, mais un romancier existentiel*" (*Essais* 187).

existentialist. The context shows that Camus believes that existentialism is compatible with Dostoyevsky's belief in God and the next world--beliefs that are irreconcilable with the philosophy of the absurd. In point of fact, there are Christian thinkers (for example, Kierkegaard and Marcel) who are sometimes classified as *theistic*, as opposed to *atheistic*, existentialists. Camus himself says, in an August 6, 1949, interview in *Diario* of São Paulo, that the origins of existentialism lie in St. Augustine (*Essais* 1699). Still, regardless of St. Augustine's relationship to existentialism--regrettably, Camus does not develop this thought--Brée does not hesitate to write:

> If we think of a writer whose essential effort is directed toward elucidating his own experience through an effort of his intelligence as a"philosopher," then Camus most certainly is a philosopher, but nothing could be more erroneous than to consider him an "existentialist" writer. (*Camus* 9)

How, then, would Camus differentiate absurdism from existentialism, and how should we? My reading of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* yields the following definitions, which, at bottom, reflect a divergence of emphasis and terminology (although this divergence is still important). *Absurdism* is the philosophy which stresses its contention that the human condition is absurd and meaningless because there is no God and because life inevitably ends in death, thus forcing man to revolt against the senselessness and injustice of the universe through lucid awareness, artistic creation, and political activism.[404]

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[404] Referring to the problem of freedom in "Remarque sur la révolte," Camus lists art and political action as the imperative signs of man's revolt: "I merely point out that this problem could be clarified by a comparative study of artistic creation and of political action considered as the two essential manifestations of human revolt. [*Je l'indique seulement, ce problème pourrait être précisé par une étude comparée de la création artistique et de l'action politique considérées comme les deux manifestations essentielles de la révolte humaine*]." He adds this in a footnote: "The goal of artistic effort being an ideal work in which creation would be corrected. [*Le but de l'effort artistique étant une oeuvre idéale où la création serait corrigée*]" (*Essais* 1696; my translations). Of course, a third manifestation is tacitly presupposed: the prior clear recognition of the absurdity of man's plight in the face of the inescapability of death.

*Existentialism*, however, is the philosophy which emphasizes its view that life can be given meaning exclusively by means of man's free choices. To clarify this difference in the light of the scandal of evil, we can say that *absurdism* is that outlook which regards death as the transcendent evil, whereas *existentialism* is the stance which considers the highest evil to be the refusal to shape one's life through one's own will. So strongly does Camus identify absurdism with the denial of God and the next world that he goes so far as to make the following claim in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*: "It is possible to be Christian and absurd. There are examples of Christians who do not believe in a future life" (*Myth* 112).[405] There are, actually, no such examples, but the fact that the French novelist believes in such a contradiction shows that, for him, an absurdist *must* deny the immortality of the soul and be consumed by rebellion against the inevitability of death.

The above definitions of existentialism accord, not only with Camus's texts, but also with the definition given in *The Reader's Companion to World Literature*, edited by Lillian Herlands Hornstein and others. This immensely useful reference work states that existentialism's "central doctrine is that man is what he makes of himself: he is not predestined by a God, or by society, or by biology" (249). Of greater weight is the fact that my definitions of existentialism are compatible with Sartre's 1946 lecture entitled "L'Existentialisme est un humanisme" ["Existentialism is a Humanism"], as confused as that exposition is.[406] In this lecture, Sartre says that existentialism gives priority to man's

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Notice that Camus, in an unguarded moment, commits a *lapsus linguae* by using the word "creation" in reference to the universe. For an atheist, there is no creation in that sense, because creation implies a creator.

[405] "*On peut être chrétien et absurde. Il y a des exemples de chrétiens qui ne croient pas à la vie future*" (*Essais* 188).

[406] Especially toward the end of Sartre's essay, readers seeking philosophical guidance should find themselves perplexed. Consider the following quotations, which, nonetheless, are useful for establishing

concrete *existence* over his nonexistent *essence*. This prioritization is the etymological basis for the word "existentialism." It is also, perhaps, the means by which Sartre wishes to set his philosophy in opposition to neo-Thomism (as represented in the France of his time by Étienne Gilson, Maritain, and Catholicism in general). Like Sartre's prioritization of existence, the definition of existentialism in *The Reader's Companion to World Literature* does not necessarily rule out a theistic existentialism, since the free choices of the existent man may be oriented toward the existent God (in whom Camus, however, does not, at least publicly throughout his life, believe). Nevertheless, existentialism tends to be strongly identified with the atheistic version of Sartre, and it is in this sense that Camus seems to understand the term in the Delpech interview.

The bond between atheistic existentialism and absurdism is the denial of God, religion, immortality, and a natural moral law rooted in God, this bond of denial being so strong that those who conflate absurdism and existentialism have to be pardoned for blurring the distinction on which Camus stoutly insists. But note this crucial point made by Camus in the Delpech interview:

> Sartre and I do not believe in God, it is true. And we don't believe in absolute rationalism either. But neither do Jules Romains, Malraux, Stendhal, Paul de Kock, the Marquis de Sade, André Gide, Alexandre Dumas, Montaigne, Eugène Sue, Molière, Saint-Evremond, the Cardinal

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that Sartre himself admits the legitimacy of *theistic* existentialism, and which also do much to explain why the difference between *atheistic* existentialism and absurdism is, at bottom, a difference of words and emphasis: "Existentialism is nothing else but an attempt to draw the full conclusions from a consistently atheistic position. [. . .] Existentialism is not atheist in the sense that it would exhaust itself in demonstrations of the non-existence of God. It declares, rather, that even if God existed that would make no difference from its point of view" (in Kaufmann 310-11). Logically, if God exists, then atheism necessarily collapses. How, then, can God's existence make no difference to an atheistic existentialist? Sartre does not answer this question, allowing his self-contradictory text to destroy itself.

> de Retz, or André Breton. Must we put all these people in the same school? (*Lyrical* 345-46)[407]

A point of exceptional importance--one that James W. Woelfel rightly emphasizes in *Camus: A Theological Perspective* (96)--is that one of the roots of the distinction between Camusian absurdism and Sartrean existentialism is the fact that Camus accepts the existence of a human essence or nature as a source of values, whereas Sartre denies the existence of a human nature. In a key passage of *L'Homme révolté*, Camus says:

> Analysis of rebellion leads at least to the suspicion that, contrary to the postulates of contemporary thought, a human nature does exist, as the Greeks believed. Why rebel if there is nothing permanent in oneself worth preserving? (*Rebel* 16)[408]

The above excerpt is a direct attack on Sartre's denial of the existence of a human nature--and also a surprising expression of agreement with Pope Pius XII's reproof of this existentialist denial in the 1950 encyclical *Humani generis*. I should be surprised if Camus had not read this major encyclical, which rejects the "new erroneous philosophy which, rivaling idealism, immanentism and pragmatism, has assumed the name of existentialism, since it concerns itself only with existence of individual things and

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[407] "*Sartre et moi ne croyons pas en Dieu, il est vrai. Et nous ne croyons pas non plus au rationalisme absolu. Mais enfin, Jules Romains non plus, ni Malraux, ni Stendhal, ni Paul de Kock, ni le marquis de Sade, ni André Gide, ni Alexandre Dumas, ni Montaigne, ni Eugène Sue, ni Molière, ni Saint-Évremond, ni le cardinal de Retz, ni André Breton. Faut-il mettre tous ces gens-là dans la même école?*" (*Essais* 1425).

[408] "*L'analyse de la révolte conduit au moins au soupçon qu'il y a une nature humaine, comme le pensaient les Grecs, et contrairement aux postulats de la pensée contemporaine. Pourquoi se révolter s'il n'y a, en soi, rien de permanent à préserver?*" (*Essais* 425).

neglects all consideration of their immutable essences" (section 6).[409] The concept of a human essence is essential for both the Catholic and the Camusian concept of human rights. For example, if human beings possess no immutable essence or nature to serve as a ground for rights, then they have no right not to be murdered. In other words, if people do not belong to that *kind* of being whom it is wrong to kill, then it cannot be wrong to kill them. But to belong to a specific kind of being is to have an *essence or nature*. As his comment about the Greeks indicates, Camus shares this insight with the Catholic Church and against Sartre and other existentialists.

In view of all the preceding considerations, we can conclude that Camus can be called an existentialist only in a broad sense. In other words, Professor Aciman's observation--that Camus is "associated" with existentialism--is felicitous, since it can be interpreted narrowly and literally in this sense: many people do associate Camus with existentialism, but this association does not mean that the French novelist is actually an existentialist in the proper sense. *The Reader's Companion to World Literature* also uses the formulation "associated" in its article on Camus (110). Both Camus's own emphatic disavowal of existentialism and his acceptance of the concept of a human nature make it preferable to call him an absurdist, as I do in this dissertation. Historian of philosophy Frederick C. Copleston does not put the case as strongly as I do, and is more inclined to merge the two philosophical outlooks of absurdism and atheistic existentialism, but I suggest that he more or less comes to the same conclusion when he writes as follows:

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[409] "*novae aberranti philosophiae, quae cum 'idealismo', 'immanentismo' ac 'pragmatismo' contendens, 'existentialismi' nomen nacta est, utpote quae, immutabilibus rerum essentiis posthabitis, de singulorum 'exsistentia' tantum sollicita sit*" (Denzinger-Schönmetzer, section 3878).

Camus quotes Maritain in his notebooks (*Carnets II 298*). Since Camus read one of France's prominent neo-Thomistic philosophers, it seems likely that he also read Pope Pius XII's ringing endorsement of the essential principles of neo-Thomism in *Humani generis*.

> One can say, therefore, that for Sartre the world and human existence are "absurd." But he does not dwell much on this theme. The "philosopher of the absurd" is rather Albert Camus, who, like Sartre, is a gifted novelist and dramatist. True, Camus disclaims the label "existentialist," and he thinks that a philosopher such as Jaspers is an escapist. But he seems to me to belong to the same general movement of thought to which Sartre belongs and to speak to men who are in a similar spiritual situation to that of the men to whom Sartre's message is primarily addressed. (*Contemporary Philosophy: Studies of Logical Positivism and Existentialism* 196)[410]

Whether we call Camus an absurdist or an existentialist, it is undeniable that the evils of death in general and suicide in particular play crucial rôles in his texts, and that anguish over mortality lies at the core of his worldview. Much of his philosophical energy is consumed in a fight against death. In chapter 6, we shall explore the reasons why Camus's position on evil, despite the literary skill and political commitment in which it is enveloped, is not adequately grounded. For the moment, however, let us merely counterpose to Camus's atheistic humanism, as exemplified in the secular humanitarianism of Tarrou and Dr. Rieux in *La Peste*, a philosophical objection that is also rooted in common sense: why bother to fight death in the form of the plague

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[410] To end this section on Camus's relationship to existentialism, it can be noted that the view that Camus is an existentialist may be called the official position of the United States government. Under the Freedom of Information Act, Todd obtained much of Camus's file from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which became interested in the French novelist in 1946 because he had allegedly "been filing inaccurate reports which are unfavorable to the public interests of this country." In Todd after page 568, see photograph 14 of a January 31, 1946, FBI memorandum from Frederick B. Lyon to J. Edgar Hoover. In Camus's file, an FBI analyst writes that the principal existentialists are Camus and Sartre, although the file acknowledges that Camus does not want to be called an existentialist (Todd 399, 801[endnote 1]).

devastating Oran? In the words of Professor Beaujour in a comment written on a draft of this dissertation: "But what's the point, if we are all to die anyway?"[411] A Christian apologist (such as a fully prepared Dmitrii Karamazov) might say: "If God and the next world don't exist, then why should doctors fight so hard against illness to preserve life in this world? Why? So that people will be able to suffer even more in addition to what they've already suffered?" On some level, Camus himself realizes the truth of the imagined objection of Dmitrii and the actual objection of Professor Beaujour, for he ends *La Peste* with an ominous warning:

> And, indeed, as he listened to the cries of joy rising from the town, Rieux remembered that such joy is always imperiled. He knew what those jubilant crowds did not know but could have learned from books: that the plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good; that it can lie dormant for years and years in furniture and linen-chests; that it bides its time in bedrooms, cellars, trunks, and bookshelves; and that perhaps the day would come when, for the bane and the enlightening of men, it would rouse up its rats again and send them forth to die in a happy city. (*Plague* 308)[412]

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[411] The absurdist may say that we should all imitate Dr. Rieux and Tarrou in their fight against death on the ground that there *might* be a point to life. Camus may be implying this in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*: "I don't know whether this world has a meaning that transcends it. But I know that I do not know that meaning and that it is impossible for me just now to know it. [*Je ne sais pas si ce monde a un sens qui le dépasse. Mais je sais que je ne connais pas ce sens et qu'il m'est impossible pour le moment de le connaître*]" (*Myth* 51; *Essais* 136). The rejoinder to this position should be obvious: then we had better find out whether this world has a meaning and what that meaning is.

[412] "*Écoutant, en effet, les cris d'allégresse qui montaient de la ville, Rieux se souvenait que cette allégresse était toujours menacée. Car il savait ce que cette foule en joie ignorait, et qu'on peut lire dans les livres, que le bacille de la peste ne meurt ni ne disparaît jamais, qu' il peut rester pendant des dizaines d'années endormi dans les meubles et le linge, qu'il attend patiemment dans les chambres, les caves, les malles, les mouchoirs et les paperasses, et que, peut-être, le jour viendrait où, pour le malheur et*

Paradoxically, Father Paneloux is exemplifying the logic of atheistic humanism when he spurns medical treatment for the plague toward the end of *La Peste* after having written a pamphlet defending this thesis: "That it's illogical for a priest to call in a doctor" (*Plague* 229).[413] And, though he is a Catholic and a Jesuit, Paneloux is also denying the Faith by contradicting Jesus's own explicit teaching: "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do" (*Mt* 9:12).[414] In fact, Paneloux's repudiation of Jesus's teaching implies--ultimately--the acceptance of both euthanasia and suicide, both of which are condemned by the Catholic Church as mortal sins. Accordingly, *La Peste* ends with a blatant contradiction: unlike Camus himself, a Catholic character lapses into irrationality by refusing to give a life-affirming response to the question implied in the first sentence of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*: "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide" (*Myth* 3).[415]

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*l'enseignement des hommes, la peste réveillerait ses rats et les enverrait mourir dans une cité heureuse*" (*Théâtre* 1474).

In *The Penguin Medical Encyclopedia*, Dr. Wingate gives this equally ominous warning: "At present plague is a rare disease, but it still smoulders in some hot countries, and rats and their fleas are ubiquitous. When sanitary services are disrupted, e.g. by warfare or natural disasters, major outbreaks are still possible" (348). Consider the disruption of sanitary services that would ensue after a nuclear war.

[413] "*Si un prêtre consulte un médecin, il y a contradiction*" (*Théâtre* 1406).

[414] "Οὐ χρείαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ἰσχύοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλ᾽ οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες."

[415] "*Il n'y a qu'un problème philosophique vraiment sérieux: c'est le suicide*" (*Essais* 99).

# CHAPTER 5

## EVERYTHING IS LAWFUL: FOR DOSTOYEVSKY MORE THAN FOR CAMUS, PERSONAL EVIL IS MORE PROBLEMATIC THAN POLITICAL EVIL

Dostoyevsky and Camus differ markedly in their approach to moral evil. Dostoyevsky is *primarily* concerned with moral evils that are *individual*, *personal*, and *sexual*, whereas Camus is *primarily* concerned with moral evils that are *social* rather than individual, *political* rather than personal, and *economic* rather than sexual.

I must immediately enter a crucial caveat necessary for justifying this schema as a legitimate and helpful framework for understanding how these two novelists deal with the scandal of evil. Clearly, the three dichotomies listed in this schema are not absolutely rigid. Their malleability flows, not merely from the textual evidence of these two authors, but also from the very nature of human conduct. In any fully rational system of ethics, it is understood that there are intrinsic linkages crisscrossing all six of the categories enumerated above, and that there is much overlapping.

An individual crime always has social ramifications; for example, when the individual known as Raskol'nikov commits murder in Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, these killings have an impact on other members of his entire society, even if we think only of the loved ones of the persons whom he kills. For this reason, Raskol'nikov's murder of Alena Ivanovna, Lizaveta, and Lizaveta's unborn child (if she was actually pregnant at that moment) is also an act that has social ramifications.[416] By

[416] Note that Raskol'nikov commits two or three murders. He first kills the woman pawnbroker, Alena Ivanovna. He then murders the pawnbroker's younger half sister, Lizaveta, whose walking into the scene Raskol'nikov does not anticipate. But there is a possibility, as Professor Beaujour points out to her students at Hunter College when she teaches *Crime and Punishment*, that Lizaveta may be expecting a child at that moment, for Raskol'nikov overhears the student tell the officer in the tavern that Lizaveta "was always

the same token, the suicides that occur throughout Dostoyevsky's works generate the same kinds of consequences as do the murders. Think, for example, of what must have been the reaction of Stavrogin's mother to the suicide of her son in *The Devils*.

Moreover, personal and political crimes are inherently tied to each other: the state-sponsored murders on which Camus focuses with great passion and eloquence in *L'Homme révolté* are both personal and political at the same time, for they represent the killing of persons by other persons, but at the behest of the modern state. The personal aspect of political crimes is not negated by the fact that they often occur on a massive scale**.** When the United States military dropped conventional and atomic bombs on Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Dresden, and other German and Japanese cities during World War II, killing scores of thousands of noncombatants, it was not only the case that many individual persons were killed, but it was also the case that individuals ordered the killings, and that individuals flew the airplanes that released the weapons of mass destruction over the targeted cities.

Furthermore, sexual transgressions--for example, prostitution and the sexual abuse of minors--are not utterly unrelated to what occurs in the economic structure of every society, since class stratification exists everywhere. Nor does one have to be a Marxist-Leninist to recognize the intersection between the sexual and the economic planes of society.

Finally, as we undertake, in the light of Ivan Karamazov's dictum "Everything is lawful," our analysis of the divergent approaches that Dostoyevsky and Camus take in

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pregnant [поминутно была беременна]" (*PSS* 6: 54; pt. 1, ch. 6). This is my translation; Coulson in the Norton Critical Edition incorrectly drops the Russian adverb and says simply that Lizaveta "was pregnant" (55).

dealing with specific categories of moral evil, we must realize that the thinking of both novelists evolves over the course of their lives, although this is true to a much greater extent for Camus than it is for Dostoyevsky. But these evolutions cannot be considered sufficient reasons to bar general statements in a thematic comparative study such as this dissertation, and that is why it is reasonable to make the general statements contained in the opening paragraphs of this chapter.

In view of the above schema, and given the above provisos, I wish to begin by observing that Dostoyevsky, to a far greater degree than is true of his French successor, concentrates his attention on man's moral choices on the individual plane, including issues of sexual ethics. This is why Dostoyevsky focuses, not only on murder and suicide, but also on prostitution and child molestation. Murder and suicide are major plot elements in his four major novels. I have already discussed his condemnation of prostitution (and his glowing comments on marriage and child-bearing) in *Notes from Underground*, and I have already mentioned that prostitution also occurs in the case of Sonia in *Crime and Punishment.* In addition, I have catalogued the *thirty-two* instances in which Dostoyevsky turns his attention to adult sexual attraction to minors.

It is above all in *The Brothers Karamazov* that Dostoyevsky makes clear the ultimate foundations for his focusing on moral evil in the individual, personal, and sexual spheres. It is in that novel that Dostoyevsky emphasizes what he regards as the ultimate basis of ethics. Someone reading *The Brothers Karamazov*, or reading about it, may come away from the experience with the more or less vague feeling that one of its themes is the concept that "Everything is lawful"--which necessitates the corollary that moral evil simply does not exist--in a cosmos in which there is no God and in which

immortality is an illusion. For the purposes of an analytical study of Dostoyevsky and of his relationship with Camus, this somewhat amorphous feeling is insufficient: it should give way to a detailed, exhaustive understanding of the way in which Dostoyevsky sets forth this dictum, a dictum that is critical for understanding his approach to the problem of evil. That is why I have used a single-file searchable online text of *The Brothers Karamazov* to compile a table of all the instances in which Ivan's Karamazov's assertion that "[e]verything is lawful" occurs in that text. My table 3, entitled "Ivan's Dictum 'Everything Is Lawful' in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*," will shed light, not only on the exceptional importance of this concept, but also on the careful manner in which Dostoyevsky develops it by having different characters react to it in different ways. This table will be found on pages 245-48.

Table 3
Ivan's Dictum "Everything Is Lawful" in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*

| Occur-rence Number | Chapter Title | Context | English | Russian |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Why Is Such a Man Alive? (pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 6) | Miusov quotes Ivan's dictum to the group in Father Zosima's cell, and Dmitrii explicates it. | "Moreover, nothing then would be immoral, everything would be lawful, even cannibalism. [. . .]"<br>"Excuse me," Dmitri Fyodorovich cried suddenly, "If I've heard aright: crime must not only be permitted but even recognized as the inevitable and the most rational outcome of his position for every atheist! Is that so or not?"<br>"Quite so," said Father Païssy. (60)[417] | Мало того: тогда ничего уже не будет безнравственного, всё будет позволено, даже антропофагия. [. . .]<br>--Позвольте,--неожиданно крикнул вдруг Дмитрий Федорович,--чтобы не ослышаться: «Злодейство не только должно быть дозволено, но даже признано самым необходимым и самым умным выходом из положения всякого безбожника»! Так или не так?<br>--Точно так,--сказал отец Паисий. (*PSS* 14: 65) |
| 2 | A Seminarian Bent on a Career (pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 7) | When Alesha and Rakitin meet on the monastery grounds, Rakitin quotes Ivan's dictum and rejects it in the name of atheistic humanism. | And did you hear his stupid theory just now: if there's no immortality of the soul, then there's no virtue, and everything is lawful. [. . .] His whole theory is vileness! Humanity will find in itself the power to live for virtue even without believing in immortality. It will find it in love for freedom, for equality, for fraternity." (72) | А слышал давеча его глупую теорию: «Нет бессмертия души, так нет и добродетели, значит, всё позволено». [. . .] Вся его теория--подлость! Человечество само в себе силу найдет, чтобы жить для добродетели, даже и не веря в бессмертие души! В любви к свободе, к равенству, братству найдет . . . (*PSS* 14: 76) |
| 3 | The Grand Inquisitor (pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5) | Alesha quotes Ivan's dictum during their tavern conversation, and Ivan refuses to renounce it. | "'Everything is lawful,' you mean? Everything is lawful, is that it?"<br>Ivan scowled, and all at once turned strangely pale.<br>"Ah, you've caught up yesterday's phrase, which so offended Miüsov--and which brother Dmitri pounced upon so naïvely and paraphrased!" he smiled queerly. "Yes, if you | --Это чтобы «всё позволено»? Всё позволено, так ли, так ли?<br>Иван нахмурился и вдруг странно как-то побледнел.<br>--А, это ты подхватил вчерашнее словцо, которым так обиделся Миусов . . . и что так наивно выскочил и переговорил брат Дмитрий?--криво усмехнулся он. --Да, |

[417] The English quotations are taken from the Garnett-Matlaw translation in the Norton Critical Edition; the Russian quotations are from *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1972-90).

Table 3
Ivan's Dictum "Everything Is Lawful" in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*

| Occur-rence Number | Chapter Title | Context | English | Russian |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | like, 'everything is lawful' since the word has been said. I won't deny it. And Mitenka's version isn't bad."<br>Alyosha looked at him in silence.<br>"I thought, brother, that going away from here I have you at least," Ivan said suddenly, with unexpected feeling; "but now I see that there is no place for me even in your heart, my dear hermit. The formula, 'all is lawful,' I won't renounce--will you renounce me for that, yes?" (244) | пожалуй: «всё позволено», если уж слово произнесено. Не отрекаюсь. Да и редакция Митенькина недурна.<br>Алеша молча глядел на него.<br>--Я, брат, уезжая, думал, что имею на всем свете хоть тебя,--с неожиданным чувством проговорил вдруг Иван,--а теперь вижу, что и в твоем сердце мне нет места, мой милый отшельник. От формулы «всё позволено» я не отрекусь, ну и что же, за это ты от меня отречешься, да, да? (*PSS* 14: 240) |
| 4 | A Hymn and a Secret (pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 4) | During a jailhouse conversation with Alesha, Dmitrii recounts his exchange with Rakitin. | 'But what will become of men then?' I asked him, 'without God and immortal life? All things are lawful then, they can do what they like?' (558) | «Только как же, спрашиваю, после того человек-то? Без бога-то [sic] и без будущей жизни? Ведь это, стало быть, теперь всё позволено, всё можно делать?» (*PSS* 15: 29) |
| 5 | A Hymn and a Secret (pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 4) | During a jailhouse conversation with Alesha, Dmitrii recounts his exchange with Ivan. | "Ivan has no God. He has an idea. It's beyond me. But he is silent. I believe he is a freemason [sic]. I asked him, but he is silent. I wanted to drink from the springs of his soul--he was silent. But once he did drop a word."<br>"What did he say?" Alyosha took it up quickly.<br>"I said to him, 'Then everything is lawful, if it is so?' He frowned. 'Fyodor Pavlovich, our papa,' he said, 'was a pig, but his ideas were right enough.' That was what he dropped. That was all he said. That was going one better than Rakitin." (561) | У Ивана бога [sic] нет. У него идея. Не в моих размерах. Но он молчит. Я думаю, он масон. Я его спрашивал--молчит. В роднике у него хотел водицы испить--молчит. Один только раз одно словечко сказал.<br>--Что сказал?--поспешно поднял Алеша.<br>--Я ему говорю: стало быть, всё позволено, коли так? Он нахмурился: «Федор Павлович, говорит, папенька наш, был поросенок, но мыслил он правильно». Вот ведь что отмочил. Только всего и сказал. Это уже почище Ракитина. (*PSS* 15: 32) |

Table 3
Ivan's Dictum "Everything Is Lawful" in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*

| Occur-rence Number | Chapter Title | Context | English | Russian |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | The First Interview with Smerdyakov (pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 6) | The narrator recounts a jailhouse conversation in which Dmitrii pillories Ivan's inconsistency. | He even succeeded in insulting Ivan Fyodorovich during their first interview, telling him sharply that it was not for people who declared that 'everything was lawful,' [sic] to suspect and question him. (572) | Он даже успел оскорбить в это первое свидание Ивана Федоровича, резко сказав ему, что не тем его подозревать и допрашивать, которые сами утверждают, что «всё позволено». (*PSS* 15: 42) |
| 7 | The Third and Last Interview with Smerdyakov (pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 8) | Smerdiakov, conversing with Ivan, accuses Ivan of having incited him to murder Fedor. | "You were bold enough then, sir. You said 'everything was lawful,' and how frightened you are now," Smerdyakov muttered in surprise. (592) | --Всё тогда смелы были-с, «всё, дескать, позволено», говорили-с, а теперь вот так испугались!--пролепетал, дивясь, Смердяков. (*PSS* 15: 61) |
| 8 | The Third and Last Interview with Smerdyakov (pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 8) | Smerdiakov, conversing with Ivan, accuses Ivan of having incited him to murder Fedor. | I did dream of it, chiefly because 'all things are lawful.' That was quite right what you taught me, for you talked a lot to me about that. For if there's no everlasting God, there's no such thing as virtue, and there's no need of it. You were right there. So that's how I looked at it. [. . .] [. . .] You used to say yourself that everything was lawful, so now why are you so upset, too? (599) | [. . .] такая мечта была-с, а пуще всё потому, что «всё позволено». Это вы вправду меня учили-с, ибо много вы мне тогда этого говорили: ибо коли бога [sic] бесконечного нет, то и нет никакой добродетели, да и не надобно ее тогда вовсе. Это вы вправду. Так я и рассудил. [. . .] [. . .] Вы вот сами тогда всё говорили, что всё позволено, а теперь-то почему так встревожены, сами-то-с? (*PSS* 15: 67-68) |
| 9 | The Devil. Ivan Fedorovich's Nightmare (pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 9) | During his appearance to Ivan, the devil quotes Ivan's dictum and explicates it. | But as, owing to man's inveterate stupidity, this cannot come about for at least a thousand years, everyone who recognizes the truth even now may legitimately order his life as he pleases, on the new principles. In that sense, 'all things are lawful' for him. (616) | Но так как, ввиду закоренелой глупости человеческой, это, пожалуй, еще и в тысячу лет не устроится, то всякому, сознающему уже и теперь истину, позволительно устроиться совершенно как ему угодно, на новых началах. В этом смысле ему «всё позволено». (*PSS* 15: 83-84) |

Table 3
Ivan's Dictum "Everything Is Lawful" in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*

| Occur-rence Number | Chapter Title | Context | English | Russian |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | The Prosecutor's Speech. Sketches of Character (pt. 4, bk. 12, ch. 6) | During Dmitrii's trial, prosecutor Ippolit Kirillovich quotes Smerdiakov's testimony concerning Ivan's dictum. | At the preliminary inquiry, he told me with hysterical tears how that young Karamazov, Ivan Fyodorovich, had horrified him by his spiritual audacity. 'Everything in the world is lawful according to him, and nothing must be forbidden in the future--that is what he always taught me.' (662)[418] | Он с истерическими слезами рассказывал мне на предварительном следствии, как этот молодой Карамазов, Иван Федорович, ужаснул его своим духовным безудержем. „Всё, дескать, по-ихнему, позволено, что ни есть в мире, и ничего впредь не должно быть запрещено,--вот они чему меня всё учили". (*PSS* 15: 126-27) |

[418] Smerdiakov's third person plural pronouns по-ихнему (*po-ikhnemu*) and они (*oni*) refer to Ivan alone. In nineteenth-century Russia, the third person plural pronoun was used as the equivalent of the third person singular pronoun by servants speaking about their employers.

An examination of table 3 shows how important Ivan's dictum is in the structure of *The Brothers Karamazov*, for it recurs, from the beginning to the end of the novel, in a total of ten instances. And it is not merely uttered by its originator, Ivan. It is also quoted by the following characters, either in concurrence or dissent: Miusov, Rakitin, Alesha, Dmitrii, Smerdiakov, Ippolit Kirillovich, and, last but certainly not least, the devil during his nocturnal visit to Ivan. The exact point that Dostoyevsky wishes to make by using this dictum as a prominent *leitmotiv* is comprehensively but concisely reflected in the objection that Dmitrii poses to the cynical, scheming seminarian Rakitin in occurrence 4: "'But what will become of men then?' I asked him, 'without God and immortal life? All things are lawful then, they can do what they like?'" (558).[419] Dmitrii's reaction is Dostoyevsky's reaction: both the character and the author are saying that atheism and the rejection of the immortality of the soul automatically and logically demand amorality, for there is no foundation for ethics apart from a moral law rooted in the existence of God and another world. This is one of the fundamental assertions that Dostoyevsky wishes to make to counter the Russian nihilists of his era. This emphatic desire to refute nihilism is one of the motives that lead him to write *The Brothers Karamazov*, as I have already shown with a quotation from his letter dated May 10, 1879, to Nikolai Liubimov. If there is a *roman à thèse* in the fullest sense, it is this novel, whose central philosophical postulate is that atheism is a grievous evil.

[419] «Только как же, спрашиваю, после того человек-то? Без бога-то [sic] и без будущей жизни? Ведь это, стало быть, теперь всё позволено, всё можно делать?» (*PSS* 15: 29; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 4).

**The Soul's Immortality: A Key Theme in Dostoyevsky**

In addition to the equation of atheism with evil, the immortality of the human soul is also a major component of Dostoyevsky's worldview. This point is emphatically set forth in *A Writer's Diary*. Writing in the December 1876 issue in defense of his publication of a fictional suicide note ("The Sentence")[420] composed by a philosophical materialist who is about to commit suicide because he believes that life is meaningless and absurd, Dostoyevsky makes the following comments in an article entitled "Unsubstantiated Statements":

> Underlying this confession of a man who is going to die "by logical suicide" is the necessity of the immediate conclusion, here and now, that without faith in one's soul and its immortality, human existence is unnatural, unthinkable, and unbearable. (1: 733)[421]
>
> Neither a person nor a nation can exist without some higher idea. And there is *only one* higher idea on earth, and it is the idea of the immortality of the human soul, for all other "higher" ideas of life by which humans might live *derive from that idea alone*. (1: 734)[422]

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[420] "The Sentence" had appeared in the October 1876 issue of *A Writer's Diary* (1: 653-56; *PSS* 23: 146-48).

[421] "Подкладка этой исповеди погибающего «от логического самоубийства» человека--это необходимость тут же, сейчас же вывода: что без веры в свою душу и в ее бессмертие бытие человека неестественно, немыслимо и невыносимо" (*PSS* 24: 46).

[422] "Без высшей идеи не может существовать ни человек, ни нация. А высшая идея на земле *лишь одна* и именно--идея о бессмертии души человеческой, ибо все остальные «высшие» идеи жизни, которыми может быть жив человек, *лишь из нее одной вытекают*" (*PSS* 24: 48).

> [. . .] love for humanity is even entirely unthinkable, incomprehensible, and *utterly impossible without faith in the immortality of the human soul to go along with it*. (1: 736)[423]

The above quotations enable us to form a schematic picture of the philosophical foundations of Dostoyevsky's approach to moral evil. For him, there is no way to approach the evil of suicide and other moral evils--indeed, there is simply no way to approach the human condition itself--apart from an unshakable belief in the powerful bonds that link all the following essential realities with one another in an unbreakable grid: the indispensable necessity of a higher truth, the immortality of man's soul as one of those higher truths, the sheer impossibility of loving other human beings in this world without at the same time believing in the existence of the next world, and the inescapable logic that leads to suicide as a response to an absurd universe once immortality has been denied. Anchoring the entire grid that Dostoyevsky pictures as the refutation of nihilism and philosophical materialism is the existence of God, for the immortality of the soul and the existence of another life have no meaning in his worldview apart from the truth of theism. Furthermore, since theism logically entails recognition of a divine order structuring and governing the entire universe, including man's actions, Dostoyevsky's schema necessarily implies a moral law, universal and immutable. Owing to man's free will, however, the moral law can be, and is, broken. A Raskol'nikov, for example, may decide to murder a woman pawnbroker. Or, as Dostoyevsky asserts in the notebooks for *The Devils*, Malthusian nihilists of the future may kill infants: "They have written that, if there should be a shortage of material goods, babes should be killed or burned, etc."

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[423] "[. . .] любовь к человечеству даже совсем немыслима, непонятна и *совсем невозможна без совместной веры в бессмертие души человеческой*" (*PSS* 24: 49).

(253).[424] For the Russian novelist, however, every transgression of this moral law, whatever the motivation of the person committing the transgression, is a moral evil, is an act that *ought not* to take place**.** Again, the Russian word преступление (*prestuplenie*) in the title of *Crime and Punishment* means "transgression." In the language of the Russian Orthodox Church, Raskol'nikov's transgression, like every similar act, is a *sin*. And so we come to the *raison d'être* for the Augustinian quotation which is highlighted in chapter 1 of this dissertation:

> And this is the totality of what is called evil, that is, sin and the punishment of sin. (*De vera religione*, ch. 12; p. 402)[425]

In the light of the philosophical commitment that underpins Dostoyevsky's thinking--a commitment that lies at the core of Russian Orthodoxy (and Catholicism)--we can easily see why Dostoyevsky proposes two major theses in his four major novels, and especially in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. The first thesis is that the immortality of the soul is critical for understanding evil and the entire human condition, and even for rejecting suicide and merely continuing to live. The second thesis is that rejection of God and immortality logically leads, not only to unhappiness and suicide, but also to total anarchy and chaos: if God and immortality do not exist, then there can be no such thing as moral evil. But, if there is no such thing as moral evil, then, as Ivan Karamazov and his disciple Smerdiakov contend, "[e]verything is lawful." Everything, including cannibalism, as Miusov states in occurrence 1 of table 3. In the

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[424] "--Писали, что если не хватит материалу, то избивать или сжигать младенцев--и т. д" (*PSS* 11: 188).

[425] "*Et hoc est totum quod dicitur malum, id est, peccatum et poena peccati*" (my translation).

introduction to *L'Homme révolté*, echoing the title of book 5 of *The Brothers Karamazov*, Camus illustrates this nihilistic point in a way that the reader cannot easily forget:

> There is no pro or con: the murderer is neither right nor wrong. We are free to stoke the crematory fires or to devote ourselves to the care of lepers. Evil and virtue are mere chance or caprice. (*Rebel* 5)[426]

**Deconstructing the Grand Inquisitor**

Since I am dealing in this chapter with Dostoyevsky's emphasis on moral evil, this is an appropriate place to comment on one of his most famous texts: the *Brothers Karamazov* chapter (pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5) known as "The Grand Inquisitor" (227-45).[427] What justifies commenting on this Dostoyevsky chapter in this chapter of the present dissertation is the fact that the Grand Inquisitor, in a statement that seems not to have received the commentary that it merits, tells Jesus that the Catholic Church permits her members to commit moral evil, i.e., to sin:

> Oh, we shall allow them even sin, they are weak and helpless, and they will love us like children because we allow them to sin. We shall tell them that every sin will be expiated, if it is done with our permission, that we allow them to sin because we love them, and the punishment for these sins we take upon ourselves. And we shall take it upon ourselves, and they will adore us as their saviors who have taken on themselves their sins before God. And they will have no secrets from us. We shall allow

[426] "*Point de pour ni de contre, l'assassin n'a ni tort ni raison. On peut tisonner les crématoires comme on peut aussi se dévouer à soigner les lépreux. Malice et vertu sont hasard ou caprice*" (*Essais* 415).

[427] *PSS* 14: 224-41.

> or forbid them to live with their wives and mistresses, to have or not to have children--according to whether they have been obedient or disobedient--and they will submit to us gladly and cheerfully. The most painful secrets of their conscience, all, all they will bring to us [. . .]. (240)[428]

This is a truly remarkable passage. Dostoyevsky does not merely attack the Catholic administration of the sacrament of Penance, claiming that this administration is a moral and psychological enslavement tantamount to the indignities visited on the citizens of police states (which is to neglect the fact that the Russian Orthodox Church also administers this sacrament, and that she also assumes the responsibility of directing consciences).[429] He goes much further in his polemic. What Dostoyevsky is also ventriloquistically saying through Ivan Karamazov is that the Catholic Church grants her members permission to commit sin, i.e., moral evil. If this were true, then the Church would be the epitome of hypocrisy and scandal, since she maintains that she has no purpose other than to deliver human beings from their sins and from the eternal punishment of hell and to lead them to eternal salvation. In fact, the Catholic Church teaches that there is no possibility of salvation apart from her. This is why she insists on

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[428] "О, мы разрешим им и грех, они слабы и бессильны, и они будут любить нас как дети за то, что мы им позволим грешить. Мы скажем им, что всякий грех будет искуплен, если сделан будет с нашего позволения; позволяем же им грешить потому, что их любим, наказание же за эти грехи, так и быть, возьмем на себя. И возьмем на себя, а нас они будут обожать как благодетелей, понесших на себе их грехи пред богом [sic]. И не будет у них никаких от нас тайн. Мы будем позволять или запрещать им жить с их женами и любовницами, иметь или не иметь детей--всё судя по их послушанию--и они будут нам покоряться с весельем и радостью. Самые мучительные тайны их совести--всё, всё понесут они нам [. . .]" (*PSS* 14: 236; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5).

[429] Russian Orthodox Bishop Alfeyev states: "The sacrament of Confession is not limited to a mere acknowledgement of sins. It also involves recommendations, or sometimes *epitimia* (penalties) on the part of the priest. It is primarily in the sacrament of Confession that the priest acts in his capacity of spiritual father" (145). The *epitimia* (in the Catholic vocabulary, "penances") are usually prayers that the confessor directs the penitent to recite as a means of repairing the spiritual damage caused by his or her sins.

the dictum "Outside the Church there is no salvation."[430] As I pointed out in chapter 1, because of Catholicism's emphasis on the necessity of some kind of relationship to the Catholic Church for salvation, it must be said that Dostoyevsky, while accepting the dogmas of the Incarnation and the Redemption as a Russian Orthodox believer, rejects the Catholic resolution of the scandal of evil. In denying Catholicism's claim to be the one true religion, the Russian novelist is in agreement with Camus.

Given the foregoing considerations, it is surprising that Stewart R. Sutherland, in his article entitled "Dostoyevsky and the Grand Inquisitor: A Study in Atheism," thinks that "[it] is a mistake [. . .] to regard the Grand Inquisitor as, from the outset, wholly and irredeemably evil" (370). From the Christian perspective of both Dostoyevsky and his *bête noire*, the Catholic Church, the Grand Inquisitor is indeed wholly evil. This is so because giving people permission to sin is wholly evil. Furthermore, again from the Christian perspective, the villainous cardinal can be redeemed from such an evil enterprise only by renouncing it and repenting of it.

If Dostoyevsky is to be believed in his depiction of the Grand Inquisitor, the Catholic Church is actually a force, not for good, repentance, and salvation, but instead for evil, impenitence, and damnation. In fact, if Dostoyevsky's accusation were true, anyone who believes in the existence of the Devil would logically be forced to say that

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[430] In her University of North Carolina master's degree thesis entitled "Dostoevsky and Camus," Frances Hubertine Pfotenhauer quotes the following assertion of Camus in *Noces*: "The world is beautiful, and outside it there is no salvation. [*Le monde est beau, et hors de lui, point de salut*]" (*Lyrical* 103; *Essais* 87). I agree with Pfotenhauer explication of this statement in the light of Camus's Epicureanism: "Since there is no belief, no hope in another life, we must take [sic] the most of this one, the only one we have" (22). She could, however, have added that Camus's line is a parody of the Catholic dictum *Hors de l'Église point de salut* ("Outside the Church there is no salvation"). For an authoritative presentation of this dictum, see the letter sent on August 8, 1949, by the Holy Office with the approval of Pope Pius XII to the archbishop of Boston (Neuner-Dupuis, sections 854-57); see also the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (sections 846-48).

the Catholic Church is in league with Satan, which is, in fact, exactly what Ivan (together with Dostoyevsky) does say, speaking again through the consummately evil Grand Inquisitor as he addresses Jesus:

> And is it for me to conceal from Thee our mystery? Perhaps it is Thy will to hear it from my lips. Listen, then. We are not working with Thee, but with *him*--that is our mystery. (238)[431]

There is no need for the Grand Inquisitor to specify to whom the ominously italicized *him* refers. It is at this moment that the Grand Inquisitor most resembles the cardinal in Sergei Eisenstein's film *Alexander Nevsky*--the monstrous cardinal who calmly throws infants into a fire.

In connection with these passages identifying Catholicism with the approbation of sin and with allegiance to the Devil, it is surprising that Catholic Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, who introduced American Catholics and others to Dostoyevsky,[432] quotes the Grand Inquisitor's "we shall allow them even sin" passage in his book entitled *Communism and the Conscience of the West* as if this passage were merely a polemic against socialism. Sheen says: "Dostoevski makes the Devil tell how socialism will organize everything: 'We shall make them work, but in their spare time we shall organize their life like a children's game. . . . We shall allow them even sin, knowing they are so weak and helpless'" (186-87). The character whom Sheen quotes is not the Devil, but a

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[431] "И я ли скрою от тебя тайну нашу? Может быть, ты именно хочешь услышать ее из уст моих, слушай же: мы не с тобой, а с *ним*, вот наша тайна!" (*PSS* 14: 234; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5).

[432] See the chapter entitled "The Man Who Knew Communism Best--Dostoevsky" in Sheen's 1957 book entitled *Life Is Worth Living: Fifth Series* (45-56). I wonder whether Sheen chose this title (which was also the title of his television program) in reaction to the opening sentence of Camus's *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*: "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide [*Il n'y a qu'un problème philosophique vraiment sérieux: c'est le suicide*]" (*Myth* 3; *Essais* 99).

member of the College of Cardinals. Apparently, Sheen is not aware that this character represents, not the socialism of Dostoyevsky's time, but the Catholic Church. There should be no doubt that the Grand Inquisitor is the papacy and the Catholic Church, for the evil cardinal bluntly tells the silent Jesus that the members of the Catholic hierarchy have been in league with the Devil for eight centuries (238).[433] This time indicator, as Frank points out (*Mantle of the Prophet* 614 [footnote]), is a reference to the papacy of Pope Stephen III (752-57), who received from the Frankish King Pepin III (the Short) the land that was to become the foundation for the temporal, territorial power of the Popes (*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* 1309, 1044).[434] Sheen is also mistaken (30-31) in thinking that Dostoyevsky's opening description of Jesus as he walks among the worshipful crowds of sixteenth-century Seville (*The Brothers Karamazov* 229-30)[435] refers to the Grand Inquisitor. This is a misreading that turns Christ into a precursor of the Antichrist. In fairness to Sheen, however, it should be noted that Dostoyevsky does believe that there will be some kind of fusion between Catholicism and socialism: in *The Devils*, he makes the revolutionary Petr Verkhovenskii express the desire to deliver the world to the Pope. Petr says to Stavrogin: "So the pope will be on top, us around him,

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[433] *PSS* 14: 234; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5.

[434] Speaking--again ventriloquistically--through the mouths of Miusov and Father Paisii in the first monastery episode in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoyevsky accuses Pope St. Gregory VII (1073-85) of having transformed the Church into the state, thus betraying Christianity (57; *PSS* 14: 61-62; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 5). Pope St. Gregory VII had militantly defended the prerogatives of the Church against the state during the controversy over lay investiture, even going so far as to excommunicate and depose Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV. St. Gregory VII humiliated the emperor by making him do penance at Canossa in 1077 (*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* 596, 633). While eight centuries separate Dostoyevsky from St. Gregory VII--just as eight centuries separate the Grand Inquisitor from Stephen III--Frank has to be correct in identifying Stephen III, not St. Gregory VII, as the source of the time indicator in "The Grand Inquisitor," for the eight centuries must be counted backward from the time of the Grand Inquisitor, who is speaking in the sixteenth century (227; *PSS* 14: 224; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5), not the nineteenth.

[435] *PSS* 14: 226-27; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5.

and below us, society organized along Shigalov's lines. All that's needed is for the International to come to terms with the pope, which is bound to happen" (400).[436]

Given the "we shall allow them even sin" text, it is clear that the central point of "The Grand Inquisitor" is Dostoyevsky's contention that the Catholic Church is a concrete and monumental embodiment of moral evil, and a veritable scandal all by herself. Moreover, I suggest that this renowned text cries out for a long overdue deconstruction in the light of that contention. I cannot agree with Camus when he interprets the Grand Inquisitor, at the end of the chapter entitled "The Rejection of Salvation" in *L'Homme révolté*, as "a prophetic prefiguration of Stalinism, degenerate socialism and totalitarian philanthropy"--to quote the characterization of Davison (129). Here are Camus's own words, which I have quoted previously: "From Paul to Stalin, the Popes who have chosen Caesar have prepared the way for Caesars who choose only themselves" (*Essais* 471).[437] Camus also says the following in *L'Homme révolté*: "The totalitarian theocracies of the 20th century, state terror, are thus foretold. The new lords and the grand inquisitors rule today, making use of the revolt of the oppressed, over a part of our history" (*Essais* 581).[438]

The French novelist goes beyond Stalin to mention the Popes, but I believe that he is mistaken--at least if he means that the *principal and immediate* objective of "The

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[436] "Папа вверху, мы кругом, а под нами шигалевщина. Надо только, чтобы с папой Internationale согласилась; так и будет" (*PSS* 10: 323; pt. 2, ch. 8).

In *The Devils*, Shigalev is a revolutionary theorist who proposes a totalitarian society.

[437] "*De Paul à Staline, les papes qui ont choisi César ont préparé la voie aux Césars qui ne choisissent qu'eux-mêmes*" (my translation).

I do not understand why Bower translates the final clause as "who quickly learn to despise popes" (*Rebel* 61). The Pléiade text contains no variant.

[438] "*Les théocraties totalitaires du XX^e^ siècle, la terreur d'État, sont ainsi annoncées. Les nouveaux seigneurs et les grands inquisiteurs règnent aujourd'hui, utilisant la révolte des opprimés, sur une partie de notre histoire*" (*Rebel* 175; my translation).

Grand Inquisitor" is to predict, and condemn in advance, the kinds of totalitarian states that the twentieth century witnessed. One has only to read the virulent, almost violent, denunciation of Catholicism in the discourse of the gentle, sensitive Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot* (525-31),[439] and the similar attacks that Dostoyevsky utters in his own voice in *A Writer's Diary*,[440] to realize that, primarily, the Grand Inquisitor is much more an embodiment of Blessed Pope Pius IX (1846-78) and Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), the Popes of most of Dostoyevsky's adulthood, than he is a precursor of any future Stalin. But one does not have to go further than the immediate text itself--which often seems to be ignored in critical discussion--to assent to the view that I am defending. Referring to the Grand Inquisitor, Ivan himself says: "I tell you frankly that I firmly believe that there

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[439] *PSS* 8: 449-53; pt. 4, ch. 7.

[440] In the November 1877 issue of *A Writer's Diary*, in an article entitled "Once More, for the Last Time, Some Soothsayings," Dostoyevsky speaks of the "power of the worldwide Catholic conspiracy [силе католического всемирного заговора]" (2: 1213; *PSS* 26: 88). In an article entitled "The Moment Must Be Seized" in the same issue, he states: "Naturally, Catholicism will find slaughter, blood, pillage, and perhaps even cannibalism to be advantageous. [Разумеется, католичеству даже выгодна будет резня, кровь, грабеж и хотя бы даже антропофагия]" (2: 1216; *PSS* 26: 90). Fusing Russian Orthodoxy with his intense Russian nationalism, he also asserts in this article that the might of Bismarck's Germany and her Protestantism will not be enough to counter Catholicism: "But they will not stop the monster: it will be stopped and vanquished by a reunited East and the new Word it will utter to humanity. . . . [Но не они остановят чудовище: остановит и победит его воссоединенный Восток и новое слово, которое скажет он человечеству . . .]" (2: 1217; *PSS* 26: 91).

It might be thought that associating Catholicism with a desire to exploit cannibalism represents the apogee of Dostoyevsky's hatred of the Catholic Church. That is not the case. In *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*, before sweepingly accusing the Anglican Church of crass, hypocritical indifference to the plight of the English poor, Dostoyevsky attacks Catholic priests who feed and clothe destitute English families, insinuating that their acts of charity are motivated solely by the desire to gain converts (50-52; *PSS* 5: 72-73; ch. 5). In the same section of that travelogue, he considers it sinister that Catholics are also distributing tracts to the impoverished London masses to spread belief in the resurrection in the next world as the ultimate consolation for their sufferings in this world. And this from the novelist who makes Sonia's reading of Lazarus's resurrection one of the climactic and most affecting moments of *Crime and Punishment*. Logically, the next paragraph in the report of Dostoyevsky's London visit ought to have pilloried Charles Dickens for having written *A Christmas Carol*.

has always been such a man among those who stood at the head of the movement. Who knows, there may have been some such even among the Roman popes" (242).[441]

The central accusation that the Grand Inquisitor lodges against Jesus is that he wrongly rejected the three "powers" that the Grand Inquisitor and his colleagues--the Popes and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church--are using to enslave the masses of Catholic Europe and, eventually, in league with the socialists, the entire world. This triad of "powers" allegedly foresworn by Christ but eagerly taken up by Catholicism consists of *miracle*, *mystery*, and *authority*. The Grand Inquisitor tells Jesus:

> There are three powers, three powers alone, able to conquer and to hold captive forever the conscience of these impotent rebels for their happiness --those forces are miracle, mystery and authority. Thou hast rejected all three and hast set the example for doing so. (236)[442]

In this tripartite formula, paralleling the threefold temptation offered to Christ by the Devil in the desert in an attempt to divert him from his Messianic mission, Dostoyevsky believes that he has identified the quintessence of the concretized, massive evil represented by the Catholic Church. Dostoyevsky begins to allude to Jesus's temptation in the desert when he makes the Grand Inquisitor say: "The wise and dread serpent, the spirit of self-destruction and nonexistence, [. . .] the great spirit talked with

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[441] "Я тебе прямо говорю, что я твердо верую, что этот единый человек и не оскудевал никогда между стоящими во главе движения. Кто знает, может быть, случались и между римскими первосвященниками эти единые" (*PSS* 14: 238-39; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5).

[442] "Есть три силы, единственные три силы на земле, могущие навеки победить и пленить совесть этих слабосильных бунтовщиков, для их счастия,--эти силы: чудо, тайна и авторитет. Ты отверг и то, и другое, и третье и сам подал пример тому" (*PSS* 14: 232; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5).

Thee in the wilderness, and we are told in the books that he 'tempted' Thee" (232).[443] This is a reference to the narratives in *Mt* 4:1-11 and *Lk* 4:1-13. In the vision of the Russian novelist, the three demonic powers of miracle, mystery, and authority are employed by the corrupt, atheistic inquisitor and his criminal accomplices throughout history in a spurious philanthropic mission whose ostensible purpose is to benefit, even save, humanity, but which, in reality, cruelly degrades, utterly infantilizes, and wretchedly deceives the faithful in a huge confidence scheme.

Permeating this frenzied indictment is Dostoyevsky's hatred for the Jesuits, and for the whole panoply of tactics that they supposedly deploy to achieve their nefarious ends, including the alleged permission to commit sin. This last accusation is a possible echo of the Russian novelist's reading of Blaise Pascal's anti-Jesuit tract *Les Provinciales* [*Provincial Letters*], which can be found in the Pléiade edition of Pascal's complete works (657-904). Concerning the Grand Inquisitor, Ivan Karamazov tells Alesha: "More than that, one such standing at the head is enough to create the actual leading idea of the Roman Church with all its armies and Jesuits, its highest idea" (242).[444] In Dostoyevsky's mind, the Jesuits are especially implicated in the Catholic Church's alleged practice of allowing her members to sin; this is clear from the fact that the devil who later visits Ivan refers to his (the devil's) taking delight in "[t]hose Jesuit

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[443] "Страшный и умный дух, дух самоуничтожения и небытия, [. . .] великий дух говорил с тобой в пустыне, и нам передано в книгах, что он будто бы „искушал" тебя" (*PSS* 14: 229; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5).

[444] "Мало того: довольно и одного такого, стоящего во главе, чтобы нашлась наконец настоящая руководящая идея всего римского дела со всеми его армиями и иезуитами, высшая идея этого дела" (*PSS* 14: 238; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5).

confessionals" (613),[445] his (and Dostoyevsky's) innuendo being that "Jesuit casuistry" (613)[446] is a clever way of excusing sin.

The spiritual descendants of St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, are assumed to be among the masterminds of this unspeakably diabolical worldwide plot, which Dostoyevsky takes several pages of envenomed prose to expose--pages which, as first published without paragraphs, mirror the rhetorical crescendo of the uncontrollable, unstoppable animus that drives his pen. In volume 14 of the *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* edition of Dostoyevsky's works, the longest paragraph of "The Grand Inquisitor" starts around the middle of page 230 and continues unbroken to a third of the way down page 237, for a total of about *seven* (!) pages of text in a rather small font. This is undoubtedly one of the longest paragraphs in world literature, and it is certainly *not* among the most calmly and rationally written ones.[447] It is a puzzle how Denis Dirscherl, despite this and other Dostoyevsky passages, can say the following of *A Writer's Diary*: "As a publicist and journalist, he was at his passionate and polemical best. Issue-conscious, he displayed an absence of control and discipline that were evident

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[445] "исповедальных этих иезуитских будочек" (*PSS* 15: 81; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 9).

[446] "иезуитская казуистика" (*PSS* 15: 81; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 9).

A mere etymological study of the word "casuistry" is enough to show that, in itself, the use of casuistry by Jesuits or others, including unbelievers, is ethically blameless. Deriving from *casus*, the Latin word for "case," casuistry simply means applying moral principles to concrete cases. For example, anyone who finds a lost object and decides, in the light of its value, whether it is necessary to try to return the object to its owner is engaging in casuistry. On a broader level, anyone who asks what he or she ought, in an ethical sense, to do in this or that situation is a casuist.

[447] It may seem that the Russian novelist is so anxious to sate his anger against the Catholic Church, the papacy, and the Jesuit order that he fails to take the time to pause for inserting paragraph indentations, but the lack of paragraphing is the fault of the editor of *Russian Messenger*, in which *The Brothers Karamazov* was first published. Dostoyevsky complains about the lack of paragraphs in his August 7/19, 1879, letter to Nikolai Liubimov (Frank and Goldstein 478; *PSS* 30, pt. 1: 103).

in his more artistic creations (134)." And, on top of this excessively sanguine discernment of control and discipline in Dostoyevsky's fiction, Dirscherl is a Jesuit![448]

The process of rationally dissecting Dostoyevsky's nightmare vision of the Catholic Church as Satan's agent must be based on the core quotation regarding the three "powers," especially since the Russian novelist claims to derive this polemical schema from the episode of the temptation of Christ in the Gospels themselves. The first thing that should strike the informed reader, regardless of his or her religious convictions, is that Christ's thrice-repeated refusal to do the Devil's bidding during the temptation in the desert cannot possibly mean that Christ spurns any one of these three Dostoyevskian instrumentalities in principle.

Not *miracle*, because the four Gospels are saturated with narratives of miracle after miracle performed by Jesus for the purpose of leading people to faith in him. Referring to his healings and other miracles, Jesus tells the crowd: "If I do not perform my Father's works, do not believe me; but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may realize [and understand] that the Father is in me and I am in the Father " (*Jn* 10:37-38).[449] And has Dostoyevsky forgotten that, only six pages before his assault on miracle, mystery, and authority, he has the Christ who

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[448] Father Dirscherl's statement, made in *Dostoevsky and the Catholic Church*, could be expressed with greater clarity. Still, unless he makes the syntactical error of using the plural verb "were" instead of the singular verb "was" in his second sentence, I understand him to be saying that Dostoyevsky is undisciplined in his non-fiction but disciplined in his fiction.

What is even more surprising than Dirscherl's being a Jesuit is that he precedes the sentences quoted in the body of this dissertation with an admission that conflicts with his general statement about the supposed restraint in Dostoyevsky's fiction: "Except for the sudden outburst in *The Idiot* and the *Legend of the Grand Inquisitor*, it is important to recall that Dostoevsky's harshest words of the West and the Catholic Church were in his *Diary*" (134).

[449] "εἰ οὐ ποιῶ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πατρός μου, μὴ πιστεύετέ μοι· εἰ δὲ ποιῶ, κἂν ἐμοὶ μὴ πιστεύητε, τοῖς ἔργοις πιστεύετε, ἵνα γνῶτε καὶ γινώσκητε ὅτι ἐν ἐμοὶ ὁ πατὴρ κἀγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρί."

The brackets appear, not in the Greek text, but only in the New American Bible.

unexpectedly arrives in sixteenth-century Seville perform two miracles: the cure of an aged blind man, and the resuscitation of a dead seven-year-old girl (229-30)?[450] And has he also forgotten that, in one of the greatest chapters of *Crime and Punishment* (266-80),[451] he has Sonia read to Raskol'nikov the resurrection of Lazarus from the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of St. John? Prompted by chief investigator Porfirii Petrovich's having previously asked him whether he believes in the raising of Lazarus (221),[452] Raskol'nikov initiates this moving scene by asking Sonia: "Where is that about Lazarus?" (274).[453] Clearly, Sonia, and thus Dostoyevsky himself, realize the evidentiary and apologetic significance of the raising of Lazarus. In her emotional reading, Sonia stresses the word "four" in Martha's statement to Jesus that Lazarus's corpse has now decomposed after having been dead for four days (*Jn* 11:39), and the narrator indicates that Sonia is burning with the hope that Raskol'nikov, like those who witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus, will also attain faith as a result of this miracle (277).[454]

For all the above reasons, Dostoyevsky's attack on miracle as a weapon of the Grand Inquisitor and his demonic associates has the effect of undermining the very Christianity that the Russian novelist wants to defend, for miracle has for centuries been considered by both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church as one of the *motiva credibilitatis* ("motives of credibility"), i.e., rational foundations for demonstrating that Christianity is worthy of credence as the only true religion. It is

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[450] *PSS* 14: 227; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5.

[451] *PSS* 6: 241-53; pt. 4, ch. 4.

[452] *PSS* 6: 201; pt. 3, ch. 5.

[453] "--Где тут про Лазаря?" (*PSS* 6: 249; pt. 4, ch. 4).

[454] *PSS* 6: 251; pt. 4, ch. 4.

especially by associating miracle with evil that the Russian novelist does the most to subvert his own objective of showing that Russian Orthodoxy has the answer to the scandal of evil as invoked with such passion in Ivan's discourse on the suffering and death of children. The foregoing considerations need to be taken into account when evaluating a statement made by Paul Evdokimov, author of *Dostoïevsky et le problème du mal* [*Dostoyevsky and the Problem of Evil*]. Evdokimov says of Dostoyevsky: "Moreover, life, from his viewpoint, is doubly tragic; it contains not only the tragedy of man, but also that of God: the tragedy of God consists of the fact that He must be accepted freely by man and therefore cannot impose himself on him by immediate evidence" (36).[455] As far as both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church are concerned, even though man's *free will* makes it possible for his *intellect* to reject *any* kind of evidence, the miracles narrated in the Gospels, having actually occurred in history, are valid evidence of the existence of God and of the rationality of believing in him.[456]

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[455] "*De plus, la vie, de son point de vue, est doublement tragique; elle contient non seulement la tragédie de l'homme, mais aussi celle de Dieu: la tragédie de Dieu consiste en ce qu'Il doit être accepté librement par l'homme et donc ne peut s'imposer à lui par une évidence immédiate*" (my translation).

[456] It may be objected that Evdokimov is speaking only of the *immediate* evidence that is provided when a miracle takes place in front of one's own eyes, or at least in one's own milieu. Even in these cases, however, man's free will can still lead to a denial of facts and to a refusal of belief. St. John, for example, in addition to reporting that the religious authorities refuse to acknowledge that Lazarus has been resurrected by divine power, also recounts that they try to kill Lazarus (*Jn* 12:9-11).

Christian tradition maintains that veracious historical testimony, even if it comes across the centuries, is as probative as personally witnessing a miracle. In this sense, from the perspective of both Russian Orthodoxy and Catholicism, the miracles in the Gospels are Evdokimov's immediate evidence. This must be understood, however, with the critical proviso that the inquirer must be in *bona fides*. In this regard, the words of Abraham in the parable of the beggar and the rich man who is condemned to hell are relevant: "If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead. [Εἰ Μωϋσέως καὶ τῶν προφητῶν οὐκ ἀκούουσιν, οὐδ' ἐάν τις ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῇ πεισθήσονται]" (*Lk*: 16:31). After Sonia's moving reading of the raising of Lazarus, does Raskol'nikov, still enmeshed in nihilism, immediately repudiate his unbelief and return to faith?

Consider, too, the narrator's words in *The Brothers Karamazov*: "The genuine realist, if he is an unbeliever, will always find strength and ability to disbelieve in the miraculous, and if he is confronted with a miracle as an irrefutable fact he would rather disbelieve his own senses than admit the fact. [Истинный

Nor--to continue this deconstruction of the Grand Inquisitor--does Jesus reject *mystery*, for it is Jesus who says to his disciples: "Knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God has been granted to you [. . .]" (*Lk* 8:10).[457] Moreover, Russian Orthodoxy is united with Catholicism in teaching that the central doctrines of the Christian religion--the Blessed Trinity (one God in three distinct Persons), and the Incarnation (two natures, divine and human, coexisting in the one Person of God the Son)--are supernatural mysteries in the strict sense, since human knowledge, while being able to see that these concepts involve no contradiction, is nevertheless incapable of sounding their depths. And, to cite a doctrine more directly relevant to the main topic of this dissertation, God's power to draw good out of every evil without exception--even the scandalous suffering and death of children--is also a mystery not fully accessible to the human mind in this world.

Nor does Jesus exclude *authority*, since the Evangelist Matthew tells us that one of the reasons why the young itinerant rabbi made such an overwhelming impression on the people was that "[. . .] he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (*Mt* 7:29).[458] It is Jesus himself who tells his followers: "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (*Mt* 28:18).[459] The conclusion is ineluctable, even for an unbeliever: if Dostoyevsky insists on referring pejoratively to miracles, mystery, and

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реалист, если он не верующий, всегда найдет в себе силу и способность не поверить и чуду, а если чудо станет пред ним неотразимым фактом, то он скорее не поверит своим чувствам, чем допустит факт]" (19-20; *PSS* 14: 24; pt. 1, bk. 1, ch. 5).

[457] "Ὑμῖν δέδοται γνῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ [. . .]."

[458] "[. . .] ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν."

[459] "'Εδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆσ] γῆς."

The same word--ἐξουσία ("power, authority")--appears in both *Mt* 7:29 and *Mt* 28:18. The brackets appear in the Greek text.

authority, tainting them by linking them to the infernal machinations of a putatively corrupt, and even Satanic, Catholicism, and if he also insists on misinterpreting Christ's rejection of the Devil's triple temptation, then the Russian novelist has to reject Christ himself, thus subverting Russian Orthodoxy no less than Catholicism, and destroying the very ground on which he stands. An observation made by James Wood, who intends it in a somewhat different sense, may be applied to Dostoyevsky's self-subversion: "And that troubled believer, Dostoevsky, in the 'Grand Inquisitor' section of *The Brothers Karamazov*, delivers a hammer-blow to the cathedral-door of orthodox faith" (89). So fierce is Dostoyevsky's detestation of the Catholic Church, however, that he cannot see this obvious point. This conclusion has a corollary: one does not have to try too hard to deconstruct the morally sick and pitifully deluded Grand Inquisitor, because he deconstructs himself in the very sentences of Dostoyevsky's unrestrained text. One has only to draw attention to the contradictions that shout out to the informed reader.

It is not simply the Gospels that Dostoyevsky contradicts. He even contradicts the remainder of *The Brothers Karamazov*. With evident authorial approbation, the dying Father Zosima warmly commends each one of the triple powers against which the novelist fulminates in his febrile attack on the evils that he associates with Catholicism and the Jesuits. First, with respect to *miracle*, it is Father Zosima who fervently tells his disciples that the clergy should read Scripture to the people, including in their reading the "miraculous story of Jonah in the whale" (273).[460] As for *mystery*, it is Father Zosima who says the following to his fellow monks in reference to the astoundingly terrifying reversal that torments Job, yet without causing Job to turn away from God and thus be

[460] "чудное сказание о пророке Ионе во чреве китове" (*PSS* 14: 267; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 2, sect. b).

overwhelmed by the scandal of evil: "But the greatness of it lies just in the fact that it is a mystery--that the passing earthly show and the eternal verity are brought together in it" (271).[461] Lastly, as for *authority*, it is the revered Father Zosima, Dostoyevsky's teacher no less than Alesha's, who praises obedience to authority by stating: "Obedience, fasting and prayer are laughed at, yet only through them lies the way to real, true freedom" (293).[462] If Dostoyevsky wishes to attack miracle, mystery, and authority, then not only is he attacking the evil Grand Inquisitor and all his insidious co-conspirators, but he is also assailing the saintly Father Zosima--and the Russian Orthodox Church herself, for Father Zosima symbolizes Russian Orthodoxy.

Perhaps the most appropriate way to end this deconstruction of "The Grand Inquisitor" is to apply to this chapter the words that Dostoyevsky himself, speaking as the conventional third-person narrator of *The Idiot*, applies to Prince Myshkin's outburst against Catholicism in the Epanchins' drawing room. Myshkin's anger is ignited to the point of explosion on learning that a certain Pavlishchev had become a Catholic and--*horrendum dictu*!--a Jesuit; Vergil's expression of horror in the *Aeneid* (bk. 4, line 454)[463] seems especially appropriate in this context. The outraged prince is eventually forced to terminate his diatribe only because his wildly swinging arm has accidentally knocked over a priceless china vase, smashing it to pieces. Shortly before the "scandal"

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[461] "Но в том и великое, что тут тайна,--что мимоидущий лик земной и вечная истина соприкоснулись тут вместе" (*PSS* 14: 265; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 2, sect. b).

[462] "Над послушанием, постом и молитвой даже смеются, а между тем лишь в них заключается путь к настоящей, истинной уже свободе [. . .]" (*PSS* 14: 285; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. e).

[463] Loeb 1: 426-27.

(531)[464] of this climax in the presence of the astounded guests, the narrator comments as follows:

> This wild tirade, this rush of strange and agitated words and confused, enthusiastic ideas, which seemed tripping each other up and tumbling over one another in confusion, all seemed suggestive of something ominous in the mental condition of the young man who had broken out so suddenly, apropos of nothing. (530)[465]

As in the case of Dostoyevsky's animus against Jews, one gets the impression that his hatred of the Catholic Church coexists with awareness, at some level of the novelist's psyche, that this hatred is irrational.

**Camus's Movement Away from Absurdism**

Let us turn now to Camus's reaction to moral evil. The first observation that I wish to make in this regard concerns a statement in *L'Homme révolté*, the long philosophical and historical study which he published in 1951. In this statement about the nihilistic approach to moral evil, Camus says that, if we are nihilists, then "[w]e are

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[464] "скандал" (*PSS* 8: 454; pt. 4, ch. 7).

[465] "Вся эта горячешная [sic] тирада, весь этот наплыв страстных и беспокойных слов и восторженных мыслей, как бы толкавшихся в какой-то суматохе и перескакивавших одна через другую, всё это предрекало что-то опасное, что-то особенное в настроении так внезапно вскипевшего, по-видимому ни с того ни с сего, молодого человека" (*PSS* 8: 453; pt. 4, ch. 7).

Myshkin's hatred of Catholicism appears to be largely unmotivated, whereas Ivan Karamazov's may be motivated in part by adherence to Freemasonry, a major antagonist of the Catholic Church. Alesha wonders whether Ivan is a Freemason (242-43; *PSS* 14: 239; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5), and Dmitrii believes that this is the case. Dmitrii even reports that he had asked Ivan whether he was a Freemason, and that Ivan had refused to answer (561; *PSS* 15: 32; pt. 4, bk. 11, ch. 4). Anyone who has read Tolstoy's *War and Peace* knows that Freemasonry existed in nineteenth-century Russia: through Bazdeev, Pierre Bezukhov is initiated into a Masonic lodge (377-94; bk. 5, ch. 1-ch. 2). In my bibliography's Russian text of *War and Peace*, this eerie segment can be found on pages 333-48 in vol. 1; in that edition, the section numbers are vol. 2, pt. 2, ch. 1-ch. 4.

free to stoke the crematory fires or to devote ourselves to the care of lepers" (*Rebel* 5)[466]--a lapidary assertion that has already been highlighted in this dissertation. This declaration shows that, even in 1951, Camus has already begun to move away from strict absurdism toward some kind of *rapprochement*, even if only inchoate, with Dostoyevsky's position and that of Christianity. In Camus's earlier works, however, his outlook on moral evil is light years away from that of Dostoyevsky. At that time, and even later in his intellectual trajectory, the French novelist prefers to concentrate on social, political, and economic, rather than on individual, personal, and sexual, evils.

In keeping with this tendency, Camus obscures the personal responsibility of Meursault in *L'Étranger* and that of his near namesake Mersault in *La Mort heureuse*. Reading those novels, one gets the impression that Camus is indifferent to the question of culpability. Even though major elements in *L'Étranger* converge with major elements in both *Crime and Punishment* (the killing) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (the trial), one can hardly imagine, in view of the ethical casualness that seems to pervade both of Camus's aforementioned novels, that Dostoyevsky could have written them. Readers may interpret Camus's circumvention of the issue of culpability in *L'Étranger* as a deliberate obfuscation, especially if they consider the ambiguous circumstances beclouding Meursault's shooting of the Arab. Whereas no one can say that Dostoyevsky is unclear about Raskol'nikov's responsibility for the killing of the woman pawnbroker and her half-sister, Lizaveta, the moral and legal responsibility of Meursault for the death of the Arab is not clear--at least to the author of this dissertation.

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[466] "*On peut tisonner les crématoires comme on peut aussi se dévouer à soigner les lépreux*" (*Essais* 415).

In this connection, I must disagree with Beránková, who, as has already been pointed out, feels that Meursault's culpability for the moral evil of manslaughter is unambiguous. Vigorously contesting Camus's statement that Meursault "is willing to die for the truth" (*Théâtre* 1928),[467] and bluntly calling the protagonist of *L'Étranger* a murderer, she contends that "[t]he fact that society condemned him in the name of a dubious justice, much more for 'having buried his mother with a heart of a criminal' than for having murdered the Arab, in no way absolves him from his crime" (169 [footnote 470])**.**[468] This judgment is, under the extenuating circumstances that Camus sets forth in the novel, so harsh and peremptory that I must say, with great respect for Beránková, that I should not wish to have her on my jury. One of the extenuating circumstances may be that Meursault experiences disorientation arising from a heatstroke.[469] Note the emphasis that Camus accords to the relentlessness of the scorching sun: "It seemed to me as if the sky split open from one end to the other to rain down fire" (*Stranger* 59).[470]

Camus's failure fully to ground his position on evil is glaringly apparent in *L'Homme révolté*. The deficiencies of this work jump out in the passages that are more or less opaque, or that contain outlandish generalizations such as Camus's approbation of the remark in which "Stendhal noticed an essential difference between Germans and other people in the fact that they are excited by meditation rather than soothed" (*Rebel*

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[467] "*accepte de mourir pour la vérité*" (my translation).

[468] "*Le fait que la société l'ait condamné en vertu d'une justice douteuse, beaucoup plus pour «avoir enterré sa mère avec un coeur de criminel» que pour avoir assassiné l'Arabe, ne le lave nullement de son crime*" (my translation).

It was the prosecutor at Meursault's trial who cried out: "Yes [. . .] I accuse this man of having buried a mother with a heart of a criminal. [*Oui [. . .] j'accuse cet homme d'avoir enterré une mère avec un coeur de criminel*]" (*Stranger* 96; *Théâtre* 1194; my translation).

[469] Heatstroke may lead to medical shock; see Dr. Wingate's discussion of heatstroke in *The Penguin Medical Encyclopedia* (216).

[470] "*Il m'a semblé que le ciel s'ouvrait sur toute son étendue pour laisser pleuvoir du feu*" (*Théâtre* 1168).

149).[471] And what is one to make of this cryptic assertion: "Hitler was history in its purest form" (*Rebel* 179)?[472] Moreover, is it not anti-historical to say that "Hitler, in any case, invented the perpetual motion of conquest, without which he would have been nothing at all" (*Rebel* 181)?[473] Still, one can say that Camus balances these lapses with an open and honest admission of the fatal--one can even say scandalous--contradictions that bedevil his own philosophy of absurdism, even in its mitigated form:

> I proclaim that I believe in nothing and that everything is absurd, but I cannot doubt the validity of my proclamation and I must at least believe in my protest. (*Rebel* 10)[474]

This is a pivotal sentence: in it, Camus himself neatly deconstructs absurdism (as well as any kind of radical philosophical skepticism). Aristotle, Plato, or St. Thomas Aquinas could not have delivered a more lethal blow to the absurdist enterprise. The point that Camus makes here is on the same level as Aristotle's devastating (and entertaining) refutation of radical skepticism in Book 4 of the *Metaphysics*, in which the Stagirite notes that Cratylus, who deemed it impossible to make any true statement, "ended by thinking that one need not say anything, and only moved his finger [. . .]" (1010 a).[475] In fact, it may be said that Aristotle, preceding Jacques Derrida by twenty-

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[471] "*Stendhal voyait une première différence des Allemands avec les autres peuples en ce qu'ils s'exaltent par la méditation au lieu de se calmer*" (*Essais* 556).

[472] "*Hitler était l'histoire à l'état pur*" (*Essais* 585).

[473] "*Hitler, dans tous les cas, a inventé le mouvement perpétuel de la conquête sans lequel il n'eût rien été*" (*Essais* 587).

[474] "*Je crie que je ne crois à rien et que tout est absurde, mais je ne puis douter de mon cri et il me faut au moins croire à ma protestation*" (*Essais* 419).

[475] "[. . .] τὸ τελευταῖον οὐθὲν ᾤετο δεῖν λέγειν ἀλλὰ τὸν δάκτυλον ἐκίνει μόνον [. . .]" (Loeb 1: 188-89).

two centuries, is one of the first deconstructionists. Here are the Greek philosopher's own words refuting all forms of universal skepticism in his *Metaphysics*:

> Indeed, the consequence follows which is notorious in the case of all such theories, that they destroy themselves; for he who says that everything is true makes the opposite theory true too, and therefore his own untrue (for the opposite theory says that his is not true); and he who says that everything is false makes himself a liar. (1012 b)[476]

In the light of Camus's own candid admissions, it is not altogether surprising to find the French novelist conceding early in *L'Homme révolté* that "[t]he absurd is, in itself, contradiction" (*Rebel* 8).[477] It is, however, somewhat surprising to find Camus quoting the above Aristotelian passage in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (which is closer to out-and-out absurdism than is *L'Homme révolté*) and granting that "[o]ver the centuries no one has furnished a clearer and more elegant demonstration of the business than Aristotle [. . .]" (*Myth* 16).[478]

Beránková is justified when, commenting on the "considerable dangers for Camusian morality" (19)[479] in what she sees as Camus's identification with Dostoyevsky's nihilistic rebels, she poses the following questions:

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[476] "συμβαίνει δὴ καὶ τὸ θρηλούμενον πᾶσι τοῖς τοιούτοις λόγοις, ἀυτοὺς ἑαυτοὺς ἀναιρεῖν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ πάντα ἀληθῆ λέγων καὶ τὸν ἐναντίον ἁυτοῦ λόγον ἀληθῆ ποιεῖ, ὥστε τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ὀυκ ἀληθῆ (ὁ γὰρ ἐναντίος οὔ φησιν αὐτὸν ἀληθῆ), ὁ δὲ πάντα ψευδῆ καὶ ἀυτὸς ἁυτόν" (Loeb 1: 204-05).

[477] "*L'absurde en lui-même est contradiction*" (*Essais* 417).

[478] "*Depuis des siècles personne n'a donné de l'affaire une démonstration plus claire et plus élégante que ne le fit Aristote [. . .]*" (*Essais* 109).

[479] "*dangers considérables pour la morale camusienne*."

> Making his own the arguments of Dostoyevsky's metaphysical "murderers," does not the French writer also risk succumbing to this justification for crime, a justification that he denounces with so much *brio* in his philosophical works? Do the theoretical foundations of Camusian morality show themselves to be sufficiently solid and unshakable to withstand such a temptation? (19)[480]

Leaving aside the question of the extent to which Camus identifies with Dostoyevsky's rebellious characters (did Camus wish to be linked too closely with Raskol'nikov the ax murderer and Stavrogin the child molester?), I maintain that Beránková is too hesitant in making her point via interrogation. There is *no doubt* that Camus subverts his own morality by failing to ground it on philosophically "unshakable" bases.

As I have indicated at the outset of this chapter, it is fair to say that, over the course of his career, and for the most part, Camus, in contrast with Dostoyevsky, tends to emphasize moral evils of a social, political, and economic nature, and also physical evils, the chief physical evil for Camus being death. In keeping with this tendency, Camus largely circumvents issues of sexual ethics, until he publishes *La Chute* in 1956. In that work, Clamence's mistreatment of women clearly emerges as a moral issue, but this sudden breakthrough occurs only after the question has been generally ignored in Camus's novels *La Mort heureuse* and *L'Étranger*, in whose androcentric atmosphere women are reduced to the function of satisfying the sensual needs of men.

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[480] "*Reprenant à son compte les arguments des «meurtriers» métaphysiques de Dostoïevski, l'écrivain français ne risque-t-il pas de succomber, lui aussi, à cette justification du crime qu'il dénonce avec tant de brio dans ses oeuvres philosophiques? Les fondements théoriques de la morale camusienne s'avèrent-ils suffisamment solides et inébranlables pour supporter une telle tentation*?"

An indication of this perspective is to be found in *L'Étranger* when Raymond says of his girlfriend: "*qu'il avait encore un sentiment pour son coït*" (*Théâtre* 1147). This is difficult to translate into English. Matthew Ward renders it as "still had sexual feelings for her" (*Stranger* 31), but this is too oblique: it sidesteps Raymond's intention to refer bluntly to sexual intercourse. In fact, a translator might feel tempted to use the Anglo-Saxon vulgarity for sexual union in this case in deference to Raymond's personality and the context, even though *coït* is not a vulgar word in French. Nevertheless, especially in 1942, a French publisher would have been reluctant to print the French equivalent of the English vulgarity, even if the verbally circumspect Camus had wanted to use it. It is somewhat surprising that Raymond's attitude toward his girlfriend--remember that Raymond cannot even write his own letter summoning his girlfriend to her "punishment" for having cheated on him--is conveyed using the Latinate *coït*, which, paradoxically, seems both inappropriate and appropriate at the same time. *Le Petit Robert* [*The Little Robert*], a French dictionary that helpfully provides apposite examples of the precise ways in which the luminaries of French literature employ the words of their language, offers no quotations for the use of *coït*, not even Camus's sentence. It seems that a better translation of this sentence, especially in today's colloquial English, would be "he liked having sex with her**"** or "he liked the way she had sex with him." This reaction on the part of Raymond summarizes what a woman is in much of Camus's fiction: someone with whom a man "has sex." Clearly, in such a world, sexuality is not generally an area for the discernment of moral evil--except, perhaps, in the case of prostitution. When Raymond and Meursault hang out together, Raymond suggests a visit to a bordello, but Meursault declines "because I don't like that"

(*Stranger* 38).[481] Still, one might ascribe Meursault's unwillingness, not to any ethical concern on his part or Camus's, but rather to the fact that both Meursault and Camus had no trouble attracting women, which eliminates the perceived need to pay for sexual favors.

Far different is Dostoyevsky's treatment of evil in the field of sexual morality, including the manner in which men should treat women. Dostoyevsky's divergent approach to these questions is especially evident when he deals with prostitution in *Notes from Underground* and *Crime and Punishment*, to say nothing of the sexual abuse of minors, a topic that this dissertation has already covered in depth. But Dostoyevsky goes even further in reflecting his belief in the truth of the Christian sexual ethic. In *Notes from Underground*, he has Mouse mention the anxiety and frustration that he experiences because of one of his nocturnal pursuits: "I indulged in depravity all alone, at night, furtively, timidly, sordidly, with a feeling of shame that never left me even in my most loathsome moments and drove me at such times to the point of profanity" (34).[482] It does not seem that Mouse is alluding to drinking alone or going to houses of prostitution by himself, and the conclusion as to what he is confessing (we should note that the original title of *Notes from Underground* was *Confession*) appears to be corroborated by the fact that the following sentence was struck from a manuscript of Stavrogin's suppressed confession in *The Devils*: "Having indulged up to the age of sixteen with extraordinary immoderation in the vice to which J. J. Rousseau confessed, I stopped it at the very

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[481] "*parce que je n'aime pas ça"* (*Théâtre* 1153).

[482] "Развратничал я уединенно, по ночам, потаенно, боязливо, грязно, со стыдом, не оставлявшим меня в самые омерзительные минуты и даже доходившим в такие минуты до проклятия" (*PSS* 5: 128; pt. 2, ch. 1).

moment which I had fixed, at the age of seventeen" (*Stavrogin's Confession* 45 [footnote 1]).[483]

On this topic, the comment that Camus attributes to Meursault's prison guard in *L'Étranger* reflects an outlook far different from that of Dostoyevsky's. Reacting to Meursault's remark that he misses having a woman, the guard replies: "But they [the prisoners] just end up doing it by themselves" (*Stranger* 78).[484] From the perspective that can be inferred from this remark, and from Camus's general attitude toward gender relationships--and here I emphasize that I am discussing the earlier, pre-*La Chute* Camus --it is accurate to say that, whereas Dostoyevsky is predominantly concerned with moral evil in the sense of issues of personal morality (for example, individual murder, suicide, and sexual ethics), Camus is predominantly interested in moral evil in the sense of issues of political morality (for example, political murder, killing in war, capital punishment, terrorism, and economic oppression).

As has already been pointed out, however, this conclusion should be understood with provisos. Moreover, even when Camus deals with murder or putative murder on the personal level as in *La Mort heureuse* and *L'Étranger*, the issue of the taking of human life is muddled by an ambiguity not to be found in Dostoyevsky's works, and one gets the impression that Camus sympathizes, at least partially, with the murderer Mersault in *La Mort heureuse* as well as with Meursault in *L'Étranger*. The basis for this divergence between Dostoyevsky and Camus is Dostoyevsky's Christian outlook, which Camus, as

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[483] Jean-Jacques Rousseau makes these statements in *Les Confessions* [*Confessions*] (in the English translation 171, 325, 617; in the Pléiade edition 1: 165-66, 316, 1569 [endnote a for page 595]).

[484] "*Mais ils finissent par se soulager eux-mêmes*" (*Théâtre* 1181).

an adherent of absurdism in some form or other during the whole of his public life, does not, and cannot, share.

Camus's focus on economic, as opposed to sexual, manifestations of evil is hardly surprising in view of the working class setting in which the author of *L'Étranger* was born and raised. This focus receives special emphasis in those sections of *L'Homme révolté* in which he discusses Marxism, socialism, and the oppression against which the modern socialist and revolutionary movements have protested. While distancing himself from the communist totalitarianism of the Soviet Union, Camus reaffirms his support for ameliorating the condition of workers**.**

Camus's emphasis on socioeconomic evils is not utterly without precedent in Dostoyevsky's works despite their divergent worldviews. On the contrary, while firmly rejecting the atheism and philosophical materialism historically associated with socialism and the "left," Dostoyevsky exhibits pronounced social concerns throughout his life--even after he begins to support the tsarist autocracy. These concerns, rooted in Russian Orthodoxy rather than unbelief, are especially apparent in the fact that the journal *Time*, of which Dostoyevsky was the editor, praised Friedrich Engels's *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Stir of Liberation, 1860-1865* 95). Christian social doctrine is also prominent in a segment of the pastoral counsel of the dying Father Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Father Zosima condemns the inhuman working conditions in the factories of his time--factories in which child labor was permitted:

> I've seen in the factories children of ten, frail, rickety, bent and already depraved. [. . .] There must be no more of this, monks, nor more torturing of children, rise up and preach that, make haste, make haste! (294)[485]

In this impassioned, urgent expression of Christian concern about social evils in nineteenth-century Russia--a manifesto in which he again refers to the suffering of children--Dostoyevsky is anticipating Camus's condemnation of socioeconomic evil in the twentieth-century. Camus believes that these evils can be fought only on a world scale. In "La Révolution travestie" ["The Revolution Travestied"], he asserts: "Thus, we can speak only of international revolution. Exactly. The revolution will be bought about on a world scale or it will not be brought about" (*Essais* 339).[486] In *La Chute*, after Clamence and his anonymous companion have caught sight of a sign graphically advertising (with the heads of two black slaves) the former house of an Amsterdam slave dealer, Clamence remarks:

> Slavery?--certainly not, we are against it! That we should be forced to establish it at home or in our factories--well, that's natural; but boasting about it, that's the limit! (*Fall* 44)[487]

Camus and Dostoyevsky are thus in agreement on the massive social evil of wage slavery in *laissez-faire* capitalism, but they diverge on the solution to this evil, for the believing Dostoyevsky challenges Camus's atheism in advance by having Father Zosima, after

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[485] "Видал я на фабриках десятилетних даже детей: хилых, чахлых, согбенных и уже развратных. [. . .] Да не будет же сего, иноки, да не будет истязания детей, восстаньте и проповедуйте сие скорее, скорее" (*PSS* 14: 286; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. f).

[486] "*Ainsi, nous ne pouvons parler que de révolution internationale. Exactement, la révolution se fera à l'échelle internationale ou elle ne se fera pas*" (my translation).

[487] "*L'esclavage, ah, mai non, nous sommes contre! Qu'on soit contraint de l'installer chez soi, ou dans les usines, bon, c'est dans l'ordre des choses, mais s'en vanter, c'est le comble*" (*Théâtre* 1498).

having denounced child labor in the factories, immediately go on to make the following proclamation:

> But God will save Russia, for though the peasants are corrupted and cannot renounce their filthy sin, yet they know it is cursed by God and that they do wrong in sinning. So that our people still believe in righteousness, have faith in God and weep tears of devotion.
>
> It is different with the upper classes. They, following science, want to base justice on reason alone, but not with Christ, as before, and they have already proclaimed that there is no crime, that there is no sin. And that's consistent, for if you have no God what is the meaning of crime? (294)[488]

Note how Dostoyevsky, writing from a perspective that is much broader than that of Camus (with the caveats previously admitted in connection with the French novelist's evolution) integrates concern about moral crimes on the individual, personal, and sexual levels with moral crimes on the social, political, and economic levels. Speaking ventriloquistically through Father Zosima, Dostoyevsky concurs with Camus in acknowledging the class divisions of every society, but the Russian novelist immediately elevates his denunciation of moral evils in the workplaces of the modern industrial world (including the danger of the sexual corruption of children) to an appeal for a Christian regeneration of his country, adding that only God can ultimately save Russia from her sins. Reflecting the Christian worldview, which denounces moral evils in *all* spheres of

[488] "Но спасет бог [sic] Россию, ибо хоть и развратен простолюдин и не может уже отказать себе во смрадном грехе, но всё же знает, что проклят богом [sic] его смрадный грех и что поступает он худо, греша. Так что неустанно еще верует народ наш в правду, бога [sic] признает, умилительно плачет. Не то у высших. Те вослед науке хотят устроиться справедливо одним умом своим, но уже без Христа, как прежде, и уже провозгласили, что нет преступления, нет уже греха. Да оно и правильно по-ихнему: ибо если нет у тебя бога [sic], то какое же тогда преступление?" (*PSS* 14: 286; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. f).

life, Dostoyevsky anticipates the Catholic Church's condemnation of the socioeconomic evils of the nineteenth century, including child labor, in Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum novarum*, whose subtitle is "On the Condition of Workers."[489] Not only does Dostoyevsky reflect a comprehensive, rather than Camus's more limited, approach to moral evil, but he also, by assailing the unbelief of Russia's upper classes, rejects Camus's atheistic humanism, which, according to Dostoyevsky, is itself an evil.

[489] Pope Leo XIII writes: "Finally, work which is quite suitable for a strong man cannot rightly be required from a woman or a child. And, in regard to children, great care should be taken not to place them in workshops and factories until their bodies and minds are sufficiently developed. For, just as very rough weather destroys the buds of spring, so does too early an experience of life's hard toil blight the young promise of a child's faculties, and render any true education impossible. [*Denique quod facere enitique vir adulta aetate beneque validus potest, id a femina puerove non est aequum postulare. Immo de pueris valde cavendum, ne prius officina capiat, quam corpus, ingenium, animum satis firmaverit aetas. Erumpentes enim in pueritia vires, velut herbescentem viriditatem, agitatio praecox elidit: qua ex re omnis est institutio puerilis interitura*]" (sect. 42; the Latin original is to be found in *Acta Sanctae Sedis* 23 [1890-91]: 661).

# CHAPTER 6

## CERTAINLY WE SHALL ALL RISE AGAIN: WHAT IS THE RESOLUTION OF THE SCANDAL OF EVIL FOR DOSTOYEVSKY AND CAMUS, AND WHY DOES EACH AUTHOR FAIL TO GROUND HIS POSITION?

In this penultimate chapter, I shall summarize the contrasting ways in which Dostoyevsky and Camus, in their own minds, resolve the scandal of evil. I shall also further explore, in the light of the philosophical and theological texts of the Western canon, the reasons why these resolutions must be said to be inadequately substantiated despite the literary achievements of both novelists.

### The Dogma of the Resurrection of the Body

The quotation which forms part of the title of this chapter comes from the last chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*. After Alesha and the friends of young Iliusha Snegirev have buried him, Kolia asks Alesha whether the Russian Orthodox Church's teaching concerning the resurrection of the body is true, and whether they will all see Iliusha and one another again in the next world. Alesha does not hesitate a moment to reply in semi-ecstasy:

> Certainly we shall all rise again, certainly we shall see each other and shall tell each other with joy and gladness all that has happened! (735)[490]

Alesha's answer summarizes the reaction of his literary creator to the scandal of the existence of evil. Alesha's emphatic affirmation of one of the doctrines of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and the Apostles' Creed--"I believe in the resurrection

[490] "--Непременно восстанем, непременно увидим и весело, радостно расскажем друг другу всё, что было" (*PSS* 15: 197; epilogue, ch. 3).

of the body" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 988)[491]--implies belief in all the other articles of both creeds, including the existence of the Triune God, the assumption of a human nature by the Second Divine Person in the Incarnation, the Redemption of the human race by the death of Jesus on the Cross, and the establishment of his Church as the only means of salvation from sin, both original and actual. All these doctrines taken collectively, together with everything that they imply on both the theoretical and the practical levels (especially contrition, forgiveness, and reparation), comprise Dostoyevsky's response to evil. They thus constitute Dostoyevsky's answer to the angry discourse delivered by Ivan in the "Rebellion" chapter of book 5 of *The Brothers Karamazov*. And they also underlie the entire body of autobiographical recollections and pastoral advice delivered by Father Zosima in the chapter entitled "Peasant Women Who Have Faith" (38-44)[492] and in the book entitled "The Russian Monk" (262-303).[493]

For Dostoyevsky, the correct understanding of all the above Christian doctrines is to be found exclusively in Russian Orthodoxy, which he believes to be the only true religion. Joined to this theological conviction is a fervent Russian nationalism, since he also believes that Russia will save the world through her religion. These primordial facts about Dostoyevsky's solution for the scandal of evil cry out to the reader in the exchange

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[491] "*Je crois à la résurrection de la chair.*"

[492] *PSS* 14: 43-49; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 3.

[493] *PSS* 14: 257-94; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 1-ch. 3.

In view of the absoluteness of the faith that Dostoyevsky proclaims through Alesha at the end of *The Brothers Karamazov*, I do not understand how Peter G. Murphy, in his Bowling Green State University master's degree thesis entitled "Dostoevsky and Camus: Two Contrasting Paths Beyond Nihilism," can argue that Dostoyevsky is a relativist: "Dostoyevsky and Camus have similar views regarding the problem of evil. [. . .] both seek value in relativistic views from a common perspective in which human beings are accountable to one another" (iv). As we shall shortly see, Dostoyevsky confirms the absoluteness of his belief in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in his March 24, 1878, letter to Nikolai Peterson (Lowe and Meyer 5: 19-21; *PSS* 30, pt. 1: 13-15).

between Shatov and Stavrogin during their emotional confrontation in the eerie "Night" chapter of *The Devils*:

> Shatov began almost threateningly, leaning forward in his chair, his eyes flashing, and his right hand raised in front of him with the index finger pointing upward. He himself appeared to be unaware of this.
>
> "Do you know," he said, "which is the one and only God-bearing nation on earth, destined to regenerate and save the world in the name of the new God--the nation that alone holds the keys of life and the New Word? Do you know what the name of that nation is?"
>
> "From the way you say it, I have no choice but to answer that it is the Russian nation, and the sooner I do so the better." (234)[494]

Dostoyevsky's proclamation, through Alesha, of Russian Orthodoxy's faith in the dogma of the resurrection of the body takes the reader back to a dramatic scene in *Crime and Punishment* (274-78):[495] the scene in which the prostitute Sonia reads to the murderer

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[494] "--Знаете ли вы,--начал он почти грозно, принагнувшись вперед на стуле, сверкая взглядом и подняв перст правой руки вверх пред собою (очевидно, не примечая этого сам),--знаете ли вы, кто теперь на всей земле единственный народ-«богоносец» [sic], грядущий обновить и спасти мир именем нового бога [sic] и кому единому даны ключи жизни и нового слова . . . Знаете ли вы, кто этот народ и как ему имя?

"--По вашему приему я необходимо должен заключить, и, кажется, как можно скорее, что это народ русский . . ." (*PSS* 10: 196; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 7).

A little later, Shatov says that Catholicism is even worse than atheism: "[. . .] even atheism is healthier than Roman Catholicism. [ [. . .] атеизм все-таки здоровее римского католичества]" (239; *PSS* 10: 199; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 7). As I have already pointed out, one of the reasons for Dostoyevsky's fierce hostility toward Catholicism is that the latter, in diametrical opposition to Dostoyevsky's Russian Orthodoxy, regards itself as the only true religion (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, sect. 2105) and views the Russian Orthodox Church as both schismatic and heretical (while rejoicing in all the Catholic elements in Russian Orthodoxy, and esteeming individual Russian Orthodox believers as temporarily separated Christian sisters and brothers). But the theological exclusivism of the Catholic Church bears no trace of Dostoyevsky's exceptionally ardent ethnocentrism--even though there is a kind of Russocentrism in the Catholic narratives relating to the 1917 apparitions of Our Lady of Fátima. The Dostoyevskian aspects of that prominent component of popular Catholicism will be discussed later in this chapter.

[495] *PSS* 6: 249-52; pt. 4, ch. 4.

Raskol'nikov the Gospel narration of Jesus's raising of Lazarus from the dead in the town of Bethany (*Jn* 11:1-45). Who knows how many times Dostoyevsky himself read this passage while lying on his bunk during his Siberian imprisonment? For Dostoyevsky, as for all Christians, belief in the resurrection of Lazarus confirms the truth of the doctrine of the resurrection of all bodies at the end of time. Furthermore, belief in the resurrection of the body means that, for Dostoyevsky, in contradistinction to Camus, death *cannot* be the ultimate evil.

In addition to teachings concerning man's eternal destiny, the Christian framework within which Dostoyevsky wrote his major works also contains an ethic, and it is especially in this ethic that we can see both his way of resolving the problem of moral evil, and also a contradiction of Camus's full-blown absurdism--the same absurdism that Dostoyevsky had encountered in Russian nihilism. In a *Crime and Punishment* segment that almost seems to have been written with Camus in mind, Dostoyevsky dramatically shows why absurdism is impossible as the answer to the questions "How should I live my life?" and "How should I react to the existence of evil?" This is the scene (39-43)[496] in which Raskol'nikov, with almost stupefying irony, wants to fight a stalker to save an adolescent girl from rape--the same Raskol'nikov who is planning to split the pawnbroker's skull with an ax.[497] (It is significant, for reasons already reviewed, that this girl was perhaps no more than fifteen years old.) After it has suddenly hit Raskol'nikov that his altruistic concern for the endangered minor contradicts his nihilism--a nihilism soon to be concretized as murder--he does an about-face and tells

[496] *PSS* 6: 39-43*;* pt. 1, ch. 4.

[497] It is *after* the incident with the street stalker that Raskol'nikov murders the pawnbroker (65-66; *PSS* 6: 63; pt. 1, ch. 7).

the police officer: "Stop! What is it to you? Drop it! Let him amuse himself! [. . .] What business is it of yours?" (42).[498] If nihilism (or Camusian absurdism) is true, and if God and moral obligation are fantasies, then, logically, why should Raskol'nikov and the cop not allow the girl to be assaulted? In this scene, without knowing that Camus would later mine his works for inspiration and would use that inspiration to endorse nihilism (to a greater or lesser extent and in accordance with his own intellectual development), Dostoyevsky is answering Camus--and every other absurdist and nihilist--in advance.

But belief in the totality of the dogmatic and moral teachings of Russian Orthodoxy forms only a part--the theoretical part--of Dostoyevsky's resolution of the scandal of evil. On the concrete, practical level, he proposes as a resolution to this scandal the concept of "active love." He does this through Father Zosima in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Counseling the distressed Madame Khokhlakova on repelling her doubts about the existence of the next life, Father Zosima assures her that her belief in God and the immortality of the soul will be impregnable as the result of one spiritual strategy only:

> By the experience of active love. Strive to love your neighbor actively and indefatigably. Insofar as you advance in love you will grow surer of the reality of God and of the immortality of your soul. (48)[499]

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[498] "--Оставьте! Чего вам? Бросьте! Пусть его позабавится [. . .]. Вам-то чего?" (*PSS* 6: 42; pt. 1, ch. 4).

[499] "--Опытом деятельной любви. Постарайтесь любить ваших ближних деятельно и неустанно. По мере того как будете преуспевать в любви, будете убеждаться и в бытии бога [sic], и в бессмертии души вашей" (*PSS* 14: 52; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 4).

Later in the same chapter, Father Zosima paints an indelible picture of what he (together with Dostoyevsky) means by "active love" when, for the benefit of Madame Khokhlakova, he contrasts it with its counterfeit:

> I am sorry I can say nothing more consoling to you, for love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared with love in dreams. (49)[500]

The concept of "active love"--it is worth noting this consummate irony in view of Dostoyevsky's hostility toward Catholicism--has found its way verbatim into the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and hence into the corpus of Catholic doctrine, perhaps to be echoed for centuries to come:

> Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his kingdom. (section 544)[501]

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[500] "Жалею, что не могу сказать вам ничего отраднее, ибо любовь деятельная сравнительно с мечтательною есть дело жестокое и устрашающее" (*PSS* 14: 54; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 4).

[501] "*Plus encore: Il s'identifie aux pauvres de toutes sortes et fait de l'amour actif envers eux la condition de l'entrée dans son Royaume.*"

This section of the new catechism cites *Mt* 25: 31-46. In the Russian translation of the catechism, the key phrase is "деятельную любовь."

The current Pope, Benedict XVI, may have been personally responsible for this Dostoyevskianism in an official document of the Catholic Church. As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he presided over the commission that produced the catechism, and we know that he is a reader of *The Brothers Karamazov*, for he once assigned "The Grand Inquisitor" to a tutorial student (according to Suzanne Fields in an op-ed piece entitled "A Good Egg, Benedict").

In addition, Benedict XVI cites *The Brothers Karamazov* in section 44 of his 2007 encyclical, *Spe salvi*: "Grace does not cancel out justice. It does not make wrong into right. It is not a sponge which wipes everything away, so that whatever someone has done on earth ends up being of equal value. Dostoevsky, for example, was right to protest against this kind of Heaven and this kind of grace in his novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. Evildoers, in the end, do not sit at table at the eternal banquet beside their victims without distinction, as though nothing had happened. [*Gratia iustitiam non repellit. Iniustitiam in ius non mutat. Non veluti spongia est quaedam quae omnia delet ita ut quod factum sit in terra eandem tandem habeat vim. Adversus id genus caelum gratiamque merito clamat, exempli gratia, Dostoievskij sua in commenticia fabula, quae est Fratres Karamazov. Improbi tandem, in aeterno convivio, permixte ad mensam prope victimas non sedebunt, proinde quasi nihil acciderit*]." In making this observation, the Pontiff is reaffirming the Church's teaching on the existence of hell. Unlike Alesha, Benedict is confronting Ivan Karamazov, who, in the name of nihilism, objects to hell as a partial answer to the scandal of evil: "What good can hell do, since those children have already been tortured? [ [. . .] что тут ад может поправить, когда те уже замучены?] (226; *PSS* 14: 223; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4). The Pope is saying that hell contributes to the establishment of the justice that nihilism annihilates.

Dostoyevsky emphasizes his ultimate solution to the scandal of suffering--belief in the resurrection of the body and all the other doctrines of the Russian Orthodox Church--by choosing the Gospel verse *Jn* 12:24 as the epigraph for *The Brothers Karamazov*:

> Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.[502]

This verse is strikingly appropriate for the novelist's intentions: it may have multiple meanings, both in its own context and in that of Dostoyevsky's novel, and each of those meanings may convey a part of Dostoyevsky's response to Ivan Karamazov's adamant refusal to accept a universe in which God permits the scandal of the suffering and death of children. The grain of wheat dies: in the same way, an innocent child dies, perhaps in agony, and every human being without exception also dies, whether in agony or not. But the child and every other person--even the child's tormentor, if the latter repents--can achieve eternal life in the resurrection at the end of time. Accordingly, the Christian reader hopes that the four amiable characters who die in *The Brothers Karamazov* will attain beatitude after their deaths: Father Zosima's brother, Markel; Mikhail, Father

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In an article entitled "The Theistic Basis for Camus's Ethic of Charity," Philip Mooney draws a distinction between two kinds of charity, and thus implicitly anticipates the new catechism's adoption (in 1992) of the Dostoyevskian expression "active love" into Catholicism's vocabulary: "But in the short stories gathered under the title *Exile and the Kingdom* [*L'Exil et le royaume*], Camus depicts three characters who achieve varying degrees of success in overcoming the indifference that cools the *affective charity* from which *effective charity* flows" (85; my italics). The three characters to whom Mooney refers are Yvers in "Les Muets" ["The Silent Men"], Daru in "L'Hôte" ["The Guest"], and D'Arrast in "La Pierre qui pousse" ["The Growing Stone"].

[502] "ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ ὁ κόκκος τοῦ σίτου πεσὼν εἰς τὴν γῆν ἀποθάνῃ, αὐτὸς μόνος μένει· ἐὰν δὲ ἀποθάνῃ, πολὺν καρπὸν φέρει."

Zosima's repentant "mysterious visitor"; Father Zosima himself; and Iliusha.[503] Note that the younger Zosima personally draws the attention of the psychologically tormented Mikhail to *Jn* 12:24 (288).[504]

The preceding exegesis of *Jn* 12:24 presupposes the following basis: Jesus, having died in agony in the crucifixion that had shocked and demoralized his followers, is buried in the same way in which the seed for a crop of wheat is buried in the earth. But as the grain of wheat rises again in the field, so, too, does Jesus rise again by his own divine power on the third day after his death, exemplifying the abundant fruit of the resurrection that awaits all those who, like the four characters just enumerated, die in the state of sanctifying grace, which is a sharing in the supernatural life of God himself. Of all the possible meanings of *Jn* 12:24 in its biblical context, it appears that the necessity and fecundity of Jesus's death on the Cross for the Redemption of the human race constitutes the primary meaning. This conclusion seems to flow from verses 32-33 in the same chapter: "'And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.' He said this indicating the kind of death he would die."[505] The stage for the enactment of this vast drama of the fruit borne by Jesus's death and the deaths of all those who die in sanctifying grace is the wheat field that is the whole world, in accordance with Jesus's explication of his parable of the weeds: "He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the

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[503] A Christian reader should also hope that the distinctly non-amiable characters Fedor Karamazov and Smerdiakov will also save their souls--through God's mercy and their own repentance. But such a reader is also aware of Jesus's warning that those who refuse to repent are risking eternal punishment in hell; see the biblical citations in sections 1033-37 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

[504] *PSS* 14: 281; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 2, sect. d.

[505] "[. . .] κἀγὼ ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς, πάντας ἑλκύσω πρὸς ἐμαυτόν. τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγεν σημαίνων ποίῳ θανάτῳ ἤμελλεν ἀποθνήσκειν."

field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom" (*Mt* 13:37-38).[506] The parable of the weeds, it seems to me, more than *Jn* 12:24, is the biblical passage that corresponds to Father Zosima's warning about planting "an evil seed" in a child (298).[507] This parable also appears to parallel Alesha's commendation of the salvific power of "some good memory, especially a memory of childhood" (734).[508]

**Theism Versus Deism**

Owing to a statement to which Frank draws attention, it is necessary to comment on a claim that appears to be injurious to the contention that Dostoyevsky attempts to resolve the scandal of evil by his embrace of the dogmas of Russian Orthodoxy. Frank points out that the writer L. X. Simonova-Khokhriakova, gravely concerned because she had interpreted Dostoyevsky's short story "The Sentence" as a justification of suicide, and thinking that he believed that there is no God, asked him bluntly during a conversation whether he was an atheist. According to his visitor, Dostoyevsky replied: "I am a deist, a philosophical deist" (*Mantle of the Prophet* 222). This quotation poses a problem, for a *deist* is someone who, while admitting the existence of God,

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[506] "Ὁ σπείρων τὸ καλὸν σπέρμα ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· ὁ δὲ ἀγρός ἐστιν ὁ κόσμος· τὸ δὲ καλὸν σπέρμα, οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας [. . .]."

The Catholic Church seems to indicate that she regards the death of Jesus as the primary meaning of *Jn* 12:24 by using the pericope containing this verse (*Jn* 12:20-33) on the Fifth Sunday of Lent in the Mass of the Roman rite in the *Novus Ordo* version during liturgical year B (see *Daily Roman Missal* 321). Lent is the Church's preparation for the death of Christ on Good Friday.

The Fifth Sunday of Lent could be called Dostoyevsky Sunday. On this Sunday during year A (see *Daily Roman Missal* 316-18), the priest, like Sonia reading in her room to Raskol'nikov in *Crime and Punishment*, reads the narration of the raising of Lazarus (*Jn* 11:1-45). Consequently, on this Sunday during liturgical years A and B, Dostoyevskians attending Mass will be delighted by a reminiscence of either *The Brothers Karamazov* or *Crime and Punishment*.

[507] "семя [. . .] дурное" (*PSS* 14: 289; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. g).

[508] "хорошее какое-нибудь воспоминание, и особенно вынесенное еще из детства" (*PSS* 15: 195; epilogue, ch. 3).

simultaneously denies that God intervenes in the universe through revelation, miracles, and prophecies.[509] *Deism* is opposed to *theism*, which, in addition to proclaiming the existence of God, also credits--or at least does not deny the possibility of--the three supernatural phenomena just enumerated. In view of the Russian Orthodox Church's profession of faith in the revealed dogmas of the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation, it is clear that a consistent Russian Orthodox believer has to be a theist rather than a deist.

Frank speculates that Dostoyevsky may have meant merely this: during the writing of "The Sentence," he had assumed the persona of the author of that text, which takes the form of a suicide note penned by someone in despair. Much more cogently, Frank also proposes that Dostoyevsky may have used the term "deist" as the equivalent of "theist." We may add to that conjecture of linguistic imprecision the observation that Dostoyevsky was, after all, a novelist, rather than a trained theologian or philosopher. He himself admits as much in the draft of a letter to K. D. Kavelin: "[. . .] philosophy is not my specialty" (Norton Critical Edition of *The Brothers Karamazov* 770). It might be suggested, however, that Madame Simonova-Khokhriakova could simply have misheard Dostoyevsky. As is the case with the English words "deist" and "theist," the Russian words деист (*deist*) and теист (*teist*) differ from each other by only one consonant, and the sounds of the two consonants in question are close to each other. Hence, Dostoyevsky might actually have told his listener that he was a philosophical theist.

But this hypothesis of mishearing is unnecessary. There is in Dostoyevsky's correspondence a letter that settles the matter definitively in favor of Frank's view that Dostoyevsky confuses theism with deism. Frank is familiar with this August 16/28,

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[509] *Le Petit Robert* defines *déisme* ("deism") as "*Position philosophique de ceux qui admettent l'existence d'une divinité, sans accepter de religion révélée ni de dogme* [Philosophical position of those who admit the existence of a divinity, without accepting revealed religion or dogma]" (479).

1867, letter to Apollon Maikov: he quotes from it when he discusses Dostoyevsky's famous visit to Ivan Turgenev in Baden-Baden (*Miraculous Years* 218). Surprisingly, however, when he comments on Dostoyevsky's "deism" in *Dostoevsky: The Mantle of the Prophet* (the final volume of his five-volume study of Dostoyevsky), Frank does not realize, or recall, that the following segment of this letter confirms that Dostoyevsky is accustomed to improperly using the term "deism" as the equivalent of "theism":

> I must confess that I could not have imagined anyone displaying his wounded pride with such naiveté and clumsiness as Turgenev did. And these people, by the way, boast about their being *atheists!* He told me that he was an out-and-out atheist. But, my God, deism gave us Christ, i.e., a concept of man so lofty that it cannot be understood without reverence, and it is impossible not to believe that this is the eternal ideal of mankind! And what have these Turgenevs, Herzens, Utins, and Chernyshevskys to offer us? Instead of the loftiest divine beauty, on which they spit, all these people are so disgustingly vain, so shamelessly petulant, so shallowly proud, that one simply can't make out what they are hoping for or how anyone could follow them. (Frank and Goldstein 254)[510]

When we consider the Russian novelist's strong profession of belief in the divinity of Christ ("the loftiest divine beauty, on which they [atheists] spit"), we have to

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[510] "Признаюсь Вам, что я никак не мог представить себе, что можно так наивно и неловко выказывать все раны своего самолюбия, как Тургенев. И эти люди тщеславятся, между прочим, тем, что они *атеисты!* Он объявил мне, что он окончательный атеист. Но боже [sic] мой: деизм нам дал Христа, то есть до того высокое представление человека, что его понять нельзя без благоговения и нельзя не верить, что это идеал человечества вековечный! А что же они-то, Тургеневы, Герцены, Утины, Чернышевские, нам представили? Вместо высочайшей красоты божией, на которую они плюют, все они до того пакостно самолюбивы, до того бесстыдно раздражительны, легкомысленно горды, что просто непонятно: на что они надеются и кто за ними пойдет?" (*PSS* 28, pt. 2: 210).

conclude that Dostoyevsky is using "deism" as a synonym for theism. Lastly, to say, as Frank does, that considering Dostoyevsky a deist in the true sense "raises many questions" (*Mantle of the Prophet* 223 [footnote]) is a pronounced understatement. It would be more accurate to say that drawing such an unnecessary conclusion from Madame Simonova-Khokhriakova's testimony would render much of Dostoyevsky's *oeuvre* (especially *The Brothers Karamazov*) utterly unintelligible, and even fraudulently insincere.

**Dostoyevsky's Omission of Original Sin**

Having seen that Dostoyevsky, in the "Rebellion" chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov* (217-27),[511] misses even greater scandals than the one to which he applies Ivan Karamazov's rhetorical skills, we must acknowledge another omission on his part. If Alesha, contrary to Dostoyevsky's depiction of him as passive and timid, had decided to defend the faith of the Russian Orthodox Church in a fully consistent and coherent manner instead of letting his older brother get away with intellectual murder, then Alesha, speaking with authorial concurrence and in accord with Dostoyevsky's professed intention of repelling blasphemy, would have had to refer to the dogma of original sin. Dostoyevsky would have had to use *some* literary technique to make the point that every physical or moral evil victimizing children (or adults) is ultimately a punishment for the state of sin in which descendants of the first human being are conceived. No thinking Christian can maintain that this dogma is without difficulties of its own, but to omit this concept when discussing the scandal of evil is, in the case of an author who is a

[511] *PSS* 14: 215-24; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4.

committed Christian, to exhibit a lapse of the first order. Since this is a comparative study, it is interesting to note that Ernest Sturm maintains that the rôle played by Clamence, the protagonist of Camus's *La Chute*, is "utterly impregnated with the Christian idea of original sin" (*Conscience et impuissance chez Dostoievski et Camus: Parallèle entre «le Sous-sol» et «la Chute»* [*Consciousness and Powerlessness in Dostoyevsky and Camus: Parallel Between* The Underground *and* The Fall] 10).[512] To Sturm's observation we can add that the very title *La Chute* [*The Fall*] recalls the dogma of the Fall, which refers to man's fall from the supernatural life of sanctifying grace in the primeval catastrophe of Adam's transgression in the Garden of Eden. (This is not to deny that the title's predominant referents are the suicidal woman's fall from the bridge into the Seine and Clamence's fall from self-adulation into self-opprobrium.) Beránková says: "Indeed, beginning with *La Chute*, the characters of Camus's books will be constantly haunted by the obsession of a sort of indelible fault, of original sin that weighs on them (*Le Renégat*, *Jonas*)" (174 [footnote 483]).[513]

Certain scholars may contest the view that Dostoyevsky, because he omits the concept of original sin, is not a consistent Russian Orthodox believer. Those scholars maintain that Russian Orthodoxy does not accept, or accept fully, the Catholic dogma of original sin. Frank says: "It should also be stressed that the doctrine of original sin, which holds human nature irremediably enthralled by evil, has much less force for an Eastern Christian than for a Roman Catholic or Protestant" (*Years of Ordeal* 147). Ralph C. Wood, a professor of theology and literature at Baylor University, expresses himself in

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[512] "*tout imprégné de l'idée chrétienne du péché originel*."

[513] "*En effet, à partir de* La Chute*, les personnages des livres de Camus seront constamment habités par l'obsession d'une sorte de faute indélébile, de péché originel qui pèse sur eux (*Le Renégat*,* Jonas*).*"

even stronger language in an article entitled "Ivan Karamazov's Mistake": "Not sharing the Western doctrine of original sin, the Orthodox hold that every person retains an efficacious awareness of God, even after the Fall" (35-36). With great respect for Professor Frank, it should be noted that Russian culture is aware of original sin, for otherwise the earlier Tolstoy, much closer to Russian Orthodoxy than he would be after he had written *War and Peace* from 1863 to 1869, would not have referred in that novel to the Fall of man:

> The Bible legend tells us that the absence of labor--idleness--was a condition of the first man's blessedness before the Fall. Fallen man has retained a love of idleness, but the curse weighs on the race not only because we have to seek our bread in the sweat of our brows, but because our moral nature is such that we cannot be both idle and at ease. (537)[514]

The Russian Orthodox Church's traditional understanding of original sin is also the reason why the later Tolstoy, now clearly heterodox in relation to Russia's state religion, makes a point of vigorously attacking this dogma in his 1902 essay entitled *What Is Religion and of What Does Its Essence Consist?*: "There can be nothing as immoral as those dreadful teachings according to which an angry and vengeful God punishes everyone for the sin of Adam, or that he sent his son to earth to save us, knowing

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[514] "Библейское предание говорит, что отсутствие труда--праздность было условием блаженства первого человека до его падения. Любовь к праздности осталась та же и в падшем человеке, но проклятие все тяготеет над человеком, и не только потому, что мы в поте лица должны снискивать хлеб свой, но потому, что по нравственным свойствам своим мы не можем быть праздны и спокойны."

In the Maude translation of the Norton Critical Edition, this quotation is found on page 537 in book 7, chapter 1; in other translations, it is found in volume 2, part 4, chapter 1. In the Russian text listed in my bibliography, this quotation is found on page 469 of volume 1 of the two-volume set.

beforehand that men would murder him and be damned for it" (*A Confession and Other Religious Writings* 95).[515]

Moreover, with equal respect for Professor Wood, it has to be pointed out that his definition does not match the authentic meaning of the Western doctrine of original sin. This authentic meaning is concisely encapsulated in two sections (403-05) of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

> Following St. Paul, the Church has always taught that the overwhelming misery which oppresses men and their inclination toward evil and death cannot be understood apart from their connection with Adam's sin and the fact that he has transmitted to us a sin with which we are all born afflicted, a sin which is the "death of the soul." [. . .]
>
> [. . .] By yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a *personal sin*, but this sin affected *the human nature* that they would then transmit *in a fallen state*. [. . .]
>
> [. . .] It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it; subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin [. . .].[516]

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[515] "И что может быть безнравственнее того ужасного учения, по которому Бог, злой и мстительный, наказывает всех людей за грех Адама и для спасения их посылает своего сына на землю, зная вперед, что люди убьют его и будут за его прокляты [. . .]" (*Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [*Complete Collection of Works*] 15: 299; I have modernized the orthography).

[516] "*A la suite de S. Paul, l'Eglise a toujours enseigné que l'immense misère qui opprime les hommes et leur inclination au mal et à la mort ne sont pas compréhensibles sans leur lien avec le péché d'Adam et le fait qu'il nous a transmis un péché dont nous naissons tous affectés et qui est «mort de l'âme». [. . .]*

"*[. . .] en cédant au tentateur, Adam et Eve commettent un* péché personnel*, mais ce péché affecte la* nature humaine *qu'ils vont transmettre* dans un état déchu*. [. . .]*

The catechism goes on to speak of a "spiritual battle" (section 405),[517] which is precisely the combat in which "God and the devil are fighting [. . .]"--the combat of which Dmitrii speaks in *The Brothers Karamazov* (97).[518] Nonetheless, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, neither Dmitrii nor Dostoyevsky explicitly connects this fight to original sin and to man's inclination toward actual sin, the kind of sin that we ourselves commit. This inclination is what the Catholic Church calls "concupiscence" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 405).[519]

In attempting a clarification of this issue in this excursus--an issue extremely relevant to Dostoyevsky's confrontation with the scandal of moral evil--let us consider the *Orthodox Confession* of Peter Mogila, the seventeenth-century Russian Orthodox metropolitan of Kiev. Eastern Orthodox Bishop Timothy Ware calls the *Orthodox Confession* one of the "chief Orthodox doctrinal statements since 787" (211). Here is what the *Orthodox Confession* (published in 1640) teaches about original sin:

> Just as all human beings during the state of innocence were in Adam, in the same manner, when he fell, in him they all fell, and remained at the same time in a state of sin. Consequently, they are subject, not only to sin,

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"*[. . .] C'est la privation de la sainteté et de la justice originelles, mais la nature humaine n'est pas totalement corrompue: elle est blessée dans ses propres forces naturelles, soumise à l'ignorance, à la souffrance et à l'empire de la mort, et inclinée au péché [. . .].*"

The catechism's entire treatment of original sin should be read in sections 385-421.

In the light of the above excerpt, it can be seen that Gweneth Boge Schwab is not reflecting the definition of original sin when she writes the following concerning the Jesuit Paneloux in Camus's *La Peste*: "Paneloux's theology assumes in man more to despise than to admire" (106). Clearly, for Catholicism (as well as for Russian Orthodoxy), the fact that "human nature has not been totally corrupted" and the fact that man has the potential to receive the gift of the supernatural life together outweigh the facts of original sin and actual sin.

[517] "*combat spirituel.*"

[518] "[. . .] дьявол с богом [sic] борется [. . .]" (*PSS* 14: 100; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3).

[519] "*concupiscence.*"

> but, on account of sin, to punishment as well. This punishment is promulgated in this decree of God (*Gen* 2:17): "On whichever day you have eaten of that tree, you will die the death." The Apostle also refers to that same fact (*Rom* 5:12): "Just as through one man sin entered the world, and, through sin, death, in this way death spread to all mortals, because in him all sinned." Thus, even in the maternal womb, we are conceived immediately and born with this sin, as the sacred Psalmist bears witness (*Ps* 51:7): "For, behold, in iniquities was I conceived, and in sins did my mother conceive me." This sin is called Ancestral (or Original) [. . .]. (pt. 1, ques. 24)[520]

Despite this excerpt from the *Orthodox Confession*, it has to be conceded that Russian Orthodoxy's acceptance of the doctrine of original sin must be understood, especially in modern times, with some qualifications owing to the Russian Orthodox Church's historical development, which is characterized by the influence of eighteenth-century Lutheran theology, and, above all, by the absence of a Russian Orthodox equivalent to Catholicism's centralized hierarchical and teaching authority. Nevertheless, in *Theologia dogmatica christianorum orientalium ab Ecclesia Catholica dissidentium*

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[520] "*Quemadmodum homines omnes durante innocentiae statu in Adamo fuerunt; eodem modo, ex quo lapsus ille fuit, in ipso omnes collapsi, simul in statu peccati permanserunt. Quamobrem non solum peccato, sed ejus caussa, poena item tenentur. Quae poena hoc Dei edicto promulgatur (Gen. II, 17.): Quacunque die de arbore ista comederitis, morte moriemini. Refert id ipsum et Apostolus (Rom. V, 12.): Ut per unum hominem peccatum in mundum introiit, et per peccatum mors; quae hoc pacto in mortales omnes pervasit, quod in illo omnes peccaverunt. Quapropter etiam in utero materno mox cum hoc peccato concipimur nascimurque, teste sacro Psalte (LI, 7.): Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in peccatis mea me mater concepit. Quod peccatum Avitum, (sive Originale), appellatur [. . .]*" (*Orthodox Confession* in Kimmel, *Monumenta fidei Ecclesiae Orientalis* [*Documents of the Faith of the Eastern Church*] 87-88; my translation).

Since there are problems in Kimmel's Greek text, I have translated the Latin version in his edition.

In addition, Mogila states that infant Baptism remits original sin in pt. 1, ques. 103 (Kimmel , *Orthodox Confession* 174-75).

[*Dogmatic Theology of Eastern Christians Dissenting from the Catholic Church*], Martin Jugie notes (2: 630 [footnote 1]) that the early nineteenth-century Russian Orthodox theologian Methodius Smirnov, in his *De differentiis inter Ecclesiam orientalem et Ecclesiam occidentalem* [*On the Differences Between the Eastern Church and the Western Church*], cites no discrepancy between the two churches on the subject of original sin. As Jugie also points out, some late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Russian Orthodox theologians even accused Catholicism of being unreliable as far as this doctrine was concerned: they went so far as to indict the Catholic Church for having allegedly fallen into the fifth-century heresy of the Pelagians, who denied original sin altogether (*Theologia dogmatica* 2: 636-37).[521]

Moreover, even though Russian Orthodox Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev, who represents the Moscow Patriarchate before the European Union in Brussels, offers some partially equivocal comments on the results of man's Fall in his book entitled *The Mystery of Faith* (70-72), first published in Russian in 1996, he still uses the term "original sin."[522] In addition, Bishop Alfeyev makes the following unequivocal statement in reference to the two kinds of sin remitted by the sacrament of Baptism:

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[521] For Pelagianism, see Ott (107-08).

[522] Bishop Alfeyev quotes (71) *Rom* 5:12 : "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned. " Here is the Greek text: "Διὰ τοῦτο ὥσπερ δι᾽ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος, καὶ οὕτως εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διῆλθεν, ἐφ᾽ ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον [. . .]." He then mentions the following interpretation of this passage, without telling us clearly whether he accepts this understanding: "Adam's sin, therefore, is not the cause of our sinfulness; we do not participate in his sin and his guilt cannot be passed on to us" (71). Nonetheless, this ambiguous statement need mean nothing more than a rejection of the view that original sin is a sin that we ourselves commit (again, what Catholicism calls "actual" sin).

But the Catholic Church has never held that original sin in us means that we have *committed* Adam's sin. That is not what original sin signifies, as we have seen from the aforementioned quotation from the authoritative *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. According to the Catholic Church, original sin is a guilty *state* or *condition* of human nature, not a personal guilty *act* that we ourselves have committed. It is, instead, the state of human nature in which that nature is deprived of the supernatural life of sanctifying

> In Baptism we are granted freedom from original sin, and forgiveness of all our personal transgressions. (135)

Since Bishop Alfeyev makes the above statement after having mentioned the Russian Orthodox Church's centuries-old practice of baptizing even newborn infants (133-34), who cannot possibly be guilty of any "personal transgressions," his straightforward declaration on the effects of Baptism means that he believes that newborns are born with original sin.

Bishop Alfeyev's clear statement on infant Baptism should put an end to disagreements over whether Russian Orthodoxy believes in original sin. After all, the bishop represents the Moscow Patriarchate, and the Moscow Patriarchate ought to know what the Russian Orthodox Church officially teaches, in contrast with what some Russian Orthodox believers, and even theologians, may say as individuals in our own day, especially when they are motivated by a desire to set themselves in opposition to the Catholic dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception. After Blessed Pope Pius IX had defined this dogma in 1854, some Eastern Orthodox believers reacted negatively, and began to drift away from the Catholic concept of original sin, as Ware points out (264). Owing to widespread confusion--a confusion that Dostoyevsky himself exhibits--it should be pointed out that the Immaculate Conception does *not* mean that Jesus was conceived of a virgin without the cooperation of a human father.[523] Instead, the dogma of

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grace as a consequence of, and as a punishment for, the personal, or actual, sin committed by Adam, the progenitor and head of the human race. When Bishop Alfeyev states later that "[. . .] we all share Adam's sin as we all share his nature" (71), his words are in agreement with the Catholic dogma of original sin.

[523] In the notebooks for *The Devils*, Dostoyevsky mentions liberal Protestants "who believe that one may very well fail to believe in the resurrection of Lazarus or *Immaculée Conception* [Immaculate Conception], yet still remain a Christian [которые верят, что если не веровать в воскресение Лазаря или immaculée conception, то всё равно можно остаться христианном]" (Wasiolek's edition 239; *PSS* 11: 180).

In an article entitled "No Morality Without Immortality: Dostoevski and the Meaning of Atheism," Protestant theologian Paul Ramsey of Princeton University may be imitating Dostoyevsky's

the Immaculate Conception means that Jesus's Mother, the woman to whom Alesha Karamazov refers when he speaks, in the chapter entitled "Cana of Galilee," of "another great heart, that other great being, His Mother" (338),[524] was free of original sin throughout her entire life. It is the teaching of the Catholic Church that Mary, though conceived in the same manner in which all other human persons are conceived, was sinless, or *immaculate*, from the first moment of her existence, i.e., from her *conception.*[525]

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error of confusing the Immaculate Conception with the Virgin Birth. Ramsey writes: "Bound to the moorings of finitude, man's finite freedom nevertheless transcends any particular force or power that would shape him and any particular inner cosmos; and, imaging God, man creates *ex nihilo* an act and a self which before were not. Raskolnikov's criminal act was not the offspring of any rational immaculate conception but the product of meonic [sic] freedom" (91).

[524] "другое великое сердце другого великого существа, бывшего тут же, матери его" (*PSS* 14: 326; pt. 3, bk. 7, ch. 4).

In this reference of Dostoyevsky's to Jesus's miraculous transformation of water into wine at the wedding celebration in Cana at the request of his Mother (*Jn* 2:1-11), note the synecdoches of the two hearts. Since Dostoyevsky's works display such a pronounced hostility toward Catholicism, it is interesting to see him refer to the Heart of the Богородица (*Bogoroditsa*, the Russian name of the Mother of God), and also to the Heart of Jesus. Devotion to the Mother of Jesus is a prominent feature of Russian Orthodoxy, as it is of Catholicism, but the Russian Orthodox Church knows nothing of devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary or the Sacred Heart of Jesus--theological and iconographic developments unique to modern Catholicism.

Perhaps Dostoyevsky became aware of the images of the Sacred and Immaculate Hearts when he visited churches in France and Italy. It is also possible that he saw the two Hearts on the reverse of one of the Miraculous Medals that thousands of devout French governesses and language instructors must have brought with them into Russia. Professor Mandelker has suggested to me that he may also have seen this medal around the necks of Polish Catholics with whom he was imprisoned in Siberia (*The House of the Dead* 51; *PSS* 4: 26; pt. 1, ch. 2). A photograph of both sides of the Miraculous Medal, which was first struck in 1832 in response to a vision reported by St. Catherine Labouré, a nun in a Paris convent, may be viewed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miraculous_Medal.

It is not surprising that Dostoyevsky connects the powerfully evocative and emotional images of the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart with the meditations of Alesha in this rhapsodic chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*. At the beginning of the novel, it is the little Alesha whom his terrified mother, "sobbing hysterically [рыдающую как в истерике]," holds up as an offering before the sacred icon of Mary in the slanting rays of the sun just before its setting (13; *PSS* 14: 18; pt. 1, bk. 1, ch. 4). Why is Alesha's mother so distraught? Does she fear that her depraved husband will turn Alesha and his older brother Ivan into nihilists who will eventually commit themselves to the dictum "Everything is lawful"? Is she praying that Mary's intercession will save her sons from this fate? Alesha, who is consecrated to the Mother of God, is, in fact, spared this outcome, while Ivan suffers a mental breakdown which--such is the conjecture of this dissertation--may have followed his seduction or rape of a fourteen-year-old girl.

[525] For an official explication of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, see sections 490-93 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church.*

In view of the authorities cited above, the negative reaction of some Eastern Orthodox believers to the papal pronouncement on the Immaculate Conception hardly warrants Ware's sweeping comment that the Catholic dogma of original sin is rejected by "[m]ost orthodox theologians" (229). Indeed, Ware's overstatement is somewhat in conflict with his admission that the Catholic (which he calls "Augustinian") notion of original sin may be found in Orthodox writings (229 [footnote 2]). His exaggeration also clashes with his admission that an Orthodox believer has the right to believe in the Immaculate Conception (which necessarily implies the doctrine of original sin) without being accused of heresy (264). As for Frank, it is impossible to sustain his categorical assertion that "the doctrine of original sin [. . .] has much less force for an Eastern Christian than for a Roman Catholic or Protestant." The actual situation is accurately described in the following statement by Professor James Likoudis, a scholar conversant with both Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism, in *Eastern Orthodoxy and the See of Peter*: *A Journey Towards Full Communion*: "To allege, therefore, that the doctrine of 'inherited guilt or sin' is completely alien to Eastern Orthodox theology is a serious misstatement of the historical facts" (136). Consequently, the question remains: why does Dostoyevsky, writing in the cultural milieu of Russian Orthodoxy, neglect the doctrine of original sin in his attempted refutation of what he calls Ivan Karamazov's "blasphemy"?

We must note that Dostoyevsky does not *utterly* disregard original sin, for he makes Ivan Karamazov allude to it in this sentence: "I say nothing of the sufferings of grown-up people, they have eaten the apple, damn them, and the devil take them all!"

(223).[526] Nevertheless, this passing, oblique mention is placed into the mouth of the unbelieving Ivan, who rejects the doctrine of original sin by declaring: "[. . .] there can be no such solidarity in sin with children" (225).[527] Hence, this reference to the tree of the Garden of Eden does not shed much light on the problem of the suffering of the innocent, and thus does not do much to answer Ivan's attack on belief. Furthermore, when Dostoyevsky has the Grand Inquisitor say to Jesus that "[. . .] man is weaker and baser by nature than Thou hast believed him! (236-37),"[528] the Russian novelist's voicing of this reference to the effects of original sin through the mouth of a repugnant character does nothing to integrate this concept into his novel's presentation of the problem of evil. Note this, too: when Dostoyevsky has Stavrogin dream of mankind's ancient bliss in the suppressed chapter of *The Devils*, what Stavrogin sees in the dream is not the state of Adam and Eve before the Fall, but rather the Golden Age of Greek mythology as depicted in Claude Lorrain's painting entitled *Landscape with Acis and Galatea* (428-29).[529] Moreover, when Dostoyevsky seems to begin dealing with original sin in "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man: A Fantastic Story," published in the April 1877 issue of *A Writer's Diary*, he subverts such a Christian application of his text by telling us that the inhabitants of the imaginary planet already experience death *before* the arrival of the corrupting narrator: "They had scarcely illnesses, although there was death, but their old

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[526] "Я не говорю про страдания больших, те яблоко съели, и черт с ними, и пусть бы их всех черт взял [. . .]!" (*PSS* 14: 221; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4).

[527] "[. . .] не с детками же солидарность в грехе [. . .]" (*PSS* 14: 222; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 4).

[528] "[. . .] человек слабее и ниже создан, чем ты о нем думал!" (*PSS* 14: 233; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 5).

[529] *PSS* 11: 21-22; pt. 2, ch. 9, sect. 2, in the 1991 Signet Classic edition. This painting may be viewed at http://www.wga.hu/index1.html.

people died peacefully [. . .]" (2: 954).[530] On the contrary, according to the dogma of original sin, death is one of the punishments resulting from the sin committed by Adam and Eve, who were *not* subject to death before their fall from sanctifying grace.

If Dostoyevsky had been a consistent adherent of Russian Orthodoxy, he would have tied the suffering and death even of the innocent--even of small children--to the primeval disaster that both Russian Orthodoxy and Catholicism posit as an indispensable element for clarifying--to the extent to which the human mind can understand it--the dark side of the human condition. As the Catholic Church summarizes the situation in her most recent universal catechism, original sin is "an essential truth of the faith" (section 388).[531] In the Christian worldview, all human persons, with the sole exception (in the Catholic understanding) of the Mother of Jesus, are conceived in a state of sin--which means that they begin their existence devoid of the supernatural life. Furthermore, original sin entails the loss of endowments to which no one has a real right, two of those endowments being the right to be shielded from suffering and the right to be spared death.

In this perspective, death, even for children, is the punishment for the sin of the first man, who threw away the gifts of impassibility[532] and immortality, not only for himself, but also, in view of the solidarity of the human race, for his descendants. Not a single character in *The Brothers Karamazov*--not even Father Zosima--explicates this basic component of the Christian outlook; consequently, in the light of Dostoyevsky's

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[530] "У них почти совсем не было болезней, хоть и была смерть; но старики их умирали тихо [. . .]" (*PSS* 25: 114).

[531] "*une vérité essentielle de la foi*."

[532] In Catholic theology, "impassibility," derived from the perfect deponent participle (*passus*) of the Latin verb *pati* ("to suffer"), is exemption from suffering.

own announced intention of writing a *roman à thèse* to defend Russian Orthodoxy, the absence of the fundamental Christian doctrine of original sin from his novel has to be regarded as a deficit. This lacuna is all the more striking when one considers that it is humanly impossible for Dostoyevsky to have written so movingly about the suffering and death of children without thinking of how he and his wife Anna had grieved over the loss of two infants of their own. There has to be a heartrending echo of little Alexei Dostoyevsky's death in the scene in which Father Zosima comforts the woman who has lost her two-year-old son, the last of her four deceased children to die. This woman has only to see his little shirt and boots to begin wailing (40).[533] In all likelihood, both of the children whom Dostoyevsky lost had been baptized by a Russian Orthodox priest, and, as we have seen, the Russian Orthodox practice of infant Baptism implies the existence of original sin even in newborn babies.

Someone may pose the following objection: even if Dostoyevsky does not have Alesha Karamazov or Father Zosima bring up original sin, is it not the case that Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground* can be construed as a kind of treatise on this topic? Consider, for example, the final declamatory passage, in which Mouse proclaims: "[. . .] we're all cripples, every one of us, more or less" (91).[534] It may seem that this is a sweeping indictment of human nature, and that it comes close to the Council of Trent's classic formulation of the dogma of original sin, repeated in section 405 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human

[533] *PSS* 14: 45; pt. 1, bk. 2, ch. 3.

[534] "[. . .] все хромаем, всякий более или менее" (*PSS* 5: 178; pt. 2, ch. 10).

nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it; subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin [. . .]."[535]

The answer to this objection is both in the negative and in the affirmative, but mainly in the negative. True, in *Notes from Underground*, Dostoyevsky reacts polemically against what he perceives to be the naïve utopianism of Nikolai Chernyshevsky's novel *What Is to Be Done?* Unquestionably, utopianism is at odds with the concept of original sin. It is also true that *Notes from Underground* has passages (in the essay-like first part) that can be quoted as implying the truth of original sin, at least to the extent to which that dogma posits an intrinsic "wounding" of human nature. By "wounding" is meant, not a Calvinistic "total depravity," but rather a restricted deterioration that compels one to say that we must all struggle with a strong inclination or tendency that pushes us toward morally disordered acts of selfishness, arrogance, intemperance, cruelty, and irresponsibility. Again, this is the tendency that Western theology calls "concupiscence": the tendency to commit actual sin. In this connection, it should be noted that Dostoyevsky, late in his life, writes the following in his March 27, 1878, letter to an unknown woman who had requested his advice concerning the upbringing of her three-year-old child:

> Of course, if the child is bad, the blame lies, at one and the same time, both with his natural evil inclinations (because a person certainly is born with them) and with those who brought him up and either did not know, or were too lazy, to *overcome* his evil inclinations before it was too late and

[535] "*C'est la privation de la sainteté et de la justice originelles, mais la nature humaine n'est pas totalement corrompue : elle est blessée dans ses propres forces naturelles, soumise à l'ignorance, à la souffrance et à l'empire de la mort, et inclinée au péché [. . .].*"

> to channel them in the right direction (by setting a good example)." (Frank and Goldstein 452)[536]

Nonetheless, what justifies the negative part of my answer regarding the interpretation of *Notes from Underground* is the possibility that Dostoyevsky may be going beyond a merely philosophical and empirical refutation of Chernyshevsky's excessively sanguine assessment of human nature. Dostoyevsky may be complicating his own common-sense protest against utopianism by possibly entering the realm of psychopathology. We must note, too, that Dostoyevsky strongly links his critique to the particular segment of Russian history through which he is living. Indeed, he mentions his own milieu in the prologue, and Matlaw, in his article entitled "Structure and Integration in *Notes from the Underground*," goes so far as to speculate that the "underground" in the title of the work includes a political and topical allusion to the nineteenth-century Russian revolutionary movement (Norton Critical Edition of *Notes from Underground* 175). (If Matlaw's suggestion is valid, and Mouse is a revolutionary activist of some kind, it is difficult, for reasons which have already been discussed in connection with his correct name, to imagine that he would ever be armed with anything more threatening than a pamphlet.)

In terms of possible psychopathology as it relates to *Notes from Underground*, what is in question is the kind that is manifested in a socially isolated individual--indeed, to a certain degree, an antisocial individual. For this reason, we have to say that the author of *Notes from Underground* may be discussing the consequences of original sin,

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[536] "Конечно, виноваты в дурном ребенке, в одно и то же время, и дурные его природные наклонности (так как человек несомненно рождается с ними) и воспитатели, которые не сумели или поленились вовремя *овладеть* дурными наклонностями и направить их к хорошему (примером)" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 18).

not as they apply to Everyman and Everywoman, but as they specifically apply to the human being who is more or less emotionally troubled. Admittedly, emotional difficulties can also reflect, according to the doctrine of original sin, the primeval catastrophe that afflicts the whole human race: these problems are among the forms of suffering that flow as punishments from the disastrous act committed by the protoparents.

Nevertheless--and this is particularly relevant to the author who so memorably invokes the sufferings of children in *The Brothers Karamazov*--the concept of original sin encompasses much more territory than that circumscribed by people, either adults or children, who are sick, to a greater or lesser degree, in a clinical or subclinical sense. Indeed, Dostoyevsky, in detailing the mental and external activities of Mouse, has perhaps (as in other places in his works) allowed himself to be somewhat carried away by his fascination with the bizarre. And, without wishing to be unkind to Dostoyevsky or to practice psychiatry in the absence of a medical degree, a reader (unless he or she is a strict formalist) might even feel justified in wondering about the extent to which Mouse's problems reflect those of Dostoyevsky's own early adulthood in St. Petersburg of the 1840's. In chapter 3, I have already engaged in speculation in that direction.

**Dostoyevsky and the Resurrection of the Body**

It is necessary to deal with an additional objection to the position that Dostoyevsky's ultimate solution to the scandalous existence of evil is to be located in his profession of Russian Orthodoxy--a profession that is exemplified by his highlighting of the dogma of the resurrection of the body. The issue is this: does the Russian novelist understand this doctrine in the same sense in which the Russian Orthodox Church

(together with the Catholic Church) teaches it, or does he maintain an idiosyncratic and heterodox view of man's ultimate destiny? This question must be posed in view of Frank's contention that Dostoyevsky is favorably influenced by a relatively obscure Russian thinker, Nikolai Fedorov (1823-1903), who maintains that it is morally obligatory for human technology to achieve some means of literally and physically resurrecting our ancestors. In the words of Copleston, writing in *Philosophy in Russia: From Herzen to Lenin and Berdyaev*: "Fyodorov was not prepared to set limits to the powers of science, and he regarded it as a task for the scientific community to develop the means of bringing 'our fathers', who had been lamentably forgotten, back to life" (228). In a considerable understatement, Copleston adds that this concept "probably seems fantastic to most of us" (228).

A problem arises because of Dostoyevsky's letter of March 24, 1878, to Nikolai Peterson, a follower of Fedorov and a former revolutionary. Peterson had sent Dostoyevsky an anonymous manuscript by Fedorov. Dostoyevsky tells his correspondent: "Then I'll tell you that in essence I am in complete agreement with these ideas. I read them as though they were my own" (Lowe and Meyer 5: 20).[537] Does this polite generic reaction mean that Dostoyevsky actually shares Fedorov's uncommon evaluation of the capabilities and moral obligations of technology? Does Dostoyevsky believe, not in the resurrection that the Russian Orthodox Church says will take place at the end of time by divine power, but rather in one to be accomplished by man's scientific prowess in the here and now? Since Frank points out that Fedorov's ideas found their way into the notes for *The Brothers Karamazov* (*Mantle of the Prophet* 370), the question

[537] "Затем скажу, что в сущности совершенно согласен с этими мыслями. Их я прочел как бы за свои" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 14).

is whether Dostoyevsky's reaction to Fedorov's extraordinary proposal exceeds mere literary fascination and shows that the Russian novelist actually shares Fedorov's heterodox view of the dogma of the resurrection of the body.

I suggest that there is no evidence for the contention that Dostoyevsky rejects the orthodox doctrine of the resurrection in favor of Fedorov's reformulation of it in the manner of science fiction. It is clear from *The Devils* that Dostoyevsky is also intrigued by the Russian sect known as the Skoptsy (215),[538] who believed in what they regarded as the moral duty of castration, but that is no reason to suppose that he agrees with the Skoptsy on that tenet. We should be all the more skeptical of the idea that Dostoyevsky believes in a human, technological resurrection of the body when we read in the letter to Peterson that Dostoyevsky is not certain as to whether Fedorov's resurrection is to be understood literally or merely "allegorically" (Lowe and Meyer 5: 20).[539] Later in the letter, Dostoyevsky indicates that he believes in the Christian doctrine that maintains that God, not human technology, will literally resurrect all human bodies at the end of time:

> Does your thinker straightforwardly and literally imagine, as religion suggests, that resurrection will be real, personal, that the abyss separating us from the soul of our ancestors will be bridged, will be vanquished by vanquished death, and that they will be resurrected not only in our consciousness, not allegorically, but actually, personally, really, in body. (N.B. Of course not in bodies as they are now, since the fact alone that immortality will have arrived, that marriage and the birth of children will

[538] *PSS* 10: 180; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 3.

[539] "аллегорически" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 14).

> have ceased, testifies to the fact that the bodies in the first resurrection, which is ordained to take place on earth, will be different bodies, not like the ones now, that is, perhaps like Christ's body after his resurrection, before his ascension on Pentecost?)
>
> [. . .] I, at least, believe in actual, literal, personal resurrection, and in the fact that it will take place on earth. (Lowe and Meyer 5: 21)[540]

Apart from Dostoyevsky's slip of writing "Pentecost" instead of "the day of the Ascension," the above passage is a perfectly orthodox exposition of the dogma of the resurrection of the body as this eschatological event is understood by both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church.[541] Nor does Dostoyevsky's saying that the resurrection "will take place on earth" impair this conclusion, for Jesus in St. John's Gospel speaks of graves located on earth when he says: "Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation" (5:28-29).[542] As for

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[540] "Ваш мыслитель прямо и буквально представляет себе, как намекает религия, что воскресение будет реальное, личное, что пропасть, отделяющая нас от душ предков наших, засыплется, победится побежденною смертию, и они воскреснут не в сознании только нашем, не аллегорически, а действительно, лично, реально в телах. (НБ. Конечно не в теперешних телах, ибо уж одно то, что наступит бессмертие, прекратится брак и рождение детей, свидетельствует, что тела в первом воскресении, назначенном быть на земле, будут иные тела, не теперешние, то есть такие, может быть, как Христово тело по воскресении его, до вознесения в Пятидесятницу?)

"[. . .] по крайней мере верим в воскресение реальное, буквальное, личное и в то, что оно сбудется на земле" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 14-15).

The verb in the last sentence--верим (*verim* or "we believe")--is plural because Dostoyevsky is including philosopher Vladimir Solov'ev in this profession of faith in the resurrection of the body.

[541] See Alfeyev (202-05), Ott (488-92), and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (sections 988-1004).

[542] "μὴ θαυμάζετε τοῦτο, ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα ἐν ᾗ πάντες οἱ ἐν τοῖς μνημείοις ἀκούσουσιν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκπορεύσονται, οἱ τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες εἰς ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς, οἱ δὲ τὰ φαῦλα πράξαντες εἰς ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως."

Dostoyevsky's reference to the "first resurrection," it is indeed cryptic, but it is only as cryptic as the biblical source from which it comes--*Rev*. 20:5[543]--where, regardless of the sense in which St. John understands it, it cannot mean anything that contradicts the Christian dogma of the resurrection of the body.

Whatever the author of the Apocalypse (Book of Revelation) and Dostoyevsky mean by the phrase "first resurrection," it is inaccurate for Frank to say: "The bold conception of a future humankind that would literally be a huge, united, and interdependent organism--a humankind in which any separation between individuals would no longer even be physically conceivable--may well have guided Dostoevsky toward his epochal formulation" (*Mantle of the Prophet* 370). On the contrary, such a concept of a mankind consisting, no longer of individuals, but instead of one unthinkably huge human body, would contradict Dostoyevsky's own words about the "bodies [note the plural] in the first resurrection." I respectfully suggest that Frank's concept is a misinterpretation of Dostoyevsky's belief in the solidarity that unites all human beings as brothers and sisters in the one human family. Frank also appears to me to misconstrue the spiritual communion that unites all members of the Church in what is called the Mystical Body of Christ. Neither of these two Christian doctrines entails the obliteration of human individuality, either spiritually or physically.[544]

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[543] "ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη."

[544] For human solidarity, see these sections of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: 360-61, 1931, 1939-42, 1948, 2212; for the Mystical Body of Christ, see sections 787-96, 805-07.

**Dostoyevsky Fails to Ground His Position**

Before arguing the case for concluding that Dostoyevsky fails to ground his answer to the scandal of evil, I wish to record a proviso. As is true of my discussions of Dostoyevsky's antagonism toward Catholics and Jews, the critique which I am about to undertake with regard to the flaws that Dostoyevsky exhibits when dealing with evil should in no way be interpreted as minimizing his status as a colossus of literature. This should be obvious (but sometimes the obvious needs to be stated). Because of the focus of this dissertation, it is worth mentioning in passing that a major factor in Dostoyevsky's literary status is his exceptional ability to interweave the stuff of melodrama and tabloid sensationalism with a profound exploration of what Ivan Karamazov calls the "eternal questions" (214).[545] Those are the questions concerning God, good, evil, immortality, and the very meaning and purpose of human existence. Dostoyevsky's superlative ability to synthesize different levels of material, and to bring together an audience of both average and academic readers, of devotees of mystery stories and love intrigues as well as those passionate about philosophical and theological discourse, is one of his signature talents, and one of his primary contributions to the literature of Russia and the world. Of special importance in this regard is Dostoyevsky's inclusion of romantic entanglement, often with bizarre twists and turns. This is the type of narrative that substantially augments the ranks of his readership. He takes to heart a thought occurring to the narrator of his early short story entitled "A Little Hero," written while he was imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg:

[545] "предвечные вопросы" (*PSS* 14: 212; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 3).

> There was, of course, a great deal of tittle-tattle and scandal, for the world could not exist without it and millions of people would have died like flies from sheer boredom. (176)[546]

Despite Dostoyevsky's genius, even an enthusiastic Dostoyevskian may agree with the thesis, which is one half of the central thesis of this dissertation, that the Russian novelist fails in presenting his response to the scandal of evil, and that this failure is all the more significant given his professed intention of triumphantly dealing with this very question. I maintain this thesis despite Dostoyevsky's contention that the refutation of Ivan's atheistic rebellion against evil comes, not from the mouth of Alesha, but from that of the dying Father Zosima. Here is what Dostoyevsky says to Nikolai Liubimov in his letter dated May 10, 1879:

> This Book Five is, in my opinion, the culminating point of the novel and it must be completed with special care.
>
> As you will see from the text I have sent you, it deals with the theme of the ultimate blasphemy and with the central core of the destructive idea of our times, in Russia, among the young generation who have lost contact with reality; and in juxtaposition to blasphemy and anarchism is the refutation of them, which I am preparing now and which will find expression in the last words of the dying Elder Zosima, one of the characters of the novel. (Frank and Goldstein 464)[547]

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[546] "Разумеется, злословие, сплетни шли своим чередом, так как без них и свет не стоит, и миллионы особ перемерли бы от тоски как мухи" (*PSS* 2: 268; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 3).

[547] "Эта 5-ая книга, в моем воззрении, есть кульминационная точка романа, и она должна быть закончена с особенною тщательностью. Мысль ее, как Вы уже увидите из посланного текста, есть изображение крайнего богохульства и зерна идеи разрушения нашего времени в России, в среде оторвавшейся от действительности молодежи, и рядом с богохульством и с анархизмом--

Still, I do not believe that the pastoral counsel of the dying Father Zosima, as moving as it is, constitutes the necessary refutation--and I note, once again, that Dostoyevsky says elsewhere that the "*whole book*" (Norton Critical Edition of *The Brothers Karamazov* 769)[548] is his answer to Ivan's "rebellion" against the suffering and death of children in the chapter entitled "Rebellion."

I cannot agree with Dostoyevsky when he contends that the whole text of *The Brothers Karamazov* serves as an answer--in the sense of a fully adequate answer--to Ivan's atheistic discourse. I grant, however, that it is fortunate that Dostoyevsky makes this assertion about the entire text of the novel, for it should not be doubted that the response that Alesha renders in the tavern scene is inadequate. If Alesha's reaction were, in fact, the only possible counterargument, then it might indeed seem reasonable to opt for Ivan's *de facto* denial of God's existence. And it might even seem that one should choose the suicide at which Ivan appears to be hinting when he says that he will go on enjoying life, including the love of a woman and the love of nature as exemplified by the wonderful "sticky little leaves as they open in spring" (211),[549] until the age of thirty. At that age, Ivan tells us, he will finally--in an ominous phrase--"fling down the cup" (211).[550]

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опровержение их, которое и приготовляется мною теперь в последних словах умирающего старца Зосимы, одного из лиц романа" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 63).

[548] "весь роман" (*PSS* 27: 48).

[549] "клейкие, распускающиеся весной листочки" (*PSS* 14: 210; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 3).

[550] "брошу кубок" (*PSS* 14: 209; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 3).

**"A Child of Doubt and Disbelief"**

This is the place in which to note a potential source for Dostoyevsky's less than forceful refutation of what he calls Ivan's "blasphemy." A wellspring for this inadequate defense of belief is perhaps the weakness of Dostoyevsky's own belief. It is impossible, of course, from the perspective of Christian theology, to plumb the depths of any human being's soul. Still, it is legitimate to take into account what people themselves say about the quality of their commitment, and there is no doubt that Dostoyevsky himself says that he feels that he is not among the strongest of Russian Orthodox believers. In a letter written early in 1854,[551] he makes this profession of faith to Nataliia Fonvizina:

> [. . .] I am a child of this century, a child of doubt and disbelief, I have always been and shall ever be (that I know), until they close the lid of my coffin. [. . .] And, despite all this, God sends me moments of great tranquility [. . .] and it was during such a moment that I formed within myself a symbol of faith [. . .] here is what it is: to believe that there is nothing more beautiful, more profound, more sympathetic, more reasonable, more courageous, and more perfect than Christ; and there not only isn't, but I tell myself with a jealous love, there cannot be**.** More than that--if someone succeeded in proving to me that Christ was outside the truth, and if, *indeed*, the truth was outside Christ, I would sooner remain with Christ than with the truth. (Frank and Goldstein 68)[552]

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[551] *PSS* dates this letter as having been written from the end of January to February 20, 1854 (28, pt. 1: 175); Frank and Goldstein state that it was written from February 15 to March 2, 1854 (67).

[552] "[. . .] я--дитя века, дитя неверия и сомнения до сих пор и даже (я знаю это) до гробовой крышки. [. . .] И, однако же, бог [sic] посылает мне иногда минуты [. . .] и в такие-то минуты я сложил в себе символ веры [. . .] вот он: верить, что нет ничего прекраснее, глубже, симпа<ти> чнее, разумнее, мужественнее и совершеннее Христа, и не только нет, но с ревнивою любовью говорю себе, что и

The first point that I wish to make in reaction to the above excerpt is that Dostoyevsky did not *always* wish to remain with Christ, for we must acknowledge an atheistic detour in his religious biography. Though raised in a home pervaded by the piety of Russian Orthodoxy, he defected to unbelief during his twenties as a result of his friendship with Russian literary critic Vissarion Belinsky, who was, at least at that time, a militant atheist. Though Belinsky's mentoring of Dostoyevsky was brief, lasting only from the late spring of 1845 to the first half of 1847 (Frank, *Seeds of Revolt* 172), it had a huge intellectual impact on the Russian novelist. In an article entitled "Old People" in *A Writer's Diary* for 1873, he forthrightly asserts of Belinsky: "[. . .] I had passionately accepted all his teaching" (1: 130).[553]

I agree with Konstantin Mochulsky (119-20) in opposition to Frank, who contends that "[. . .] just what Dostoevsky means by 'all his teaching' is terribly vague" (*Seeds of Revolt* 195). On the contrary, it is not vague at all. As Mochulsky points out, Dostoyevsky says of Belinsky in the same article of *A Writer's Diary*: "I found him to be a passionate socialist, and in speaking to me he began directly with atheism. [. . .] But as a socialist he first had to dethrone Christianity. He knew that the revolution must necessarily begin with atheism" (1: 128).[554] In a later article of the 1873 issue of *A Writer's Diary* ("One of Today's Falsehoods"), Dostoyevsky defines Belinsky's atheistic

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не может быть. Мало того, если б кто мне доказал, что Христос вне истины, и *действительно* было бы, что истина вне Христа, то мне лучше хотелось бы оставаться со Христом, нежели с истиной" (*PSS* 28, pt. 1: 176).

Translator Andrew MacAndrew's "symbol of faith" should be changed to "credo": символ веры (*simvol very*) is the believer's profession of faith, his or her creed, not a symbol or emblem.

[553] "[. . .] но я страстно принял всё учение его" (*PSS* 21: 12).

[554] "Я застал его страстным социалистом, и он прямо начал со мной с атеизма. [. . .] Но, как социалисту, ему прежде всего следовало низложить христианство; он знал, что революция непременно должна начинать с атеизма" (*PSS* 21: 10).

teaching as including the latter's contention about the "immorality of religion" and clearly states that he, Dostoyevsky, once accepted this claim along with other communist doctrines:

> Even in 1846 Belinsky had initiated me into the whole *truth* of this coming "regenerated world" and into the whole *sanctity* of the future communistic society. All these convictions of the immorality of the very foundations (Christian ones) of contemporary society and of the immorality of religion and the family; of the immorality of the right to private property, of the elimination of nationalities in the name of the universal brotherhood of people and of contempt for one's fatherland as something that only slowed universal development, and so on and so forth--all these things were influences we were unable to resist and which, in fact, captured our hearts and minds in the name of something very noble. (1: 285-86)[555]

In the light of the above quotation, which appears to be neglected in scholarly research (apart from Mochulsky's classic study), an additional linkage between Dostoyevsky and Camus may be identified: both novelists were briefly converted to communism but eventually abandoned it.[556]

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[555] "Я уже в 46 году был посвящен во всю *правду* этого грядущего «обновленного мира» и во всю *святость* будущего коммунистического общества еще Белинским. Все эти убеждения о безнравственности самых оснований (христианских) современного общества, о безнравственности религии, семейства; о безнравственности права собственности; все эти идеи об уничтожении национальностей во имя всеобщего братства людей, о презрении к отечеству, как к тормозу во всеобщем развитии, и проч. и проч.--всё это были такие влияния, которых мы преодолеть не могли и которые захватывали, напротив, наши сердца и умы во имя какого-то великодушия" (*PSS* 21: 131).

[556] Anyone who may object to my calling the young Dostoyevsky a communist should read Mochulsky's chapter entitled "Dostoevsky the Revolutionary" (114-32). It is more convincing than Frank's

As for the timeframe for Dostoyevsky's abandonment of communism, he had repudiated Belinsky's unbelief by the day on which he stood in Semenovskii Square awaiting the death which, fortunately for him and for literature, did not ensue.[557] Frank says: "And we know from one of his fellow-Petrashevtsy that, as Dostoevsky was awaiting execution in 1849, he spoke as a believing Christian who had by no means abandoned his hope of an afterlife in which he would 'be with Christ'" (*Seeds of Revolt* 195-96).[558] Dostoyevsky's renewal of belief is also clear from a statement that he makes in reference to *Notes from Underground*, published in 1864. Regardless of the intellectual difficulties that he may have experienced while believing again in the religion of his childhood, we know that he had returned to this belief from his angrily objecting to

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corresponding chapter: "Belinsky and Dostoevsky II" (*Seeds of Revolt* 182-98). Frank maintains that Dostoyevsky accepted Belinsky's socialism while never abandoning Christian belief.

[557] As Frank points out, Belinsky himself may have rejected atheism and returned to Russian Orthodoxy in the face of his impending death from tuberculosis (*Seeds of Revolt* 288 [footnote]).

Frank cites Dr. Ianovskii's report that he and his friend Dostoyevsky observed the Russian Orthodox Church's fast before the feast of the Ascension in both 1847 and 1849 (*Seeds of Revolt* 196). Does this report mean that Dostoyevsky ended his atheistic interlude long before he stood in Semenovskii Square expecting to be shot in a few minutes? Did he return to faith as early as 1847, thus making his excursion into unbelief extremely short? Not necessarily. Dostoyevsky's fasting in 1847 may have been prompted by social conformism or his friendship with Ianovskii--or even by a desire to camouflage his involvement with atheists in revolutionary activities.

I wonder whether Frank's mention of the feast of the Ascension of Christ (forty days after Easter) may be an error for the feast of the Assumption of the Mother of God (August 15). Russian Orthodoxy has no fast before the Ascension, but it does have one during the two weeks preceding the Assumption; see Ware (306). In Russian, the Ascension is Вознесение (*Voznesenie*), whereas the Assumption is Успение (*Uspenie*). I requested Professor Frank's assistance in resolving my doubt, but I did not receive a reply.

[558] In his essay entitled "Dostoevskii and Religion," Malcolm V. Jones casts doubt on the significance of Dostoyevsky's words during the mock execution: "Dostoevskii seems to have continued to hope for something after his physical death and to have been terrified by the unknown as much as by the imminent prospect of extinction. At all events it would be inappropriate to draw any general conclusions about his religious views from his feelings at such a moment" (154).

On the contrary, Professor Jones! It is precisely at such a moment that one may be most serious and most sincere about religion. Perhaps Dostoyevsky is thinking of this point, and of his own experience with imminent death, when he makes the down-to-earth Varvara Stavrogina tell the dying, but still frivolous, Stepan Verkhovenskii in *The Devils* that she has summoned a priest. Madame Stavrogina exclaims: "Rubbish, rubbish! [. . .] We're not playing games now. We've fooled around long enough! [--Вздор, вздор! [. . .] Теперь не до шалостей. Довольно дурачились]" (675; *PSS* 10: 504; pt. 3, ch. 7, sect. 3).

the tsarist censorship's excision of Christian references from the original text of that work. In his March 26, 1864, letter to his brother Mikhail, he complains as follows:

> The censors are a bunch of pigs--those places where I mocked everything and occasionally employed blasphemy *for the sake of form* they allowed to stand; but when, from all that, I deduced the need for faith and for Christ, they took it out. (Frank and Goldstein 191)[559]

Regrettably, we do not have the Christian references that the censors expunged from Dostoyevsky's original text.[560]

Despite Dostoyevsky's transition from atheism back to Russian Orthodoxy, another point that I wish to make about the excerpt from Dostoyevsky's 1854 letter to Madame Fonvizina is that the relatively early date of this letter should not lead us to conclude that the religious difficulties that Dostoyevsky experienced while simultaneously professing Russian Orthodoxy belong only to his youth. In connection with his projected novel entitled *The Life of a Great Sinner*, he makes the following comment to Apollon Maikov in a letter dated March 25/April 6, 1870, when he, Dostoyevsky, was forty-eight years old: "The main question which will run through all

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[559] "Свиньи цензора, там, где я глумился над всем и иногда богохульствовал *для виду*,--то пропущено, а где из всего этого я вывел потребность веры и Христа--то запрещено" (*PSS* 28, pt. 2: 73).

[560] Dostoyevsky's declaration about the Christian elements censored out of *Notes from Underground* shows why it is misleading for Sturm to say in reference to a possible religious solution for Mouse's misery: "The Underground Man does not even mention the possibility of such a solution [. . .]. [*L'Homme du souterrain n'évoque même pas la possibilité d'une telle solution* [. . .] ]" (*Conscience et impuissance* 57; my translation).

Furthermore, I respectfully dissent from this judgment of Sturm's: "The *Underground* contains, without a doubt, the most diabolical collection of nihilistic arguments and principles ever assembled in Western literature. [*Le «Sous-sol» contient sans doute l'accumulation la plus diabolique d'arguments et de principes nihilistes jamais rassemblés dans la littérature occidentale*]" (*Conscience et impuissance* 114-15; my translation). This is an overstatement.

the parts of the novel is the question that has tormented me either consciously or unconsciously all my life--the existence of God" (Frank and Goldstein 331).[561]

The peroration of Dostoyevsky's 1854 profession of faith is copied and put--with consummate irony and incongruity--into the mouth of Stavrogin in *The Devils*. During their nocturnal confrontation, Shatov asks Stavrogin: "Wasn't it you who said that even if it was proved to you mathematically that the Truth was outside Christ, you would prefer to remain with Christ outside the Truth?" (237).[562] Despite the jarring attribution of this sentiment to Stavrogin, one may ask: "What is wrong with this statement from the viewpoint of Russian Orthodoxy (or from that of Catholicism)?" Is this not, for a Russian-speaking Christian, one of the most beautiful and moving expressions of faith ever penned in that language? Is it not an outstanding example of the use of paradox and hyperbole to affirm Christian faith?[563] The answers to these questions are emphatically in the affirmative. But also, to some extent, in the negative. In the negative, because Dostoyevsky admits at the very beginning of the epistolary quotation that he is *still* and always will be a child of nineteenth-century unbelief, and because, in his affecting conclusion, he sets up an opposition, which, even though it is posed in a merely hypothetical fashion, a Christian has to reject as false, inasmuch as the whole point of

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[561] "Главный вопрос, который проведется во всех частях,--тот самый, которым я мучился сознательно и бессознательно всю мою жизнь,--существование божие" (*PSS* 29, pt. 1: 117).

[562] "--Но не вы ли говорили мне, что если бы математически доказали вам, что истина вне Христа, то вы бы согласились лучше остаться со Христом, нежели с истиной?" (*PSS* 10: 198; pt. 2, ch. 1, sect. 7).

[563] To defend his saying that he would remain with Christ even if Christ were outside the truth, Dostoyevsky could have appealed to the rhetorical precedent set by St. Paul, who writes that he is so anguished over the failure of other Jews to convert to belief in Jesus that "[. . .] I could wish that I myself were accursed and separated from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kin according to the flesh. [ηὐχόμην γὰρ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν συγγενῶν μου κατὰ σάρκα [. . .] ]" (*Rom* 9:3). In what I understand to be a paradoxical contrary-to-fact condition, there is a suppressed protasis: "if it were morally permissible to wish to be anathema from Christ."

faith is that it is *true* and *certain*. Again ironically, it is the unbelieving Stavrogin who expresses the Russian Orthodox and Catholic view of the certitude necessary for the act of faith when he says to Bishop Tikhon in Camus's *Les Possédés*: "But, for me, faith must be perfect or not exist. That's why I'm an atheist" (*Théâtre* 1068).[564]

Despite the myriads of intellectual and emotional difficulties--even the most agonizing ones--that may arise in the mind and heart to render difficult the profession of belief in Christ, no Christian who wishes to be coherent can legitimately say, or even seem to imply, that the truths of faith are uncertain or doubtful. In the Christian understanding, a *doubt* against faith is a *refusal* of the *will* to believe, and *is* a sin; however, a *difficulty* against faith is merely the *inability* experienced by the *intellect* when attempting to reconcile two realities, and is *not* a sin. For example, Dostoyevsky--or any other Russian Orthodox believer, including the most learned theologian--cannot explain how bread and wine are changed into the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ during the Divine Liturgy (beyond saying that this happens through God's omnipotence), but no Russian Orthodox believer, if he or she is truly a believer, doubts that this change takes place. By the same token, no Russian Orthodox believer can fully and adequately explain, from a human viewpoint, how human suffering--physical evil--can be reconciled with God's love, but the Russian Orthodox believer knows that he or she cannot doubt that they *are* reconcilable, since both are facts.

These examples reflect the crucial distinction underlying Cardinal John Henry Newman's statement in *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*: "Ten thousand difficulties do not make

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[564] "*Mais, pour moi, la foi doit être parfaite ou ne pas être. C'est pourquoi je suis athée*" (pt. 2, sc. 14; my translation).

one doubt [. . .]" (184).[565] It seems that many people, unaware of Newman's dictum, confuse the issue by using the term "doubt" to refer to what is only an intellectual difficulty. In the understanding of both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, this confusion is to be avoided, for faith is to be so strong--despite all intellectual difficulties, hindrances, and scandals--that one must feel obliged, should it prove necessary, to die as a martyr to bear witness to its truth. In Stavrogin's phraseology as reflected in Camus's adaptation of *The Devils*, faith must be perfect--in the sense of being free of all doubt. This is why a committed Christian recognizes the moral obligation to follow the example of the Russian soldier who, as recounted by Grigorii in *The Brothers Karamazov*, is flayed alive by Muslims because he refuses to renounce Christ (115).[566] This reference is based on a news story in the Russian press of Dostoyevsky's day; the heroic soldier's name was Foma Danilov. In an article entitled "Foma Danilov, a Russian Hero Tortured to Death," Dostoyevsky discusses this soldier's martyrdom at length in the January 1877 issue of *A Writer's Diary* (2: 820-25).[567]

Admittedly, Dostoyevsky himself, in the depths of his soul and in spite of his letter to Nataliia Fonvizina and his own possible confusion, may believe as strongly and lucidly as Foma Danilov, but, then again, he may not believe as strongly and lucidly as his compatriot, in which case this may be one of the factors that contribute to his failure

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[565] The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* quotes this dictum in its section on the certitude of faith (157).

[566] *PSS* 14: 117; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 7.

[567] *PSS* 25: 12-17.

There is a contemporary Foma Danilov. In a striking parallel to the reference in *The Brothers Karamazov*, it has been reported that a Russian soldier, nineteen-year-old Evgenii Rodionov, was beheaded by Chechen separatists on May 23, 1996, after having refused to convert to Islam, and that a wave of devotion among believers has resulted in his *de facto* canonization as a martyr for Russian Orthodoxy. See Seth Mydans, "From Village Boy to Soldier, Martyr and, Many Say, Saint," *New York Times*, November 21, 2003, and "Russian Soldier Goes Through Chechen Captivity Hell," *Pravda* [*Truth*], January 8, 2003.

to fulfill his own avowed intention of decisively refuting Ivan Karamazov's case for a godless, absurd universe--the case that is to exert such a profound influence on Camus in the twentieth century. Christian writers who wish to defend their faith must first have an unshakable, rock-solid commitment to their beliefs. Otherwise, they may produce magnificent works of art--there is no doubt that Dostoyevsky does so--but they may still fail to realize their apologetic intentions.

Apart from the solidity of Dostoyevsky's own faith, what is the most profound, most basic textual reason why it must be said that Dostoyevsky fails to ground his position on the scandal of evil? The essential structural reason why Dostoyevsky fails to achieve an adequate refutation of atheism and nihilism in *The Brothers Karamazov* is that he refuses to adhere to the tradition of Christian apologetics, which requires that the arguments of unbelievers be directly *answered* on the basis of reason. Contrary to Frank's positing of a "Christian irrationalism" (*Mantle of the Prophet* 607), St. Thomas Aquinas says this of the arguments of unbelievers:

> The obvious conclusion from the foregoing is that whatever arguments are advanced against the documents of the Faith do not rightly follow from the first self-evident principles intrinsic to nature. For this reason, such arguments lack the power of demonstration, but are either probable reasons or sophisms. And thus there exists the possibility of solving them. (*Summa contra gentiles* [*Summary Against Unbelievers*], bk. 1, ch. 7)[568]

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[568] "*Ex quo evidenter colligitur quaecumque argumenta contra fidei documenta ponantur, haec ex principiis primis naturae inditis per se notis non recte procedere. Unde nec demonstrationis vim habent, sed vel sunt rationes probabiles vel sophisticae. Et sic ad ea solvenda locus relinquitur*" (my translation).

When St. Thomas says that some of the arguments of unbelievers are "probable," he means "*merely* probable," i.e., only *superficially*, but not truly, cogent, as the context makes clear.

St. Thomas exemplifies in practice his own theoretical approach of using reason to defend faith. For example, when he deals in the *Summa contra gentiles* with the dogma of the Incarnation--God's having a assumed a human nature in Jesus--he begins his discussion by first posing no fewer than thirteen objections from reason against the truth of this doctrine (bk. 4, ch. 40). Then, in accordance with his routine procedure in dealing with objections, he sets forth his reasons for accepting the truth of the dogma, and then proceeds, systematically and in detail, to answer all thirteen objections on the basis of logic (bk. 4, ch. 49).

According to this apologetic tradition, it is not sufficient simply to profess the Creed, or to give good personal example. An apologist must also make an adequate reason-based response to the adversaries of faith; in one word, the apologist must *refute* them. Accordingly, if the apologist is also a novelist engaged in writing a *roman à thèse* whose avowed objectives are to defeat unbelief and vindicate Christian theodicy, and if the novel is to incorporate the extensively presented arguments of unbelievers, then merely to present ethically attractive characters--characters who, in their actions, exemplify Christian belief--is not a sufficient reaction to the contentions of those who attack belief.

Yes, the portraits of admirable characters in *The Brothers Karamazov*--Alesha, Father Zosima, Markel, Dr. Herzenstube, and, in their various states of regeneration, Dmitrii, Kolia Krasotkin, Iliusha Snegirev, and Grushen'ka--are outstanding. In particular, the reaction of Kolia and his schoolmates, under Alesha's big-brother mentoring, to the dying nine-year-old Iliusha--another symbol of the suffering child--is certainly one of Dostoyevsky's literary triumphs. It is in this novelistic *tour de force* that

Dostoyevsky resembles Dickens. The cycle of Iliusha's last days and burial, including the delightful story of the resurrection (as it were) of his lost dog, Zhuchka (495-531, 727-35),[569] is enough to bring tears to a reader's eyes, in addition to establishing an atmosphere in which even an unbeliever may be more inclined to explore the case for the core dogmas of Russian Orthodoxy, especially the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and man's supernatural destiny in heaven. Yes, for all the preceding reasons, Dostoyevsky makes an undoubtedly valid point when he says in his notebooks that the answer to the nihilistic discourse of Ivan in the "Rebellion" chapter will be the "*whole book*" (Norton Critical Edition of *The Brothers Karamazov* 769).[570] But this is not enough, if we consider the novelist's own declared intentions.

The reason why this is not enough is that the ultimate answer to the scandalous evils of suffering and death as Dostoyevsky presents this answer is, as we have seen, the Christian doctrine that we shall all be resurrected at the end of time, with the possibility of achieving eternal happiness and salvation in heaven. This salvation implies that God has forgiven us for having committed the moral evil of mortal sin, thus allowing us to escape the possibility of eternal damnation in hell, which Dostoyevsky has Father Zosima call the "suffering of no longer being able to love" (301).[571] But Dostoyevsky's solution of believing in the resurrection and heaven as the answers to evil is valid only if there will, in fact, be a resurrection. This in turn means that Dostoyevsky's response is valid

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[569] *PSS* 14: 471-508; pt. 4, bk. 10, ch. 3-ch. 7; *PSS* 15: 189-97; epilogue, ch. 3.

[570] "весь роман" (*PSS* 27: 48).

[571] "Страдание о том, что нельзя уже более любить" (*PSS* 14: 292; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. i).

only if the core teachings of Russian Orthodoxy are *true*, and, above all, only if there is a God who rewards good and punishes evil.

If Ivan is right in arguing against God's loving providence, then there is no God. Nor, in that case, is there a resurrection. And, if there is no resurrection, then Iliusha (and all his loved ones and friends, such as Alesha, Kolia, and his schoolmates) have, in fact, nothing to which they can ultimately look forward. Further, if Ivan is correct, then Alesha's consoling words about his reunion with Iliusha and the other boys in the next world--"Certainly we shall all rise again, certainly we shall see each other and shall tell each other with joy and gladness all that has happened!" (735)[572]--are a cruel self-deception. In the words of St. Paul writing about the resurrection of Jesus as the paradigm for our own resurrection: "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are the most pitiable people of all" (*1 Cor* 15:19).[573] Moreover, if Ivan is justified in rejecting both God and immortality, then Jesus's assurance in *Jn* 12:24 that the grain of wheat will produce much fruit only if it dies is wholly invalidated, for the primary referent in that verse (as has already been stated) is Jesus's redemptive death on the Cross considered as the guarantee of eventual resurrection and of the possibility of eternal life in beatitude for everyone else who dies. But if atheism is true, then Jesus's teaching in this verse is false. This is why Dostoyevsky, who chooses this verse as the epigraph for his last novel, must decisively refute Ivan's atheistic discourse directly as well as indirectly.

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[572] "--Непременно восстанем, непременно увидим и весело, радостно расскажем друг другу всё, что было" (*PSS* 15: 197; epilogue, ch. 3).

[573] "εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἠλπικότες ἐσμὲν μόνον, ἐλεεινότεροι πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἐσμέν."

The reaction of the Christian apologist to Dostoyevsky's manner of fulfilling his own intentions has to be along these lines: "Yes, the power of good example is crucial, and 'active love' for one's neighbor, together with love for God, is the core of Christian ethics**.** It is also true that God, acting directly inside the human soul, or indirectly through the resplendent external example of other people, is constantly planting spiritual seeds that may sooner or later germinate in acts of love and salvation.[574] Granted, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, there are glowing instances of this planting of seeds through example. And, yes, these seeds will later yield an abundant harvest in accordance with the metaphor of Jesus's parable of the sower: 'But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirtyfold' (*Mt* 13:23).[575] Among these examples of the sowing of fruitful seeds is the Christian witness borne by the dying Markel to his young brother Zosima (266-69)[576] and by kindly Dr. Herzenstube to Dmitrii, then an unloved, neglected child who

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[574] Catholic theology gives the name "actual grace" to the seeds (as it were) that God plants directly and supernaturally inside the human soul. This technical term distinguishes these internal and transitory influences from external influences (such as good example and orthodox teaching) and also from the habitual internal state known as sanctifying grace, or the supernatural life. There is no irreverence in an alternative metaphor: likening actual graces to laser beams with which God is constantly bombarding all human beings to give light to the intellect and vigor to the will to help people achieve in the next world the ultimate goal for which they have been brought into existence in this world. Ott says: "The teaching of the Church [. . .] is that man needs a power exceeding his natural capacity (i.e., a supernatural power), for the performance of salutary acts. The supernatural help of God in salutary activities extends to the two faculties of the soul, the reason and the will. Actual grace consists in a direct enternal [sic] enlightenment of the understanding and a direct internal strengthening of the will" (225). See Ott's entire section on actual grace (225-49).

When Father Zosima says that "I cut off my superfluous and unnecessary desires, I subdue my proud and wanton will and chastise it with obedience, and with God's help I attain freedom of spirit and with it spiritual joy. [ [. . .] отсекаю от себя потребности лишние и ненужные, самолюбивую и гордую волю мою смиряю и бичую послушанием, и достигаю тем, с помощию божьей, свободы духа, а с нею и веселья духовного!"] (293; *PSS* 14: 285; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 3, sect. e), the phrase "with God's help" refers to actual grace.

[575] "ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν καλὴν γῆν σπαρείς, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τὸν λόγον ἀκούων καὶ συνιείς, ὃς δὴ καρποφορεῖ καὶ ποιεῖ ὃ μὲν ἑκατόν, ὃ δὲ ἑξήκοντα, ὃ δὲ τριάκοντα."

[576] *PSS* 14: 260-63; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 2, sect. a.

was deeply affected by the doctor's gift of a pound of nuts (637-41).[577] Nevertheless, when faced with the approach taken by Ivan Karamazov in favor of atheism, both theoretical and practical, it is insufficient to appeal *exclusively* to the power of Christian witness."

The Christian apologist would have to extend the above critique by proceeding in the following manner: "Even a sophism must be confronted on its own terms. Since human confusion and weakness are as pronounced as the doctrine of original sin tells us they are, they may lead readers to accept even the worst sophisms. It has to be the case that many readers have been confirmed in their unbelief by reading Ivan's relentless indictment of God for permitting evil to exist in the forms of the suffering and death of children. Consequently, Ivan must be *refuted*. And he must be refuted in such a way that the rationality of belief shines forth, in keeping with the above quotation from St. Thomas's *Summa contra gentiles*." The foregoing responses represent how a Christian apologist has to react to Dostoyevsky's failure in *The Brothers Karamazov*, while conceding, to be sure, that it is a magnificent failure.

It should not be thought that Dostoyevsky would have been unfaithful to Russian Orthodoxy if he had followed the example of St. Thomas, a Catholic theologian, in pursuing a direct approach to apologetics in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Not only does Dostoyevsky tell us in his correspondence that he realizes that he ought to read Catholic authors,[578] but the reading of such works had also become a part of Russian Orthodox

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[577] *PSS* 15: 103-07; pt. 4, bk. 12, ch. 3.

[578] Writing on December 11/23, 1868, to Apollon Maikov about a projected novel entitled *Atheism* (a prototype for *The Brothers Karamazov*), Dostoyevsky says: "[. . .] before I can start on it I have to read practically a whole library of atheists, Catholics, and Orthodox. [ [. . .] прежде чем приняться за который, мне нужно прочесть чуть не целую библиотеку атеистов, католиков и православных]" (Norton Critical Edition of *The Brothers Karamazov* 751; *PSS* 28, pt. 2: 329).

tradition as early as the time of Peter Mogila in the seventeenth century.[579] Still, this expansion of Russian Orthodox tradition to include apologetics in the Catholic sense seems not to have strongly influenced the religious education of average believers. For this reason, Gibson appears largely (not totally) justified in saying that "Dostoevsky's religious education did not supply him with the means to meet an intellectual challenge" (9).

What is especially surprising in Dostoyevsky's failure to honor the tradition of Christian apologetics is that he himself uses reason at other points in his writings to defend Russian Orthodoxy. We have seen, for example, that he uses an argument from reason in *A Writer's Diary* to establish the immortality of the soul: he argues that the soul must be immortal because the contrary conclusion turns life into an absurdity. This is an argument from reason: one based on philosophy. We have also seen that he appeals to the reality of Jesus's resurrection of Lazarus as establishing the truth of Christianity in the *Crime and Punishment* chapter in which Sonia tries to bring Raskol'nikov back to the faith of his childhood. This, too, is an argument from reason: one based on history. Consequently, it is all the more puzzling that, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, which Dostoyevsky writes with the acknowledged intention of refuting atheism and anarchism, he omits any direct counterattack on Ivan's direct attack on belief. To use Dostoyevsky's

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[579] Of seventeenth-century Russian Orthodox theologians, Jugie says: "These theologians are no longer Byzantines in the former mode. The new spirit of the West has penetrated them. They know the Latin language, read the Latin Fathers fluently, and cite them almost as much as the Greek Fathers in their sermons and their writings. They do their theology in the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas, and they are not unfamiliar with the great names of sixteenth-century Catholic theology. [*Ces théologiens ne sont plus des Byzantins à l'ancienne manière. L'esprit nouveau de l'Occident les a pénétrés. Ils savent la langue latine, lisent couramment les Pères latins et les citent presque autant que les Pères grecs dans leurs sermons et leurs écrits. Ils font leur théologie dans la* Somme *de saint Thomas d'Aquin, et n'ignorent pas les grands noms de la théologie catholique au XVI^e siècle*]" ("Moghila, Pierre," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, 10, pt. 2: 2076).

own verb, he fails to "refute" Ivan directly. And what is even more puzzling is that Dostoyevsky himself is aware of his failure. His correspondent, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, later chief procurator of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, had opined to Dostoyevsky that the Russian novelist had not answered all the points that Ivan had made. In an August 24/September 5, 1879,[580] letter to Pobedonostsev, Dostoyevsky tries to assuage the latter's concerns. In doing so, he admits that he himself is uncertain whether book 6, entitled "The Russian Monk" (262-303),[581] will be sufficient to counter Ivan's attack on Russian Orthodoxy:

> Your opinion of what you have read of *The Karamazovs* (about the force and vigor of the writing) flatters me greatly, but then, you also raise the *absolutely essential* question: That thus far I don't seem to have the answer to all these atheistic arguments, and an answer is indispensable. Yes, you have something there, and this is now my major worry and concern. For I attempt, as a matter of fact, to give the answer to this whole *negative side* in Book Six, "A Russian Monk," which will be coming out on August 31. And that's why I am trembling over it, wondering whether it will be an *adequate* answer. What makes it even more difficult is that the answer itself is not a direct one, not really a point-by-point refutation of the ideas formulated earlier (by the Grand Inquisitor and earlier), but only an indirect one. (Frank and Goldstein 486)[582]

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[580] Frank and Goldstein give the Julian and Gregorian dates of this letter as August 25 and September 6, respectively. I am taking the August 24/September 5 dating from *PSS* 30, pt. 1: 120.

[581] *PSS* 14: 257-94; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 1-ch. 3.

[582] "Мнение Ваше о прочитанном в «Карамазовых» мне очень польстило (насчет силы и энергии написанного), но Вы тут же задаете *необходимейший* вопрос: что ответу на все эти атеистические

If Dostoyevsky had given even greater weight to Pobedonostsev's well-founded misgivings, how could he have had Dmitrii, or even Alesha, refute the articulate case that Ivan argues against belief in God's goodness and providence, and thus against God's very existence? There are counterarguments that a Christian interlocutor could have used to overcome Ivan's discourse, as has already been indicated to some extent in chapter 2 of this dissertation. An apologist confronting Ivan could have objected that the evil and disorder that we discern in children's sufferings can *never* logically negate God's existence, since God is necessary to account for the manifest good and the undeniable order that otherwise characterize--even in our limited, human understanding--man's experience of life and the universe. Dmitrii, the former Russian army officer, could have recalled (let us suppose this) that he had once entered a barracks to inspect it, finding nineteen of its beds made and one unmade. No sane or reasonable person doubts that the nineteen made beds required soldiers to put them into that condition.[583]

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положения у меня пока не оказалось, а их надо. То-то и есть и в этом-то теперь моя забота и всё мое беспокойство. Ибо ответом на всю эту *отрицательную сторону* я и предположил быть вот этой 6-й книге, «Русский инок», которая появится 31 августа. А потому и трепещу за нее в том смысле: будет ли она *достаточным* ответом. Тем более, что ответ-то ведь не прямой, не на положения прежде выраженные (в «В<еликом> инквизиторе» и прежде) по пунктам, а лишь косвенный" (*PSS* 30, pt. 1: 121-22).

[583] This concrete example is taken from an apologetics textbook widely studied in Irish schools in the last century: Archbishop Michael Sheehan's *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine* (54). The philosophical principles behind this homespun analogy go back to Greek philosophy. These principles are encapsulated in the argument of St. Thomas Aquinas: "Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer. [*Ea autem quae non habent cognitionem, non tendunt in finem nisi directa ab aliquo cognoscente et intelligente, sicut sagitta a sagittante*]" (*Summa theologiae*, pt. 1, ques. 2, art. 3, body).

In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Father Zosima replicates St. Thomas's argument when he says: "Every blade of grass, every insect, ant, and golden bee, all so amazingly know their path, though they have not intelligence, they bear witness to the mystery of God and continually accomplish it themselves. [Всякая-то травка, всякая-то букашка, муравей, пчелка золотая, все-то до изумления знают путь свой, не имея ума, тайну божию свидетельствуют, беспрерывно совершают ее сами [. . .] ]" (273; *PSS* 14: 267; pt. 2, bk. 6, ch. 2, sect. b). This is one of the many points that Alesha could have made to Ivan in the tavern.

The only way to evade the force of Archbishop Sheehan's dormitory analogy is to doubt the existence of the beds. Or to deny that you are really reading this dissertation. Or that you yourself exist.

By the same token, to whatever degree the human intellect is scandalized and anguished by the apparent disorder of a young child's suffering and death, it is impossible to deny the existence of order in the cosmos--an order that demands the existence of a transcendent source of order. That source is called God. This is the essence of the argument that Dmitrii or another character could have set against Ivan's emotional indictment of divine providence. "No, Ivan, I can't exhaustively explain"--Dostoyevsky *could have had, but did not have,* Dmitrii say--"in a way that is humanly and emotionally satisfactory to you here and now, why all these children have suffered. Still, all the tears ever shed by, or for, those poor children cannot destroy the fact that the universe cries out for the acknowledgement of a supreme intelligence. Even the 'sticky little leaves' (211)[584] that you love so much, brother, even they point to someone who fashioned their beauty." This is what Dmitrii could have said to Ivan in the Metropolis Tavern, had Dostoyevsky made him or another articulate character say it. But Dostoyevsky fails to do so, thereby undermining his own professed goal of refuting unbelief and defending Russian Orthodoxy. This is the main reason for this dissertation's contention that Dostoyevsky fails to ground his position on the scandal of evil. Instead of adequately defending Christian faith as the only rational answer to this scandal, Dostoyevsky allows the existence of evil to overwhelm him, despite his *sui generis* status as a writer.

I am not alone in contending that Dostoyevsky fails to respond successfully to Ivan's attack on belief. In an article entitled "Evil in an Earthly Paradise: Ivan

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These philosophical options illustrate the *argumenta ad absurdum* by which the *philosophia perennis* defends itself.

[584] "клейкие [. . .] листочки" (*PSS* 14: 210; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 3).

Karamazov's 'Dialectic' Against God and Zossima's 'Euclidean' Response,'" Robert V. Wharton writes: "Since [Edward Hallett] Carr virtually all major Dostoevskyans have repeated either his view that Ivan is unanswered within *The Brothers Karamazov* itself or his view that Ivan is unanswerable in actual fact" (568). Among those commentators whom Wharton lists (with quotations) as belonging to the first group are René Fülöp-Miller, Yarmolinsky, and Richard Peace (568). Yarmolinsky says: "Indeed, he [Dostoyevsky] jotted down in his notebook, the whole novel was an answer to Ivan. Of course, it is no more a logical answer than is the section on Zosima--dialectic was not Dostoevsky's strong point" (*Dostoevsky: His Life and Art* 385). To the second group--those who believe a rational refutation impossible--Wharton assigns Ernest Simmons, Eliseo Vivas, Edward Wasiolek, Mochulsky, Robert Lord, and Nikolai Lossky (568-69). Having set forth the reasons why I agree with Wharton's first group (but not with the second), I now turn to Camus, and to the reasons why he, too, is overwhelmed by the problem of evil.

**Camus's Odyssey**

It is not as easy to discuss Camus's attempted resolution of the scandal of evil as it is to discuss Dostoyevsky's. With the exception of his relatively brief defection to atheism under the influence of Belinsky in the 1840's, Dostoyevsky's approach to the problem of evil remains essentially static because of his commitment to Russian Orthodoxy, whereas Camus undergoes a pronounced evolution in his worldview over the course of his life and career. For convenience, and without being unduly rigid in positing demarcations, we can say that the three high points of Camus's intellectual development

are (1) *L'Étranger* and *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, which can be considered a pair, and which were both published in 1942;[585] (2) *L'Homme révolté,* published in 1951; and (3) *La Chute*, published in 1956. Those texts are markers for three stages, more or less distinct, in Camus's philosophical odyssey. Stage one is full-fledged *absurdism*, which takes atheism for granted. This stage includes the early novel *La Mort heureuse*, completed in 1938 and unpublished during Camus's lifetime. Stage two is *atheistic humanism*--nonetheless with a strong residue of absurdism as a substratum. This stage incorporates Camus's novel *La Peste*, published in 1947. Stage three seems to be a period of flux, with a possible movement away from atheistic humanism toward Catholicism. In relation to the focus of this dissertation, the evils on which Camus concentrates change in each of the three phases of his ideological journey. In stage one, he concentrates on the *physical* evil of death; in stage two, on *moral* evils of a social, political, and economic nature; in stage three, on *moral* evils on the individual, personal, and sexual levels, with emphases on guilt and contrition. (Nonetheless, as I have already pointed out in chapter 5, if we take his *entire career* into account, we must say that Camus, in contrast with Dostoyevsky, is more concerned with evil in the overall *political*, rather than the overall *personal*, sense.)

**Camus's First Phase: Unmitigated Absurdism**

For the Camus of stage one--the Camus of *L'Étranger* and *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*--the resolution of the problem of evil is to be located in a relentless, but ultimately hopeless, revolt against a meaningless universe. The Camus of this phase regards his

[585] I am taking the publication year of *L'Étranger* and *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* from *Essais* (1414, 1934). *Théâtre* incorrectly states that *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* did not appear until 1943 (xxxiii).

revolt as hopeless and the universe as meaningless because he presupposes, almost dogmatically, that there is no God, and because, for him, every human life is inevitably, and unjustly, annihilated by death. In fact, as we have already seen in chapter 4, Camus is all but obsessed by the menace of death. His concept of revolt reflects Camus's having been profoundly impressed by Ivan Karamazov's revolt against God's universe in the chapter entitled "Rebellion" in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. But Camus transcends Ivan. So thoroughgoing is the French novelist's atheistic revolt against mortality that one can say that his idea of God matches his portrayal of Gaius Caligula (A.D. 37-41), the homicidal third Roman emperor, in Camus's play of that name. The Camusian notion of God is also mirrored in the rapacious, murderous innkeepers who kill their own son and brother in Camus's play *Le Malentendu* [*The Misunderstanding*]. In *Caligula*, Camus puts into the mouth of the Roman emperor words that deserve to be highlighted:

> I live, I kill, I wield the mad power of the destroyer, next to which that of the creator looks like clownish mimicry. That's what it means to be happy. That's beatitude, that unbearable relief, that universal contempt, the blood, the hate surrounding me, that unequalled isolation of the man who holds all his life under his gaze, the overflowing joy of the unpunished murderer, that implacable logic [. . .]. (*Théâtre* 106)[586]

[586] "*Je vis, je tue, j'exerce le pouvoir délirant du destructeur, auprès de quoi celui du créateur paraît une singerie. C'est cela, être heureux. C'est cela le bonheur, cette insupportable délivrance, cet universel mépris, le sang, la haine autour de moi, cet isolement nonpareil de l'homme qui tient toute sa vie sous son regard, la joie démesurée de l'assassin impuni, cette logique implacable [. . .]* " (*Caligula and Three Other Plays* 72; act 4, sc. 13; my translation).

In the light of the atheistic absurdism of the early Camus, the emperor who kills his subjects left and right with utter impunity may be viewed, on at least one level, as the avatar of the beatific murdering God who tyrannizes with impunity over the whole universe. Unlike Caligula, however, God manages to take the lives of *all* his wretched subjects without exception under the draconian law of universal mortality. Beránková's comment on both Camus's Caligula and Martha in *Le Malentendu* is correct: "Thus, the two criminals are the beneficiaries of a kind of excuse: in their murderous lunacy, they are both merely imitating that divine indifference that also condemns human beings to an unjust and absurd death" (170).[587] The possible tacit indictment of God in *Le Malentendu* is particularly trenchant, for Martha tells her mother that they are not really killing their unlucky guests. According to her, they are merely drugging their victims into unconsciousness with poisoned tea before dumping them into the river (*Caligula and Three Other Plays* 80-81).[588] The implication may be that it is God who is really the cruel murderer: just think of the agonizing kinds of death that he inflicts without the merciful administration of an anesthetic.

During his thoroughgoing absurdist phase, the revolt that Camus advocates as the response to man's putatively desperate immersion in physical evil is not simply abstract. It is not exclusively an intellectual rebellion founded on absurdist man's unsparingly lucid recognition of the actual human predicament. On the contrary, the necessary revolt must assume a concrete form that corresponds to the here and now, to the only context in which man can operate. This concrete expression of rebellion is the deliberate

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[587] "*Ainsi, les deux criminels bénéficient d'une sorte d'excuse: dans leurs folies meurtrières respectives, ils ne font qu'imiter cette impassibilité divine qui condamne, elle aussi, les hommes à une mort injuste et absurde.*"

[588] *Théâtre* 119; act 1, sc. 1.

agglomeration of as many gratifying experiences as possible before dying. This piling up of euphoric interludes is the sole compensation for the evils of life, and, above all, for the supreme evil of death. Obviously, then, in order to have a sufficient number of satisfying hours, one must *hope* to avoid a premature death (which, ironically, Camus himself, by perishing in an automobile crash at the age of forty-six, fails to do). One must hope, too, to overcome the evil of the *ennui* that Camus limns so effectively in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*:

> It happens that the stage sets collapse. Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday according to the same rhythm--this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day the "why" arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement. (*Myth* 12-13)[589]

Actually, "hope" is not the best verb for describing Camus's outlook on the accumulation of pleasures in a long life as a counterbalance to the physical evil of mortality. In *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, he emphatically denies that a fully aware person can have any hope at all. For this younger Camus, the human condition is, in the absolute sense, hopeless. Speaking of the consistent Camusian man who intrepidly faces up to the consequences of an absurd universe, the French novelist says: "He can then decide to accept such a universe and draw from it his strength, his refusal to hope, and the unyielding evidence of a life without consolation" (*Myth* 60).[590] Emphasizing the

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[589] "*Il arrive que les décors s'écroulent. Lever, tramway, quatre heures de bureau ou d'usine, repas, tramway, quatre heures de travail, repas, sommeil et lundi mardi mercredi jeudi vendredi et samedi sur le même rythme, cette route se suit aisément la plupart du temps. Un jour seulement, le «pourquoi» s'élève et tout commence dans cette lassitude teintée d'étonnement*" (*Essais* 106-07).

[590] "*Il peut alors décider d'accepter de vivre dans un tel univers et d'en tirer ses forces, son refus d'espérer et le témoignage obstiné d'une vie sans consolation*" (*Essais* 142).

accumulation of present gratifications in the absence of a long-term hope, the thoroughly absurdist Camus offers a clear example of intellectual continuity, for this position is a revival of the Epicureanism of the Greco-Roman world, albeit with a patina of Stoicism. In line with his Epicureanism, Camus underscores, in a key passage worth quoting again, the satisfaction to be found in the sensuous and sensual delights of the sunlit Mediterranean littoral and its happy denizens:

> During those months the city is deserted. But the poor remain, and the sky. We join the former as they go down toward the harbor and man's treasures: warmth of the water and the brown bodies of women. ("Summer in Algiers," in *Myth* 142).[591]

The revived Epicureanism of Camus--which is especially apparent in his choice of Don Juan as one of his absurdist exemplars in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (*Myth* 69-77)[592]--is Camus's answer to man's confrontation with *physical* evils, and especially the overwhelming evil of man's physical extinction. It is necessary to emphasize the qualifier "physical," for *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* does not concern itself with *moral* evils, or with questions of ethics. Indeed, in that work, Camus denies that man is guilty of moral evil. The most that Camus will say is that human beings are, in some vague manner, accountable for their conduct: "A mind imbued with the absurd merely judges that those consequences must be considered calmly. It is ready to pay up. In other words, there

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[591] "*Pendant ces mois, la ville est désertée. Mais les pauvres restent et le ciel. Avec les premiers, nous descendons ensemble vers le port et les trésors de l'homme: tiédeur de l'eau et les corps bruns des femmes*" (*Essais* 68).

[592] *Essais* 152-57.

may be responsible persons, but there are no guilty ones [. . .]" (*Myth* 67).[593] This observation is preceded by Camus's refusal to discuss ethics (*Myth* 66),[594] by his explicit insistence on man's "innocence" (*Myth* 67),[595] and, finally, by his statement that Ivan Karamazov's dictum "Everything is permitted" is "a bitter acknowledgement of a fact" (*Myth* 67).[596] Given those premises, it is hardly surprising that Camus also says: "A subclerk in the post office is the equal of a conqueror if consciousness is common to them. All experiences are indifferent in this regard" (*Myth* 68).[597]

Before we pass from the above candid expressions of nihilism to the dramatic *volte-face* that Camus expresses nine years later in *L'Homme révolté*, we should note first that the French novelist already anticipates his reversal on moral evil in the second letter of his *Lettres à un ami allemand* [*Letters to a German Friend*]. As early as this December 1943 letter, which can be considered a kind of half-way house on the road to *L'Homme révolté*, Camus reaches an ethical apogee and implicitly withdraws statements that he had made in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (completed in February 1941, though not published until December 1942).[598] He makes these retractions above all in his unsettling narrative of the German military chaplain who alerts his compatriots to the attempted

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[593] "*Un esprit pénétré d'absurde juge seulement que ces suites doivent être considérées avec sérénité. Il est prêt à payer. Autrement dit, si, pour lui, il peut y avoir des responsables, il n'y a pas de coupables*" (*Essais* 150).

I have omitted Justin O'Brien's "in its opinion" at the end of the last sentence, for it is not in the French.

[594] *Essais* 149.

[595] "*innocence*" (*Essais* 149).

[596] "*une constatation amère*" (*Essais* 149).

[597] "*Un surnuméraire aux Postes est l'égal d'un conquérant si la conscience leur est commune. Toutes les expériences sont à cet égard indifférentes*" (*Essais* 150).

[598] I am taking these dates from *Essais* (1413-14).

escape of a sixteen-year-old boy. The youth, who had been rounded up with members of the French Resistance, jumps out of the truck carrying him and other prisoners to their deaths. He is caught and executed after the priest, who has been sitting with the doomed men in the back of the truck, has shouted "*Achtung!*" to the soldiers on the other side of the truck's partition (*Resistance* 15-18).[599] It is obvious that Camus's condemnatory reaction to the German priest's conduct is not that of someone who still accepts the dicta "Everything is permitted" and "All experiences are indifferent in this regard." Given my speculation concerning Camus's possible movement toward Catholicism, it is interesting that he tells us that he was informed of this incident by a French priest, who deplored the conduct of his German co-religionist (*Resistance* 17-18).[600]

In addition to narrating this account of the German priest who subordinates the Faith to nationalism, Camus anticipates his own abandonment of absurdist nihilism in a concrete, personal manner: he himself participates in the French Resistance during World War II, during which he writes editorial after editorial in the clandestine newspaper *Combat* to oppose the German occupation. Beránková seems correct in saying: "Indeed, the shock of the Second World War profoundly overturned Camus's convictions" (172).[601] The philosophical implications of Camus's participation in the Resistance are clear. If nihilism is true, why resist *anything* on ethical grounds? Accordingly, anyone who resists anything is *ipso facto* abandoning nihilism.

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[599] *Essais* 229-31.

[600] *Essais* 231.

[601] "*En effet, le choc de la Seconde Guerre mondiale a profondément bouleversé les convictions de Camus.*"

**Camus's Second Phase: Atheistic Humanism**

The outstanding statement of Camus's radically altered response to moral evil --and mortality--comes during stage two of his intellectual development with the publication, in 1951, of *L'Homme révolté*, the work that precipitates his break with Sartre and other French intellectuals of the "left." This text is almost a total repudiation of absurdism. The qualifier "almost" is necessitated by the crucial fact that Camus still remains an atheist, though he may now be called an atheistic humanist.

Here I must note that I disagree with Woelfel, who maintains that Camus is an agnostic rather than an atheist (24). Woelfel appeals to *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, in which Camus says: "I don't know whether this world has a meaning that transcends it. But I know that I do not know that meaning and that it is impossible for me just now to know it (*Myth* 51).[602] Nonetheless, Camus is talking here, *not* about the existence of God, but rather about the transcendent meaning of the cosmos.

Surprisingly, however, Woelfel fails to quote from a Camus interview which, at first sight, appears to clinch his argument. In an interview published in *Le Monde* [*The World*] on August 31, 1956, we find Camus answering a question about a conflict between Faulkner's faith and his own "agnosticism":

> I don't believe in God, that's true. But I am not an atheist nonetheless. I would even agree with Benjamin Constant that there is something vulgar . . . yes . . . worn out about being against religion. (*Lyrical* 320)[603]

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[602] "*Je ne sais pas si ce monde a un sens qui le dépasse. Mais je sais que je ne connais pas ce sens et qu'il m'est impossible pour le moment de le connaître*" (*Essais* 136).

[603] "[. . .] *Je ne crois pas en Dieu, c'est vrai. Mais je ne suis pas athée pour autant. Je serais même d'accord avec Benjamin Constant pour trouver à l'irréligion quelque chose de vulgaire et de . . . oui d'usé*" (*Théâtre* 1881).

In the above quotation, note that Camus does *not* repeat the interviewer's use of the word "agnosticism." Note, too, Camus's implicit, idiosyncratic definition of the word "atheist" as someone who *militantly* and *vulgarly* opposes religion, and consider this private definition against the backdrop of the broader definition of *athée* ("atheist") in *Le Petit Robert*: "Person who does not believe in God, denies the existence of any divinity" (121).[604] Besides, it seems to me that, if Camus had wished to be considered an agnostic rather than an atheist, he would never have linked himself with the resolutely atheistic Sartre in the Delpech interview by saying: "Sartre and I do not believe in God, it is true" (*Lyrical* 345).[605] Nor would Camus have written: "But it is also clear that all I wish to do by calling it [i.e., the body] truth is consecrate a higher poetry: the dark flame that Italian painters from Cimabue to Francesca have raised from the Tuscan landscape as the lucid protestation of men thrown upon an earth whose splendor and light speak ceaselessly to them of a nonexistent God"; this is to be read in "Le Désert" ["The Desert"], one of the essays in *Noces* (*Lyrical* 95).[606] Finally, it can, and should be, argued that, for all practical purposes, an agnostic *is* an atheist. For all the above reasons, I respectfully reject Woelfel's nomenclature and shall continue, in agreement with Ignace Lepp, to call Camus an atheist. In *Psychanalyse de l'athéisme moderne* [*Psychoanalysis of Modern*

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[604] "*Personne qui ne croit pas en Dieu, nie l'existence de toute divinité.*"

[605] "*Sartre et moi ne croyons pas en Dieu, il est vrai*" (*Essais* 1425).

[606] "*Mais on comprend aussi que par vérité je veux seulement consacrer une poésie plus haute: la flamme noire que de Cimabué à Francesca les peintres italiens ont élevée parmi les paysages toscans comme la protestation lucide de l'homme jeté sur une terre dont la splendeur et la lumière lui parlent sans relâche d'un Dieu qui n'existe pas*" (*Essais* 80).

*Atheism*, published in English as *Atheism in Our Time*], Lepp entitles his segment on Camus "The Despairing Atheism of Albert Camus" (151).[607]

Returning now to a consideration of *L'Homme révolté* as an example of Camus's developing attitude toward the problem of evil, we should note that this is the text that Camus says represents his treatment of murder, just as *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* represents his treatment of suicide. He makes this comment on resolving the issues of murder and suicide in the English-language introduction to Justin O'Brien's 1955 translation of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (v)--a comment which, unfortunately, is not reprinted in the Pléiade edition of Camus's works. The mere fact that Camus refers to murder is an indication of the sea change that he has undergone in the sphere of ethical thought since the publication of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*. In the light of this transformation, the introduction to *L'Homme révolté* has to be considered a *rapprochement* (substantial but not total) with the *philosophia perennis*.

**"Murder Is the Problem Today"**

In the crucial introduction to *L'Homme révolté*, Camus demands that we recognize the centrality of the crime of murder in the modern world as well as the ethical obligation of revolting against this crime by refusing all complicity with it:

> Our purpose is to find out whether innocence, the moment it becomes involved in action, can avoid committing murder. We can act only in terms of our own time, among the people who surround us. We shall know nothing until we know whether we have the right to kill our fellow men, or the right to let them be killed. In that every action today leads to

[607] "*L'athéisme désespéré d'Albert Camus*" (245).

> murder, direct or indirect, we cannot act until we know whether or why we have the right to kill. (*Rebel* 4)[608]
>
> Each day at dawn, assassins in judges' [r]obes slip into some cell: murder is the problem today. (*Rebel* 5)[609]

The above quotations, which justify Davison's statement that the "central problem" of *L'Homme révolté* is the "legitimization of murder" (119), are found in a chapter that must be considered one of the most effective, if only partial, refutations of nihilism and amorality in world literature. Pestelli goes so far as to say this: "It is around the critique of murder that Camus built his entire philosophy; he established the laws of a revolt that is opposed to injustice and to war" (61).[610]

For the foregoing reasons, *L'Homme révolté* merits an extremely attentive reading--and many rereadings--and those readings refute McCarthy's view that *L'Homme révolté* "is not merely his worst book but one that did him great harm" (248). Those readings also show that the substance of Camus's argument is as follows: (1) if we recognize the physical evil of death, then, logically, we must fight against this physical evil by refusing to commit the moral evil of suicide; and (2) if we valorize our own lives by refusing to kill ourselves, then, to be coherent, we cannot kill, or be complicit in the killing of, other human beings. Camus neatly summarizes his argument in two sentences:

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[608] "*Il s'agit de savoir si l'innocence, à partir du moment où elle agit, ne peut s'empêcher de tuer. Nous ne pouvons agir que dans le moment qui est le nôtre, parmi les hommes qui nous entourent. Nous ne saurons rien tant que nous ne saurons pas si nous avons le droit de tuer cet autre devant nous ou de consentir qu'il soit tué. Puisque toute action aujourd'hui débouche sur le meurtre, direct ou indirect, nous ne pouvons pas agir avant de savoir si, et pourquoi, nous devons donner la mort*" (*Essais* 414).

[609] "*À chaque aube, des assassins chamarrés se glissent dans une cellule: le meurtre est la question*" (*Essais* 414).

[610] "*C'est autour de la critique du meurtre, que Camus a bâti toute sa philosophie; il a établi les lois d'une révolte qui s'oppose à l'injustice et à la guerre*" (my translation).

"To say that life is absurd, the conscience must be alive. How is it possible, without making remarkable concessions to one's desire for comfort, to preserve exclusively for oneself the benefits of such a process of reasoning?" (*Rebel* 6).[611]

It is noteworthy that Camus, speaking as an atheistic humanist throughout the introduction to *L'Homme révolté*, categorically and resolutely condemns suicide. This condemnation is a major component of his resolution of the problem of evil. In this text, which should be read in the light of Camus's having been tempted by suicide in 1936 and 1937 (Louis Faucon in *Essais* 1412), in 1949 (Lottman 468), and in 1950, when he "felt like" imitating a friend's suicide (Lottman 483), Camus links suicide with murder no fewer than eight times. In fact, he says that both kinds of killing are identical: "With respect to the confrontation [between 'human questioning' and 'the silence of the world'], murder and suicide are the same thing, and one must embrace or reject them together" (*Essais* 416).[612] Consider the far-ranging implications of this assertion: how is it possible to escape the conclusion that a Camus living today would have to agree that any legislator, judge, or voter who approves "assisted suicide" must *logically* approve political, social, or military murder, even on a massive scale?[613] This fiercely anti-suicide

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[611] "*Pour dire que la vie est absurde, la conscience a besoin d'être vivante. Comment, sans une concession remarquable au goût du confort, conserver pour soi le bénéfice exclusif d'un tel raisonnement?*" (*Essais* 416).

[612] "*Vis-à-vis de la confrontation* [between '*l'interrogation humaine*' and '*le silence du monde*']*, meurtre et suicide sont une même chose, qu'il faut prendre ou rejeter ensemble*" (*Rebel* 6; my translation).

[613] Moreover, whether or not Camus saw, or would eventually have seen, the force of the following extrapolation from his own logic in *L'Homme révolté*, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that anyone willing to approve abortion must also approve suicide--one's own retroactive suicide. If I were to agree that my mother, like all other women, had the right to end my life before I was born, then, to avoid incoherence, I should necessarily have to consent to my own death. Such consent is the essence of suicide**.**

This is the consent that the nihilist Smerdiakov bitterly expresses to Mar'ia Kondrat'evna in *The Brothers Karamazov*: "Grigorii Vasil'evich accuses me of being in revolt against my birth. 'You tore her womb,' he says. Let the claim about the womb stand. Still, I would have allowed someone to kill me while I was still in the womb just so that I might not come out into the world at all, ma'am. [Григорий

stance on Camus's part is somewhat ironic: of all the Greco-Roman philosophers, the one who most resembles Camus is the Roman Stoic Seneca, but Seneca is a firm proponent of what he thinks is the right to kill oneself.[614] Even though Camus's adamant denunciation of suicide alienates him from Seneca, it decisively aligns him--and this time it is not a question of pointing out a merely logical and hypothetical congruence--with Catholicism. Had Camus survived the car accident, his position on suicide would have had to be a major factor impelling him in the direction of the Catholic Church, even if he had never converted.

In the framework of the extended (eight Pléiade pages) anti-nihilistic argument of the introduction to *L'Homme révolté*, Camus uses the noun *meurtre* ("murder") no fewer than twenty-six times. In his condemnation of murder, suicide, and the nihilism that underlies them, we see that Camus has, to a large extent, transcended the absurdism, not

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Васильевич попрекает, что я против рождества бунтую: «Ты, дескать, ей ложесна разверз». Оно пусть ложесна, но я бы дозволил убить себя еще во чреве с тем, чтобы лишь на свет не происходить вовсе-с]" (*PSS* 14: 204; pt. 2, bk. 5, ch. 2; my translation). The Garnett-Matlaw version unjustifiably removes the concrete reference to a possible killing of Smerdiakov inside his mother's womb by having him say: "[. . .] I would have sanctioned their killing me before I was born [. . .]" (206). Since Smerdiakov is both a murderer and a suicide, he is the concrete embodiment of Camus's dictum that murder and suicide are inseparable.

"But Camus never mentions abortion in *L'Homme révolté*." Granted, but it may well have been on his mind when, in front of the Paris Dominicans five years before *L'Homme révolté*, he launched his surprise attack on the Catholic concept of limbo. Limbo is bound up with the eternal destiny of unbaptized infants, billions of whom are aborted--surgically, chemically, or spontaneously. Furthermore, the street ethic of the tough working class neighborhood of Camus's young adulthood--as he describes it in *Noces*--embraces "consideration for the pregnant woman [*des égards pour la femme enceinte*]." As was noted in discussing Mouse in Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground*, if a male from Camus's neighborhood fails this and other tests, "[. . .] 'he's not a man,' and that's that. [ [. . .] *«il n'est pas un homme», et l'affaire est réglée*]" (*Essais* 72; *Lyrical* 87; my translation).

In Camus's *La Mort heureuse*, is Mersault hinting to Noel that the latter should arrange an abortion for Rose? Mersault says: "Rose's condition obliges you to take certain steps promptly. [*L'état de Rose vous fait un devoir de presser les choses*]" (*A Happy Death* 96; *La Mort heureuse* 141). Not necessarily, because Mersault's counsel can also allude to a shotgun wedding.

[614] Seneca says: "A man who sluggishly awaits his fate is almost a coward [. . .]. But if the body is useless for service, why should one not free the struggling soul? [*Prope est a timente, qui fatum segnis expectat [. . .]. At si inutile ministeriis corpus est, quidni oporteat educere animum laborantem?*]" (*Epistle* 58, sections 32-34; Loeb 1: 406-07).

only of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, but also of *La Mort heureuse* and *L'Étranger*. Indeed, at this point in his literary and philosophical career--only nine years or so before his death in 1960--the concept of the absurd is now nothing more than a "specially selected emotion," "one perception among many," one of the "intermediaries," a "sensibility," a "diagnosis," a "point of departure," a "criticism," the equivalent of René Descartes's "systematic doubt," and, finally, a "mirror" that "must be broken" (*Rebel* 9-10).[615] This string of nine eroding qualifiers represents an abandonment of Camus's earlier full-throated absurdism. Still, as I have said, in *L'Homme révolté*, the French novelist has transcended his earlier stance only to "to a large extent," because, even in this work, he still remains an atheist, and he still rejects the immortality of the soul. True, as an atheistic humanist, he is now willing to discuss ethics, and he now has an ethical system: an ethic without a transcendent basis, an exclusively secular morality. It is Camus's continuing atheism that demands that we see him as still having one foot set firmly in the camp of absurdism.

That Camus is still, to some degree, an absurdist even after the publication of *L'Homme révolté* can be seen, for example, in "Homage to an Exile," a speech that he delivers on December 7, 1955,[616] in honor of Eduardo Santos, a newspaper editor exiled by a dictatorial régime in Colombia:

> And it seems to me that at such a moment those who are like him [Santos] must come toward him (forgetting his titles and all devices of the official

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[615] "*une émotion privilégiée [. . .] un sentiment parmi d'autres [. . .] intercesseurs [. . .] la sensibilité [. . .] le diagnostic [. . .] un point de départ, une critique [. . .] doute systématique [. . .] il faut briser [. . .] miroir*" (*Essais* 418-19).

[616] In *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*, Justin O'Brien gives the date as December 7, 1955, whereas the Pléiade edition gives the year as 1957 in one place (*Essais* 1809 [footnote]) and 1955 in another place (*Essais* 1958).

> orator) to tell him straight from the heart that he is not alone and that his action is not futile, that there always comes a day when the palaces of oppression crumble, when exile comes to an end, when liberty catches fire. Such calm hope justifies your action. *If, after all, men cannot always make history have a meaning, they can always act so that their own lives have one*. (*Resistance* 106; my italics)[617]

What Camus could easily have written instead of "so that their own lives have one" is "as if their own lives had one." Such a formulation conforms better to the spirit of absurdism, and matches more closely something that he says in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*: "Conquerors know that action is in itself useless. There is but one useful action, that of remaking man and the earth. I shall never remake men. But one must do 'as if'" (*Myth* 87).[618] This is a largely despairing presupposition: we cannot remedy evil by constructing a utopia, because man simply cannot be redone, but we can *pretend*. At least Camus's program during the phase of his atheistic humanism, if it is reminiscent of a charade, is not *utterly* despairing, because he is willing to urge people to take some kind of action despite the absurd plight of being trapped on a planet hurtling around some star located somewhere in a senseless universe. Operating not far from this ethic of make-believe, Camus contends, as early as his 1945 interview with Delpech: "An analysis of the idea of revolt could help us to discover ideas capable of restoring a relative meaning

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[617] "*Et il me semble qu'à ce moment, ceux qui lui ressemblent doivent venir vers lui, oubliant les titres et les précautions de style, avec le seul langage du coeur, pour lui dire qu'il n'est pas seul et que son action n'est pas vaine, qu'un jour vient toujours où les palais de l'oppression s'écroulent, où l'exil s'achève, où la liberté flambe. Cet espoir tranquille justifie votre action. Si les hommes, après tout, ne peuvent pas toujours faire que l'histoire ait un sens, ils peuvent toujours agir pour que leur propre vie en ait un*" (*Essais* 1815-16).

[618] "*Les conquérants savent que l'action est en elle-même inutile. Il n'y a qu'une action utile, celle qui referait l'homme et la terre. Je ne referai jamais les hommes. Mais il faut faire «comme si»*" (*Essais* 166).

to existence, although a meaning that would always be in danger" (*Lyrical* 346).[619] In "Remarque sur la révolte," Camus goes even further when he actually speaks of "the absolute relative" (*Essais* 1696).[620] This comes close to being the absolute oxymoron.

During his phase of atheistic humanism, Camus begins, in a gingerly fashion, to gravitate toward the Christian ethic. Paralleling Clamence's guilt feelings in *La Chute* over his lapses in the fields of individual, personal, and sexual ethics is the intense concern that Camus exhibits much earlier than *La Chute* in relation to a list of privileged topics in the social, political, and economic realms: political murder, terrorism, socioeconomic oppression, and war, especially nuclear war. In Camus's stage two writings, all those phenomena are presented as moral evils, in the same manner in which Camus is later to depict Clamence's sins against women, including the woman whom he may have allowed to drown in the Seine.

In keeping with his shift away from pure absurdism in his approach to evil during his second phase, Camus is among the first to condemn the United States atomic attack on Hiroshima in his strongly foreboding *Combat* editorial of August 8, 1945. He denounces this attack on noncombatants as "organized murder" and warns the world of "collective suicide":

> We shall summarize our thought in one sentence: just now, mechanical civilization has reached its final degree of savagery. It will be obligatory to choose, within a timeframe more or less imminent, either collective suicide or the intelligent utilization of scientific conquests. [. . .]

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[619] "*Une analyse de la notion de révolte pourrait aider à découvrir des notions capables de redonner à l'existence un sens relatif, quoique toujours menacé*" (*Essais* 1425).

[620] "*le relatif absolu.*"

> [. . .] There is no doubt that no one, at least no one given to impenitent idealism, will think of being astounded at this idea: in a world delivered up to all the wrenchings of violence, incapable of any control, indifferent to justice and the simple happiness of human beings, science is devoting itself to organized murder. (*Essais* 291-92) [621]

Camus delivers an even more emphatic condemnation of nuclear warfare in one of his notebook entries:

> Thermonuclear bomb: ultimately, widespread death, coincides with the human condition under that angle. [. . .] displacement of the problem: the universal scourge no longer has God as author, but human beings. At last, human beings have equaled God, but in his cruelty. We must therefore begin again the revolt of former ages, but this time against humanity. We need a new Lucifer who will repudiate the power of human beings. (*Carnets III* 115-16)[622]

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[621] "*Nous nous résumerons en une phrase: la civilisation mécanique vient de parvenir à son dernier degré de sauvagerie. Il va falloir choisir, dans un avenir plus ou moins proche, entre le suicide collectif ou l'utilisation intelligente des conquêtes scientifiques. [. . .]*

"*[. . .] Que dans un monde livré à tous les déchirements de la violence, incapable d'aucun contrôle, indifférent à la justice et au simple bonheur des hommes, la science se consacre au meurtre organisé, personne sans doute, à moins d'idéalisme impénitent, ne songera à s'en étonner*" (my translation).

[622] "*Bombe thermonucléaire: à la limite, la mort généralisée, coïncide avec la condition humaine sous cet angle. [. . .] déplacement du problème: le fléau universel n'a plus Dieu pour auteur, mais les hommes. Les hommes viennent enfin d'égaler Dieu, mais dans sa cruauté. Nous devons donc recommencer la révolte des anciens âges, mais cette fois contre l'humanité. On réclame un nouveau Lucifer qui niera la puissance des hommes*" (my translation).

Jumping ahead for a moment to *La Chute*, we should note that Camus has Clamence mention that a friend who had managed to conquer nicotine addiction suddenly resumed smoking after having read about the explosion of the first hydrogen bomb (*Fall* 87).[623]

In his *Combat* editorial on the Hiroshima attack, Camus is anticipating, by twenty years, the Second Vatican Council's fulminating condemnation of nuclear attacks on cities as intrinsically evil:

> Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation. (*Gaudium et spes*, sect. 80; Abbott 294)[624]

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[623] *Théâtre* 1520.

[624] "*Omnis actio bellica quae in urbium integrarum vel amplarum regionum cum earum incolis destructionem indiscriminatim tendit, est crimen contra Deum et ipsum hominem, quod firmiter et incunctanter damnandum est* " (Sacrosanctum Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum II 816).

In connection with the threat of nuclear catastrophe, the foregoing Vatican II text represents the official Catholic position based on the "public" revelation of the "You shall not kill" prohibition of the Decalogue. Camus's categorical condemnation, and intense fear, of nuclear war are also consonant with the "private" revelation that popular Catholicism (with the approval of the official Church) sees in the 1917 apparitions of Our Lady of Fátima in Portugal. The message of those apparitions warns that war is a punishment for sin, and that "various nations will be annihilated" in the absence of repentance and reparation. This apocalyptic threat of unspeakable physical evil as a response to moral evil is widely feared to be nuclear annihilation.

Camus may have been aware of the Fátima apparitions from the Catholics with whom he always maintained contact. This possibility is reflected in the Rosary-praying dying woman at the beginning of *L'Envers et l'endroit* [*The Wrong Side and the Right Side*]. Her Rosary beads, whose use is an integral part of the Fátima message, signal to Camus that this woman believes in God (*Lyrical* 19; *Essais* 15). Any author who knew--as the text of *La Peste* demonstrates--that St. Roch is the patron saint of plague victims (*Plague* 221; *Théâtre* 1400) and who St. Odilia was (*Plague* 222; *Théâtre* 1401) probably knew about Fátima as well.

The Rosary is also to be found in Dostoyevsky, who makes it a symbol of a man's consecration to God: in *The Idiot*, Aglaia, in half-mockery of Myshkin, recites a poem in which Alexander Pushkin praises a medieval knight who externalizes his faith and chastity by wearing a Rosary around his neck (238-45, *PSS* 8: 205-10; pt. 2, ch. 6-7). This poem, which begins with the words "There lived in the world a poor knight [. . .] [Жил на свете рыцарь бедный [. . .] ]," was never published during Pushkin's lifetime owing to the tsarist censorship (Pushkin 3: 499). The version in *The Idiot* differs from the two versions in Pushkin's collected works (3: 116-18, 462-64), but the reference to the Rosary exists in all three versions. Ware notes that, in the recitation of the Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner"), many Eastern Orthodox believers use a Rosary often made of wool instead of wood (312-13).

Paradoxically, despite Dostoyevsky's enmity toward the Catholic Church, the Fátima message is heavily enveloped in Dostoyevskian *leitmotivs*: the reparative value of suffering, the responsibility of all for

Although the parallel between Camus's reaction to Hiroshima and the reaction of the Catholic Church is unmistakable, we should note that the *totality* of the French novelist's ethical presuppositions in his post-*L'Homme révolté* period also approximates the Catholic natural law position, which in turn is rooted in the *philosophia perennis.*

An outstanding example of Camus's invocation of natural law premises during the period of his atheistic humanism is his outspoken condemnation of terrorist atrocities --including state terrorism--committed during the guerrilla war against French colonialism in Algeria, one of the most traumatic periods of modern French history. Camus is unambiguous and uncompromising as he pleads for justice, and, specifically, as he demands an agreement by all parties to spare the lives of noncombatants. In his demand for civilian immunity, Camus condemns the killing of civilians as murder, and, in so doing, he approximates the Catholic ethic, despite his atheism. It is clear that all kinds of terrorism are morally evil in his eyes. One of his eloquent texts on this topic is his talk of January 22, 1956, delivered in Algiers during a time of great tension and fear (*Resistance* 131-42).[625] Also worthy of special attention is "Trêve pour les civils" ["Truce for Civilians"], an article published in the January 10, 1956, issue of *L'Express* [*Express*]. In this article, Camus resolutely defends the principle that certain actions are evil (a "crime") regardless of circumstances, antecedents, or pretexts. Camus's defense

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all, and the threat of a future devastation of horrific proportions. In reference to the last point, one can cite the plague nightmare of Raskol'nikov in *Crime and Punishment* (461-62; *PSS* 6: 419-20; epilogue, ch. 2) and the fire nightmare of Dmitrii in *The Brothers Karamazov* (478-80; *PSS* 14: 456-57; pt. 3, bk. 9, ch. 8). A Russocentrism reminiscent of (but not identical with) Dostoyevsky's is an additional component of the Fátima message, which predicts that Russia, having first disseminated the errors of atheism and nihilism throughout the world, will finally be converted to Catholicism after the Pope and the bishops have consecrated her to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in a public ceremony, and that this transformation will be a prelude to the establishment of universal peace.

See Michel de la Sainte Trinité, *The Whole Truth About Fatima*, in three volumes.

[625] *Essais* 991-99. *Essais* entitles this talk "Pour une trêve civile en Algérie" ["For a Civilian Truce in Algeria"].

of this principle is an implicit attack on what Judge Casado says in Camus's play *L'État de siège* [*State of Siege*]: "If crime becomes the law, it ceases being crime" (*Caligula and Three Other Plays* 189).[626] Camus's contemporary, Pope Pius XII, could have written the following words from "Trêve pour les civils":

> How can one condemn the excesses of the repression if one disregards or remains silent about the transgressions of the rebellion? And, conversely, how can one be outraged by the massacres of French prisoners if one allows Arabs to be shot without a trial? Everyone takes a warrant from the crime of the other to go further. But, by this logic, there is no outcome other than unending destruction. (*Essais* 983-84)[627]

One of the most significant indicators of Camus's stance on the scandal of moral evil is his reply to a strident pro-independence Algerian during Camus's visit to Sweden in 1957. At the students' "Maison" of the University of Stockholm, this young man challenges Camus: "You've signed many petitions for the countries of the East, but, for three years, you've done nothing for Algeria!" (Todd 699).[628] In his response, after

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[626] "*Si le crime devient la loi, il cesse d'être crime*" (*Théâtre* 251; pt. 2).

By rejecting Casado's bluntly formulated amoralism, Camus is decisively aligning himself with a bedrock ethical doctrine of Catholicism. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that a crime remains a crime even if it is legislated: "A human law has the character of law to the extent that it accords with right reason, and thus derives from the eternal law. Insofar as it falls short of right reason it is said to be an unjust law, and thus has not so much the nature of law as of a kind of violence. [ *[. . .] lex humana intantum habet rationem legis, inquantum est secundum rationem rectam: et secundum hoc manifestum est quod a lege aeterna derivatur. Inquantum vero a ratione recedit, sic dicitur lex iniqua: et sic non habet rationem legis, sed magis violentiae cuiusdam*]" (*Summa theologiae*, pt. 1 of pt. 2, ques. 93, art. 3, reply to obj. 2). These sentences are quoted in section 1902 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, from which I am taking the English translation.

[627] "*Comment condamner les excès de la répression si l'on ignore ou l'on tait les débordements de la rébellion? Et inversement, comment s'indigner des massacres des prisonniers français si l'on accepte que des Arabes soient fusillés sans jugement? Chacun s'autorise du crime de l'autre pour aller plus avant. Mais, à cette logique, il n'est pas d'autre terme qu'une interminable destruction*" (my translation).

[628] "*Vous avez signé beaucoup de pétitions pour les pays de l'Est mais jamais, depuis trois ans, vous n'avez rien fait pour l'Algérie!*" (my translation).

having emphasized his desire for justice for all the inhabitants of his native land, Camus refers to the fact that all the *pieds-noirs* in Algeria, including his own mother in Algiers, are in danger of being killed in terrorist attacks:

> I have always condemned terror. I must also condemn a terrorism that is practiced blindly, in the streets of Algiers, for example, and that one day may strike my mother or my family. I believe in justice, but I'll defend my mother ahead of justice. (qtd. in Todd 700)[629]

Conor Cruise O'Brien unjustifiably frames Camus's wonderful statement by preceding it with the phrase "what seemed to be the increasingly right-wing positions of his later years" and by following it immediately with this observation: "The defence of his mother required support for the French army's pacification of Algeria" (75). My namesake's contentions are mistaken, both factually and ethically. Camus makes his point clear by saying that he condemns terrorism (which condemnation is hardly a position exclusive to the "right-wing"), and it should be obvious that a "justice" that fails to condemn the killing of noncombatants is no justice.

Despite the atheistic nature of the humanism of his second phase, Camus's general ethical position during that period would fit the Catholic perspective on bioethical issues like a glove, the foremost of those issues being abortion. In view of Pope John Paul II's condemnation of abortion as "murder" in section 58 of his 1995 encyclical

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[629] "*J'ai toujours condamné la terreur. Je dois condamner aussi un terrorisme qui s'exerce aveuglément, dans les rues d'Alger par exemple, et qui un jour peut frapper ma mère ou ma famille. Je crois à la justice, mais je défendrai ma mère avant la justice*" (my translation).

In endnote 41 on page 821, Todd cites an article by Dominique Birmann in the December 14, 1957, issue of *Le Monde* as his source for this quotation, but he fails to cite the title and page number. Todd also cites "testimony and letters to the author"--testimony and letters of G. Bjurström and Birmann.

*Evangelium vitae*,[630] a Camus who might eventually have returned to Catholicism had he not been killed in a car crash could easily have cited passages from his own December 1957 Nobel Prize speech and from *L'Homme révolté* as having laid the groundwork for an acceptance of the "culture of life" in opposition to a "culture of death" in the senses in which those themes are explained in section 21 of the same encyclical. In the Nobel address, the French novelist asserts: "It has been necessary for them [most of the populations of France and Europe] to forge an art of living in a time of catastrophe, to be born a second time, and then to do battle, with faces exposed, against the death instinct at work in our history" (*Essais* 1073).[631] He also speaks in this statement of "a world threatened by disintegration, in which our grand inquisitors are likely to establish forever the kingdoms of death" (*Essais* 1073).[632] One may wonder whether John Paul II was

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[630] "The moral gravity of procured abortion is apparent in all its truth if we recognize that we are dealing with murder and, in particular, when we consider the specific elements involved. [*Procurati ideo abortus gravitas moralis tunc quidem omni sua elucet in veritate, cum intellegitur hic agi de homicidio ac nominatim cum propria perspiciuntur adiuncta quibus illud circumdatur*]."

Whether or not Camus agreed with the Catholic Church by acknowledging that a human embryo or a fetus is a child, in his play *Les Justes* [*The Just Assassins*], he stresses the moral evil of the killing of children. He does this by having the Russian terrorist Kaliaev refuse to throw a bomb into a carriage carrying two young children in addition to an adult member of the Russian ruling class. Camus briefly discusses the ethical principles involved in Kaliaev's decision in a preface to the play. In this discussion, he emphasizes the concept of ethical limits: "Our world turns a repugnant face toward us today, precisely because it is fabricated by people who confer on themselves the right of transgressing those limits, and, in the first place, of killing others, without ever paying for this in their own person. [*Notre monde nous montre aujourd'hui une face répugnante, justement parce qu'il est fabriqué par des hommes qui s'accordent le droit de franchir ces limites, et d'abord de tuer les autres, sans jamais payer de leur personne*]" (*Théâtre* 1835; my translation). Recall that the Russian word translated as "crime" in Dostoyevsky's title *Crime and Punishment* can also be translated as "transgression."

[631] "*Il leur a fallu se forger un art de vivre par temps de catastrophe, pour naître une seconde fois, et lutter ensuite, à visage découvert, contre l'instinct de mort à l'oeuvre dans notre histoire*" (my translation).

Intentionally or not, Camus's words "to be born a second time" echo the words of Nicodemus to Jesus in *Jn* 3:4 in the discourse on Baptism: "How a can a person, being old, be born? One cannot enter one's mother's womb a second time and be born, right? [Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὤν; μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δεύτερον εἰσελθεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι;]" (my translation).

[632] "*un monde menacé de désintégration, où nos grands inquisiteurs risquent d'établir pour toujours les royaumes de la mort*" (my translation).

influenced by these passages when he was composing section 21 of *Evangelium vitae*. It would be surprising if a European intellectual such as Karol Wojtyła had never read, and been impressed by, Camus's Nobel Prize speech, especially since we know that Wojtyła recommended *La Peste* to one of his colleagues at the Catholic University of Lublin (Weigel 117).

**Camus's Third Phase: Toward Catholicism?**

*L'Homme révolté* with its atheistic humanism does not represent the final word on Camus's resolution of the scandal of evil. In 1956, he raises his philosophical quest to a new level by publishing *La Chute*, in which Jean-Baptiste Clamence discourses in elegant French (including the use of the imperfect subjunctive) on guilt. Calling himself a "judge-penitent" (*Fall* 8),[633] this expatriate Parisian lawyer buttonholes fellow bar patrons in a sailors' dive in Amsterdam, confessing his sins in long monologues (like Marmeladov in *Crime and Punishment)*,[634] but without being absolved, since there is no priest present to hear his confession and grant him absolution. Among his transgressions are his sexual exploitation of women (*Fall* 56-71)[635] and his possession of a valuable painting, *The Just Judges*, painted by Jan and Hubert van Eyck, and stolen (but not by Clamence) from the cathedral in Ghent (*Fall* 128-30).[636]

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[633] "*juge-pénitent*" (*Théâtre* 1479).

[634] The parallel between Clamence and Marmeladov is discussed by Dunwoodie (126-34).

[635] *Théâtre* 1504-11.

[636] *Théâtre* 1542-43.

The panel entitled *The Just Judges*, which is merely one segment of the many segments of a large altarpiece called *The Adoration of the Lamb*, was actually stolen from the cathedral of St. Bavo in Ghent, Belgium, in 1934 and was later replaced with a copy. See Peter Schmidt's *The Adoration of the Lamb* (40). St. John the Baptist, Clamence's patron saint, is depicted on the reverse of *The Just Judges* (Schmidt 40).

Above all, however, Clamence's conscience is being unceasingly gnawed by the recollection of his failure even to attempt to save the life of a young woman who threw herself from the Pont Royal into the Seine (*Fall* 69-71).[637] At the time of this incident, Clamence prided himself on being an athlete: "[. . .] I indulged in sports and the fine arts --in short, I'll not go on for fear you might suspect me of self-flattery. But just imagine, I beg you, a man at the height of his powers, in perfect health, generously gifted, skilled in bodily exercises as in those of the mind [. . .] (*Fall* 27-28).[638] One of the first things that Clamence tells us is that he takes pride in his rugby player's build (*Fall* 9).[639] In this self-evaluation, Clamence makes clear that he believes that he was physically capable of trying to save the bridge jumper. He later reinforces this point by saying--as I noted early

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The cynosure of *The Adoration of the Lamb* is the iconic lamb who represents Jesus, the Lamb of God. The Divine Lamb, Redeemer of the human race, blood gushing from his wounded breast into a chalice, stands on an altar and receives the adoration of the faithful gathered before him. The biblical reference is the scene in which St. John the Baptist proclaims to the crowd at the Jordan River that Jesus is the Lamb of God: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. [Ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου]" (*Jn* 1:29).

Like someone having only one piece of a jigsaw puzzle, Clamence, the "judge-penitent," possesses only one panel of *The Adoration of the Lamb*: the one referring to judgment. Is Camus hinting that Clamence's panel is a token of the latter's incipient contrition and inchoate faith, the consummation of which is symbolized by the whole altarpiece, which celebrates the Redemption and potential salvation of all sinners, including (by implication) Clamence? Such an interpretation is supported by the fact that the aforementioned words of St. John the Baptist are repeated at one of the most dramatic moments of the Mass of the Roman rite. Immediately before the reception of Holy Communion, the priest elevates the consecrated Host and says: "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (*Daily Roman Missal* 799). (St. John the Baptist's singular noun "sin" becomes the plural "sins" in the liturgy of the Roman rite.)

Excellent Internet reproductions of the *Adoration of the Lamb* are to be found at http://www.wga.hu/index1.html.

[637] *Théâtre* 1511.

[638] "*[. . .] je pratiquais les sports et les beaux-arts, bref, je m'arrête, pour que vous ne me soupçonniez pas de complaisance. Mais imaginez, je vous prie, un homme dans la force de l'âge, de parfaite santé, généreusement doué, habile dans les exercices du corps comme dans ceux de l'intelligence [. . .]*" (*Théâtre* 1489).

[639] *Théâtre* 1480.

in this dissertation--that he thought of himself as a "[h]alf Cerdan" (*Fall* 54).[640] He even goes so far as to say: "To tell the truth, just from being so fully and simply a man, I looked upon myself as something of a superman" (*Fall* 28).[641] It is hard to believe that Marcel Cerdan, middleweight champion of the world and hero of France, would have hesitated to plunge into the Seine to save a woman's life.[642] In contrast, despite his Cerdan-like athleticism, Superman just keeps walking after having heard the splash, and does not even bother to check the newspapers the next day to learn the fate of the unfortunate woman.

It is in Clamence's confessional non-confession that we see the enormous distance that now, in this third phase of his philosophical exploration, separates Camus from the author of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*. Whatever the degree of Clamence's duplicity in his past life, we have to feel, as we drink with him now in the Mexico City Bar, that we are no longer in a scenario in which Ivan Karamazov's dictum "Everything is lawful" is taken as a fact, and in which the discussion of ethics is suppressed. No longer is everyone except God innocent. *La Chute* makes no sense unless Clamence feels, and is, guilty. He is guilty of a number of moral infractions, including, above all, possible

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[640] "*Moitié Cerdan*" (*Théâtre* 1503).

[641] "*En vérité, à force d'être homme, avec tant de plénitude et de simplicité, je me trouvais un peu surhomme*" (*Théâtre* 1490).

[642] Readers may object: "But could Cerdan swim?" The Web site that Nicolas Cerdan maintains in honor of his grandfather contains a photograph of Marcel Cerdan with his buddy and sparring partner Maurice Rouff at a beach. Waves are rolling in the background, the caption indicating that this is the ocean beach at Casablanca. I doubt that Cerdan was there only to meet young ladies and get a suntan.

Readers who view this photograph at http://www.marcelcerdan.com/PhotosFamille.aspx (Cerdan is on the left) will probably agree--to use a colloquialism--that Cerdan looks like a guy who can take care of business, not only in the ring, but also in a rescue effort in the Seine. I suggest that Camus, a boxing fan, takes this into account when he makes Clamence identify with Cerdan. The point is that Clamence knows that he at least had a chance to save the woman who jumped from the Pont Royal, and that, in any case, he ought to have done what one of France's greatest athletes and his own rôle model would have done.

complicity in a death that might have been prevented. To what degree, one wonders, does Clamence represent Camus himself?

Connected to that question is another issue: to what extent is the Camus of *La Chute*, with but three more years or so to live, moving away, if only incipiently and gropingly, from atheistic humanism toward the Catholicism of his childhood? If such a shift is to be detected in this work, then we may say that Camus is now proposing some kind of contrition--perhaps a barely vocalized contrition--as his final resolution of the problem of moral evil. And, if so, he is implicitly suggesting that it is faith that provides the ultimate answer to evils of all kinds. In this sense, toward the end of his life, Camus may be edging, however haltingly, in the direction of Dostoyevsky's Christian resolution of the scandal of evil.

**Syllogisms**

Despite the fact that the Camus of the second and third stages of his intellectual journey abandons the out-and-out nihilism of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* and develops an ethic which, while remaining atheistic, is also humanistic in its recognition and denunciation of moral evil, it nonetheless remains true that Camus, like Dostoyevsky, allows evil to overwhelm him. Because he is overwhelmed, Camus must also be said, but for different reasons, to fail in grounding his position on evil. Camus, as he himself fully realizes by the time of *L'Homme révolté*, cannot base any ethical stance whatsoever on strict absurdism. The syllogism that proves this impossibility is so obvious as to appear banal, but the logic underlying it is nonetheless devastating and unanswerable:

***Syllogism 1***

If the human condition is absurd, then all its components are absurd.

But moral obligation is a component of the human condition.

*Ergo*, moral obligation is absurd.

But Camus phrases the conclusion of this syllogism so much more vividly and effectively in a sentence which I have already quoted from *L'Homme révolté*: "We are free to stoke the crematory fires or to devote ourselves to the care of lepers" (*Rebel* 5).[643]

If the major premise in syllogism 1 is true, then the above conclusion demolishes, in Shakespeare's "one fell swoop" (*Macbeth*, act 4, sc. 3), every ethical system without exception--as Raskol'nikov suddenly realizes in *Crime and Punishment* after he has initially intervened to protect the young girl on the street from the stalker. But syllogism 1 does more than abolish ethics. It also shows that Camus is mistaken in believing that the nihilistic *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* answers the arguments for suicide. It is insufficient to say with that text: "It is essential to die unreconciled and not of one's own free will. Suicide is a repudiation" (*Myth* 55).[644] To prove that this argument of Camus's is inadequate, a second nihilistic syllogism can be constructed:

***Syllogism 2***

The notion that one should not commit suicide implies a moral obligation.

But moral obligation is absurd.

*Ergo*, the contention that one should not commit suicide is absurd.

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[643] "*On peut tisonner les crématoires comme on peut aussi se dévouer à soigner les lépreux*" (*Essais* 415).

[644] "*Il s'agit de mourir irréconcilié et non pas de plein gré. Le suicide est une méconnaissance*" (*Essais* 139).

If human existence is absurd, then Camus's whole professed objective in writing *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* has been overturned, and his argument has destroyed itself.

It is in *L'Homme révolté* that Camus makes progress toward grounding his rejection of suicide as a moral evil--and thus toward grappling with evil in general. It is not that he presents a fully valid moral argument against suicide in his second major philosophical essay, but at least he avoids contradicting himself and lays the groundwork for a rational consideration of the subject. Before acknowledging that "[t]he absurd, considered as a rule of life, is therefore contradictory" (*Rebel* 9),[645] Camus makes the following statement: "I proclaim that I believe in nothing and that everything is absurd, but I cannot doubt the validity of my proclamation and I must at least believe in my protest" (*Rebel* 10).[646] The tacit syllogism in this argument of Camus's is a valid one (but only as far as it goes, for it does not go far enough):

***Syllogism 3***

To believe in my protest, I must be alive.

But, if I commit suicide, then I shall no longer be alive.

*Ergo*, I must not commit suicide.

Or, as Camus himself says summarily, also in *L'Homme révolté*: "To say that life is absurd, the conscience must be alive" (*Rebel* 6).[647]

We have seen that, for those who wish to adhere to the concept of ethical obligation, our first and second syllogisms, taken together, undermine the first phase of

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[645] "*L'absurde, considéré comme règle de vie, est donc contradictoire*" (*Essais* 418).

[646] "*Je crie que je ne crois à rien et que tout est absurde, mais je ne puis douter de mon cri et il me faut au moins croire à ma protestation*" (*Essais* 419).

[647] "*Pour dire que la vie est absurde, la conscience a besoin d'être vivante*" (*Essais* 416).

Camus's philosophical journey: his period of unqualified absurdism. Quite appropriately, syllogisms 1 and 2 constitute *argumenta ad absurdum*. But even the modified absurdism of Camus's atheistic humanism in phase two is still philosophically problematic, and hence insufficiently grounded, precisely because it remains atheistic. It is especially during this second segment of Camus's life that he exhibits intense ethical concerns in addition to his condemnation of the evil of suicide, as we have seen in this chapter in connection with nuclear war and with both guerrilla-sponsored and state-sponsored terrorism in French Algeria. Still, from the standpoint of logic, those concerns are in diametrical conflict with atheistic humanism no less than with total absurdism, as is demonstrated by the fourth syllogism (actually, an expanded syllogism that incorporates syllogism 1):

***Syllogism 4***

If there is no God, then the human condition is absurd.

But there is no God.

*Ergo*, the human condition is absurd.

If the human condition is absurd, then all its components are absurd.

But moral obligation is a component of the human condition.

*Ergo*, moral obligation is absurd.

It may be asked: "Why, precisely, does Camus's rejection of God and immortality impair even his later, more intensely anti-nihilistic, reaction to the scandalous existence of death and all the other evils of the human condition?" The reason for this impairment is that Camus never truly confronts the counterarguments: the arguments for the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. For this reason, it must be said that Camus, like

Dostoyevsky, fails to ground his resolution of the scandal of evil. For example, the French novelist never faces forthrightly Plato's *Phaedo*, St. Augustine's *De immortalitate animae* [*On the immortality of the soul*], and St. Thomas's chapters 79-81 in book 2 of the *Summa contra gentiles*--all of which argue eloquently in favor of the imperishability of man's soul. Nor, after citing it in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (*Myth* 110),[648] does he deal adequately with Dostoyevsky's argument for immortality in the December 1876 issue of *A Writer's Diary* (an argument previously cited in this dissertation).[649] It is precisely this argument that Camus ought to have confronted, and this for two reasons: Camus's tremendous respect for the Russian novelist, and the content of Dostoyevsky's reasoning. The core of Dostoyevsky's case for the immortality of the soul can be summarized in this sentence of his: "The result, clearly, is that when the idea of immortality is lost, suicide becomes an absolute and inescapable necessity for any person who has even developed slightly above the animal level" (1: 736).[650] Anyone who, like Camus, adamantly condemns suicide but bases his worldview on the denial of the immortality of the soul is intellectually obliged to answer Dostoyevsky's argument, and not merely dismiss it breezily, as Camus does in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*.

**"I Do Not Believe in His Resurrection"**

Nor does Camus deal seriously with the arguments that Christianity presents for the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus. In his Stockholm interview of December 9,

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[648] *Essais* 186.

[649] Dostoyevsky's article is entitled "Unsubstantiated Statements" (1: 732-36; *PSS* 24: 46-50).

[650] "В результате ясно, что самоубийство, при потере идеи о бессмертии, становится совершенною и неизбежною даже необходимостью для всякого человека, чуть-чуть поднявшегося в своем развитии над скотами" (*PSS* 24: 49).

1957, Camus merely asserts: "I do not believe in his resurrection" (*Essais* 1597 [footnote]).[651] This statement is hardly surprising: logically, if Jesus rose from the dead, then the religion which he established is true, with two chief consequences for a writer and thinker such as Camus: (1) God *does* exist, and (2) death is *not* the end of man's existence. Conversely, as the Apostle Paul states in a conditional statement with which even Camus the absurdist must logically agree, "[. . .] if Christ has not risen, vain then is our preaching, vain too is your faith (*1 Cor* 15:14).[652]

Furthermore, if St. Paul is correct in proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus as a historical fact,[653] then death cannot be, as it is for Camus, the supreme evil. Consequently, as soon as one grants the historicity of the Resurrection, the whole foundation of Camus's absurdism, in both its radical and mitigated forms, collapses, for all absurdity vanishes from man's condition as a rational being created by God, redeemed

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[651] "*Je ne crois pas à sa résurrection*" (my translation).

[652] "[. . .] εἰ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐγήγερται, κενὸν ἄρα [καὶ] τὸ κήρυγμα ἡμῶν, κενὴ καὶ ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν [. . .]" (Confraternity translation).

The brackets around καὶ are in the Greek text.

[653] But do not Christians view the Resurrection as a matter of *faith*--just as they accept the mystery of one God in three Persons as a matter of faith? No. To obviate a misunderstanding, it should be noted that a well-instructed, consistent Christian must maintain that the Resurrection is a *historical fact* that serves as an antecedent motive justifying the eventual act of faith. This is the official position of the Catholic Church: "The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness. [*Le mystère de la résurrection du Christ est un événement réel qui a eu des manifestations historiquement constatées comme l'atteste le Nouveau Testament*]" (section 639).

Comparing apologetic argumentation to a duel with unbelievers in *The Belief of Catholics*, Catholic apologist Ronald A. Knox highlights the overwhelming significance that the Catholic Church attaches to the historicity of the miracle of the Resurrection as a proof of the status of Catholicism as the one true religion: "You must not say that no revelation would satisfy you unless the guarantee of miracle accompanied it, and then say in the same breath that you will refuse to accept any story of miracle precisely on the ground that it is miraculous. That is as if you were to invite your opponent to stab you with a pistol" (97).

That the unbelieving Camus acknowledges the B-follows-A logic underlying Knox's observation is clear from his emphatic declaration: "I do not believe in his resurrection." Camus *has* to say this to avoid incoherence, for it is almost a tautology that those who admit the Resurrection as a fact of history (proposition A) are intellectually obliged to believe in the truth of Christ and his religion (proposition B). As a Russian Orthodox believer, Dostoyevsky also has to agree with Knox's point, although the Russian novelist believes that the one true Church is the Russian Orthodox Church, not the Catholic Church.

by the God-Man Jesus Christ from the effects of the moral evils of original and actual sin, and destined, if worthy of it, for eternal supernatural happiness in the next world. Indeed, if the resurrection of Jesus is a fact of history, then it is absurd to deny this fact and all its implications.[654] The chief practical implication of this anti-absurdist conclusion for every human being, to quote the lapidary statement of Frank Sheed, is this: "Since this life is a preparation, the only ultimate tragedy is to leave it unprepared" (*Theology and Sanity* 383). Just as the earlier Camus could have absorbed Plato's *Phaedo* and other works defending the immortality of the soul, so, too, could he have assimilated any standard work of apologetics to force himself to come to grips with the case that the Catholic Church presents for the resurrection of Christ. Instead, Camus--at least the Camus of the

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[654] Ironically, a Catholic priest bluntly rejects this outlook. In an essay entitled "Albert Camus: The Dark Night Before the Coming of Grace?" (included in Brée's *Camus: A Collection of Critical Essays*), Father Bernard C. Murchland, C.S.C. (Congregation of the Holy Cross), states: "It would be the sheerest of nonsense for the Christian to consider his [i.e., Camus's] position invalid because it does not make room for the traditional categories of grace and redemption" (64). On the contrary, if the Redemption and the Resurrection are facts, then it would be the sheerest of nonsense for Camus or anyone else not to make room for them in his or her worldview. The mere desire to respect logic and avoid contradiction dictates that conclusion.

Murchland's essay, first published in 1959 in *The Catholic World*, is a foreshadowing of the contradictions and confusion that would envelop that world after the Second Vatican Council. Sister Lucia dos Santos of the Fátima apparitions described this phenomenon with the phrase "diabolical disorientation": "It is the diabolical disorientation that is invading the world and deceiving souls!" This statement is found in Sister Lucia's April 12, 1970, letter addressed to Maria Teresa. This letter is reproduced in John Vennari's pamphlet entitled "A World View Based on Fatima"; the quotation is found on page 28.

It is reasonable to suppose that Camus himself would evaluate Murchland's assertion in the same way that Sister Lucia would. In his address to the Paris Dominicans, Camus says: "[. . .] the only possible dialogue is the kind between people who remain what they are and speak their minds. This is tantamount to saying that the world of today needs Christians who remain Christians. The other day at the Sorbonne, speaking to a Marxist lecturer, a Catholic priest said in public that he too was anticlerical. Well, I don't like priests who are anticlerical any more than philosophies that are ashamed of themselves. [ *[. . .] il n'y a donc de dialogue possible qu'entre des gens qui restent ce qu'ils sont et qui parlent vrai. Cela revient à dire que le monde d'aujourd'hui réclame des chrétiens qu'ils restent des chrétiens. L'autre jour, à la Sorbonne, s'adressant à un conférencier marxiste, un prêtre catholique disait en public que, lui aussi, était anticlérical. Eh bien! je n'aime pas les prêtres qui sont anticléricaux pas plus que les philosophies qui ont honte d'elles-mêmes*]" (*Resistance* 70; *Essais* 372).

The best studies of the mentality that Camus rejects in the above quotation are Dietrich von Hildebrand's *Trojan Horse in the City of God: The Catholic Crisis Explained* and *The Devastated Vineyard*.

period of *L'Homme révolté*--brusquely dismisses the Resurrection, relegating it to a footnote in that text:

> Of course, there is a metaphysical revolt at the beginning of Christianity, but the resurrection of Christ, the announcement of the Parousia, and the kingdom of God interpreted as a promise of eternal life are the answers that render it useless. (*Essais* 430 [footnote])[655]

The above footnote of Camus's represents a begging of the question and a refusal to face a major counterargument. The core of this counterargument can be expressed as follows: the tomb of Jesus must have been found empty, because otherwise it is impossible to explain why the Jewish religious establishment and the Roman state were unable to crush the nascent Christian movement and its claim of a resurrection by merely producing the corpse of its executed leader. The only ways in which the nonconformist heading this "metaphysical revolt" can rationally be said to have left that empty tomb are either a theft of his body by his followers or else a resurrection. His comrades could not have stolen his remains, because a mendacious prolongation of the rebellion of someone whom they now knew to be a fraud is what would have been truly "useless." *Ergo*, the rebel known as Jesus left the sepulcher alive, and his resurrection is a fact of history (despite having been dismissed by Albert Camus and consigned to a footnote).[656]

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[655] "*Bien entendu, il y a une révolte métaphysique au début du christianisme, mais la résurrection du Christ, l'annonce de la parousie et le royaume de Dieu interprété comme une promesse de vie éternelle, sont les réponses qui la rendent inutile*" (my translation).

I have translated this crucial footnote myself because Anthony Bower omits "the announcement of the Parousia" (*Rebel* 21 [footnote]).

[656] This historical argument is fully developed in a book which, having been published in a French translation in 1932 under the title *Le Tombeau vide* [*The Empty Tomb*], could have been read by Camus (but probably was not): Frank Morison's *Who Moved the Stone?* Morison summarizes his case in just one sentence: "It is the complete failure of any one to produce the remains, or to point to any tomb, official or

Camus's failure to grapple with the apologetic arguments for the Resurrection is especially interesting in the light of the French novelist's statement in "La Mer au plus près" ["The Sea Close By"] concerning what awaited him at New York's Battery: "But, each time, a faraway tugboat signal came to remind me that this city, a dry cistern, was an island, and that at the Battery the water of my Baptism awaited me, black and polluted, covered with hollow corks" (*Essais* 879).[657] This failure also recalls an admission that Camus puts into the mouth of Clamence in *La Chute*: "In short, we should like, at the same time, to cease being guilty and yet not to make the effort of cleansing ourselves"

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otherwise, in which they were said to lie, which ultimately destroys every theory based upon the human removal of the body" (139-40).

In his 1891 short story entitled "Le Procurateur de Judée" ["The Procurator of Judea"], Anatole France attempts in advance to blunt the force of Morison's argument by contending that the early Christian movement was so insignificant that even Pontius Pilate, toward the end of his life, failed to remember Jesus's name. As ill-equipped a Christian apologist as Dostoyevsky was, he could easily have countered France's claim by asking the following question: "If Jesus posed no exceptional threat to the established order, then why did the Roman state bother to execute him in the first place?" I suggest that even the unbelieving Camus would have seen the point of this hypothetical question. I thank Allan Rogg for having drawn my attention to France's short story.

As for the theory that the wishful thinking of Jesus's disciples transmuted itself into collective hallucinations of a resurrected Messiah, Dostoyevsky puts into the mouth of Ippolit in *The Idiot* an argument combating the contention that the traumatized, demoralized followers of the crucified rabbi were anticipating his resurrection. Referring to a gruesome painting that he had seen in Rogozhin's house--Hans Holbein's *The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb*--the dying Ippolit says: "But, strange to say, as one looks at this corpse of a tortured man, a peculiar and curious question arises; if just such a corpse (and it must have been just like that) was seen by all His disciples, by those who were to become His chief apostles, by the women that followed Him and stood by the cross, by all who believed in Him and worshipped Him, how could they believe that that martyr would rise again? [Но странно, когда смотришь на этот труп измученного человека, то рождается один особенный и любопытный вопрос: если такой точно труп (а он непременно должен был быть точно такой) видели все ученики его, его главные будущие апостолы, видели женщины, ходившие за ним и стоявшие у креста, все веровавшие в него и обожавшие его, то каким образом могли они поверить, смотря на такой труп, что этот мученик воскреснет?]" (396; *PSS* 8: 339; pt. 3, ch. 6; see also 210-11; *PSS* 8: 181-82; pt. 2, ch. 4). Translator Constance Garnett omits "looking at such a corpse" after "how could they believe."

The condition of Jesus's corpse was probably even more gruesome than it appears in Holbein's painting, for the artist's rendering does not seem to reflect the effects of the scourging inflicted on all those whom the Romans executed by crucifixion. A reproduction of *The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb* may be viewed at http://www.wga.hu/index1.html.

[657] "*Mais, à chaque fois, un appel lointain de remorqueur venait me rappeler que cette ville, citerne sèche, était une île, et qu'à la pointe de la Battery, l'eau de mon baptême m'attendait, noire et pourrie, couverte de lièges creux*" (my translation).

(*Fall* 83).[658] Further, Clamence tells us that the cry of the woman whom he failed to try to save from drowning had traveled from the Seine all over the world to haunt him "on seas and rivers, everywhere, in short, where lies the bitter water of my baptism" (*Fall* 108).[659] A bit later, Clamence wonders whether he and his interlocutor, traveling on an apparently motionless steamboat on the dead Zuider Zee, will ever reach Amsterdam from "this immense holy-water font" (*Fall* 109).[660] It is against the background of these quotations that we may pose the following question: did Camus ultimately achieve a convergence with Dostoyevsky's Christian resolution of the scandal of evil? In any event, this is certain: from Dostoyevsky's own Christian perspective, the failure of both Dostoyevsky and Camus to ground their treatment of the scandal of evil is itself a scandal.

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[658] "*En somme, nous voudrions, en même temps, ne plus être coupables et ne pas faire l'effort de nous purifier*" (*Théâtre* 1518).

[659] "*sur les mers et les fleuves, partout enfin où se trouverait l'eau amère de mon baptême*" (*Théâtre* 1531).

[660] "*ce bénitier immense*" (*Théâtre* 1531).

# CHAPTER 7

## I AM YOUR AUGUSTINE BEFORE THE CONVERSION: DID CAMUS FINALLY ACHIEVE A *RAPPROCHEMENT* WITH DOSTOYEVSKY ON THE SCANDAL OF EVIL?

A reader who carefully follows the strong ethical framework that Camus begins to expound in *L'Homme révolté* (which, as I have noted, has to be regarded as a *partial* retraction of absurdism), should not be utterly astonished to learn of hints pointing to a possible return by the later Camus to the Catholicism of his childhood. In this regard, I wish to note what Frank Sheed states in his autobiographical *The Church and I* (published in 1974) in connection with his translation of St. Augustine's *Confessions*:

> How Luther and Calvin used--or as I think, mis-used [sic] him [St. Augustine]--hardly needs saying. In our own day we find Albert Camus writing an essay "Hellenism and Christianity, Plotinus and St. Augustine"; as I am told, he planned his own return to the Church in the image of Augustine's--if only he had not been killed in a motor smash. (128-29)

Sheed having died in 1979, I wrote to Sheed's son, the novelist Wilfrid Sheed, asking him who had told his father that Camus had intended to return to the Catholic Church, but I never received a reply. An article that Wilfred Sheed published on Camus --the article is entitled "A Sober Conscience"--contains nothing to confirm his father's later report. Nonetheless, that Frank Sheed's statement may not be mere wishful thinking on the part of a committed Catholic is indicated by Todd's reporting that an unnamed newspaper carried the headline: "Camus Will Not Capitulate to Catholicism." Todd also says that a reporter asking Camus whether he intended to convert received a simple "no" in reply (703). Clearly, people in the French intellectual world, both Catholics and non-

Catholics, must have had *some* reasons, however meager, to wonder about Camus's possible conversion. In *Albert Camus: A Study of His Work*, Philip Thody even asserts: "It is possible that the novel [*La Chute*] expresses the full realization of sin and unworthiness which precedes the coming of Grace. One might also go so far as to say of *The Fall* what was said of Huysman's [sic] *À Rebours* [*Against the Grain*]--that the author now had to choose between conversion or suicide" (77). After all, Camus himself, according to the diary of Catholic convert Julien Green, made the following statements during the question-and-answer period that followed his 1946 address at the Dominican residence of boulevard de Latour-Maubourg:

> I am your Augustine before the conversion. I am struggling with the problem of evil, and I am not through. (4: 950-51)[661]

When approaching Sheed's statement that he had been told that Camus, like St. Augustine, had been planning to embrace the Catholic Faith, one should consider an odd, provocative comment that emerges from nowhere in the middle of *L'Homme révolté*. Discussing the slave revolt led by the gladiator Spartacus in 70 B.C.--an uprising that culminated in the execution of 6,000 rebellious slaves, all crucified along the road between Capua and Rome--Camus suddenly draws a comparison with the best known crucifixion in history:

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[661] "*Je suis votre Augustin d'avant la conversion. Je me débats avec le problème du mal et je n'en sors pas*" (my translation).

These sentences reiterate to some extent the assertion recorded in the Pléiade text of Camus's address: "We are faced with evil. And, as for me, I feel rather as Augustine did before becoming a Christian when he said: 'I tried to find the source of evil and I got nowhere.' [*Nous sommes devant le mal. Et pour moi il est vrai que je me sens un peu comme cet Augustin d'avant le christianisme qui disait: «Je cherchais d'où vient le mal et je n'en sortais pas»*]" (*Resistance* 73; *Essais* 374). It is possible that Camus, during the question-and-answer period, reformulated a thought that he had included in his talk.

> The cross is also Christ's punishment. One might imagine that He chose a slave's punishment, a few years later, only so as to reduce the enormous distance that henceforth would separate humiliated humanity from the implacable face of the Master. He intercedes, He submits to the most extreme injustice so that rebellion shall not divide the world in two, so that suffering will also light the way to heaven and preserve it from the curses of mankind. (*Rebel* 110)[662]

To say that one of the reasons behind Jesus's "having chosen"--note the verb--to be crucified was that he wished to narrow the gap between the suffering human race and the countenance of God in "heaven" is certainly something that a committed Catholic might say. Consider, too, that the Catholic certainly believes that Jesus, being God Incarnate, voluntarily *chose* to die: "This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father" (*Jn* 10:17-18)."[663] Admittedly, there is a certain ambiguity pervading this Camusian passage; it arises from the atheist's--or the putative atheist's--pejorative designation of God as the "Implacable Master." In this reference, Camus is

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[662] "*La croix est aussi le supplice du Christ. On peut imaginer que ce dernier ne choisit quelques années plus tard le châtiment de l'esclave que pour réduire cette terrible distance qui désormais sépare la créature humiliée de la face implacable du Maître. Il intercède, il subit, à son tour, la plus extrême injustice pour que la révolte ne coupe pas le monde en deux, pour que la douleur gagne aussi le ciel et l'arrache à la malédiction des hommes*" (*Essais* 520).

Since the French verb *gagner* can mean either "to earn" or "to reach," note that "*pour que la douleur gagne aussi le ciel*" is equivocal. It can mean "so that suffering may earn heaven, too" or "so that suffering may reach even heaven." Translator Hebert Read opts for the first possibility. I wonder whether Camus intends this dual meaning.

[663] "διὰ τοῦτό με ὁ πατὴρ ἀγαπᾷ ὅτι ἐγὼ τίθημι τὴν ψυχήν μου, ἵνα πάλιν λάβω αὐτήν. οὐδεὶς αἴρει αὐτὴν ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τίθημι αὐτὴν ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ. ἐξουσίαν ἔχω θεῖναι αὐτήν, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω πάλιν λαβεῖν αὐτήν· ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔλαβον παρὰ τοῦ πατρός μου."

harking back to the atheistic atmosphere of *Caligula* and *Le Malentendu*. Despite that mixing of signals, it is striking that the French novelist so closely parallels the thinking of two Catholics in particular. A parallel to Camus's unanticipated meditation on the Crucifixion can be found in a passage of St. Thomas Aquinas, in which the Dominican theologian responds to the objection that Christ did not have to be crucified to effect the Redemption. Citing Saints John Damascene and Augustine, St. Thomas says the following:

> *Obj.* 2. Further, Damascene says (*De Fide Orthod*. iii) that Christ ought not to assume *dishonoring afflictions*. But death on a cross was most dishonoring and ignominious [. . .].
>
> *I answer that*, It was most fitting that Christ should suffer the death of the cross.
>
> First of all, as an example of virtue. For Augustine thus writes (*QQ*. lxxxiii, *qu*. 25): *God's Wisdom became man to give us an example in righteousness of living. But it is part of righteous living not to stand in fear of things which ought not to be feared. Now there are some men who, although they do not fear death in itself, are yet troubled over the manner of their death. In order, then, that no kind of death should trouble an upright man, the cross of this Man had to be set before him* [. . .]. (*Summa theologiae*, pt. 3, ques. 46, art. 4)[664]

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[664] "2. *Praeterea, Damascenus dicit quod Christus non debuit assumere* detractibiles passiones*. Sed mors crucis videtur maxime detractibilis et ignominiosa [. . .].*

"*Respondeo dicendum quod convenientissimum fuit Christum pati mortem crucis. Primo quidem, propter exemplum virtutis. Dicit enim Augustinus, in libro* Octoginta trium quaest.: Sapientia Dei hominem, ad exemplum quo recte viveremus, suscepit. Pertinet autem ad vitam rectam ea quae non sunt metuenda, non metuere. Sunt autem homines qui, quamvis mortem ipsam non timeant, genus tamen mortis

Another sign of Camus's possible intentions regarding Catholicism is Julien Green's report of something else that Camus says after having addressed the Dominicans of boulevard de Latour-Maubourg. An unidentified questioner says: "Sir, I cannot decide in forty seconds about the conduct I shall have to follow if the Church is persecuted. I want to ponder that my whole life" (4: 951)[665] Green informs us that Camus replies: "Sir, you have five years" (4: 951).[666] Perhaps Camus foresees the ever widening gap between the Catholic Church and the modern secular state--for all intents and purposes, an explicitly or implicitly atheistic state. It is this conflict that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* identifies when it says: "From the beginning of Christian history, the assertion of Christ's lordship over the world and over history has implicitly recognized that man should not submit his personal freedom in an absolute manner to any earthly power, but only to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Caesar is not 'the Lord'" (section 450).[667] Camus's unsettling, even jolting, reply to the worried questioner shows that the anti-totalitarian French novelist, though a professed atheist, clearly understands why, for a Catholic, Caesar is not the Lord. In another place, Camus writes ominously of the "strange and terrifying growth of the modern State" (*Rebel* 177).[668] Hence, Camus's reply to the questioner after the Latour-Maubourg address can be interpreted as

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horrescunt. Ut ergo nullum genus mortis recte viventi homini metuendum esset, illius hominis cruce ostendendum fuit [. . .]."

[665] "*Monsieur, je ne puis me décider en quarante secondes sur la conduite que j'aurai à suivre si l'Église est persécutée. Je veux y réfléchir toute ma vie*" (my translation).

[666] "*Monsieur,* [. . .] *vous avez cinq ans*" (my translation).

[667] "*Dès le commencement de l'histoire chrétienne, l'affirmation de la seigneurie de Jésus sur le monde et sur l'histoire signifie aussi la reconnaissance que l'homme ne doit soumettre sa liberté personnelle, de façon absolue, à aucun pouvoir terrestre, mais seulement à Dieu le Père et au Seigneur Jésus-Christ: César n'est pas «le Seigneur».*"

[668] "*étrange et terrifiante croissance de l'État moderne*" (*Essais* 583).

expressing sympathy for the Catholic reaction to the modern world, to say nothing of Camus's historical prescience.

**Father Ignace Lepp's Testimony**

I cannot help wondering whether Julien Green also thought that Camus, despite being scandalized by a universe in which children suffer, was indeed evincing a pronounced sympathy for Catholicism, and that this affinity would ultimately lead to the novelist's return to the Catholic Faith. In this regard, we should also consider remarks made by Ignace Lepp, who had converted from both Marxism and membership in the French Communist Party to Catholicism and membership in the priesthood--in addition to becoming a psychoanalyst and an author. His autobiography is entitled *Itinéraire de Karl Marx à Jésus-Christ* [*From Karl Marx to Jesus Christ*]. Despite its somewhat tendentious "left"-leaning comments concerning the Church's actions in postwar France, Lepp's testimony in *Psychanalyse de l'athéisme moderne* (translated as *Atheism in Our Time*) is worth quoting, especially since the second half of the paragraph advances an intriguing hypothesis to explain why Camus did not convert:

> Camus' friends know that, between the years 1947 and 1950, he was very close to Catholicism; several friends anticipated his immediate conversion. [. . .] Since 1950, however, strong censures have been pronounced by the Church, precisely upon those Catholics through whose influence Camus had conceived a vague hope that there might be something beyond despair, that man could not be as much a stranger to himself and to others as he thought. The persecutions unleashed against the priest-workers, the

> suspicion thrown by *Humani Generis* and other Roman documents upon Teilhard de Chardin, Mounier, de Lubac, and the Dominicans of the Cerf publishing house could only strike Camus as a further confirmation of the absurdity of the world. (*Atheism in Our Time* 153-54)[669]

Regardless of how one understands the *objective* significance of the Church's actions listed in Lepp's indictment, Camus's *subjective* reaction to these events--since he was a man of the "left"--may have been what Lepp says it was, and this reaction may thus have been at least one reason why the novelist did not return to Catholicism. In a eulogy in the October 27, 1944, issue of *Combat* for his Catholic friend René Leynaud, whom the Germans had shot, Camus says: "And some who are not worthy speak of the honor that was identified with him, while others who are not trustworthy speak in the name of the God he had chosen" (*Resistance* 44).[670] It is possible that, in Camus's mind, the "others who are not trustworthy" include members of the Catholic hierarchy. Lepp's

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[669] "*Les amis d'Albert Camus savent qu'entre 1947 et 1950, l'écrivain s'était beaucoup rapproché du catholicisme, au point que certains escomptaient déjà sa prochaine conversion. [. . .] Dès 1950, cependant, les instances suprêmes du catholicisme frappaient de réprobation ou de condamnation précisément ceux parmi les chrétiens grâce auxquels il avait conçu le vague espoir qu'il pourrait y avoir peut-être quand même un au-delà du désespoir, que l'homme pourrait ne pas être aussi étranger à soi-même et aux autres qu'il le croyait. Les persécutions déclenchées contre les prêtres ouvriers, la suspicion jetée, par l'encyclique* Humani Generis *et autres documents romains, sur Teilhard de Chardin, Mounier, de Lubac, les dominicains des éditions du Cerf, ne pouvaient apparaître à Albert Camus que comme une confirmation supplémentaire de l'absurdité du monde*" (*Psychanalyse de l'athéisme moderne* 248-49).

The priest-workers were French and Belgian priests who, starting in 1943, took jobs in proletarian settings to bring the working class back to Catholicism. Despite this evangelical intention, some of these priests left the Church and married, while others joined communist unions, thus helping to persuade the Vatican to abandon this experiment in 1959. See "End of the Worker Priests" in the September 28, 1959, issue of *Time*. *Humani generis* was the 1950 encyclical (already cited) in which Pope Pius XII warned Catholics against existentialism and the hypothesis of evolution (in their atheistic forms); it also admonished them to uphold uncompromisingly the immutability of Catholic doctrine. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) was a French Jesuit who attempted to integrate the hypothesis of evolution with Catholicism. Emmanuel Mounier (1905-50) was the founder of the French Catholic periodical *Esprit*. Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) was a French Jesuit whom some consider to have been be a target of *Humani generis*; he was, however, a *peritus* at Vatican II, and was made a cardinal in 1983. Again, de Lubac wrote *Le Drame de l'humanisme athée*.

[670] The Pléiade edition does not have the text of this eulogy.

intriguing report appears especially worthy of credence because of his position in French Catholicism, and because of his opening assertion, which can be interpreted as reflecting inside knowledge: "Camus' friends know that [. . .]." It is a good bet that Father Lepp knew some of the friends who thought that Camus was on the verge of converting in the late 1940's. One of those friends may have been Dominican Father Bruckberger, who was mentioned earlier in this dissertation.

If Camus, shortly before his death in 1960, had ceased to be severely scandalized by Lepp's indictment of the hierarchy's actions in France, and if the novelist was by that time again strongly tempted by, or even planning to convert to, Catholicism, this should not cause a shock. Not only does Camus share an ethical foundation with Catholicism's natural-law moral system, but it is also a surprising fact that Camus himself, in "L'Énigme" ["Enigma"], one of his relatively early, and overlooked, essays (published as part of *L'Été* in 1950), concisely deconstructs his own absurdism in a passage that could have been penned by either Étienne Gilson or Maritain, the prominent French neo-Thomistic philosophers who were contemporaneous with Camus.[671] This key passage merits verbatim transcription:

> The moment you say that everything is nonsense you express something meaningful. Refusing the world all meaning amounts to abolishing all value judgments. But living, and eating, for example, are in themselves value judgments. You choose to remain alive the moment you do not

[671] Camus met Gilson when both were in New York. Camus took the scholar to the Copacabana nightclub (Todd 408). Amusingly, Todd asks: "How far can you take a Thomist? [*Jusqu'où peut-on mener un thomiste?*]" (my translation). I wonder whether Camus told Gilson, as they watched the floor show together at the Copacabana, that he had used two books and an article by the neo-Thomist to write his *diplôme d'études supérieures*, as the bibliography of the thesis indicates (*Essais* 1313). One of those books was Gilson's *Introduction à l'étude de saint Augustin* [*Introduction to the Study of St. Augustine*].

> allow yourself to die of hunger, and consequently you recognize that life has at least a relative value. What, in fact, does "literature of despair" mean? Despair is silent. Even silence, moreover, is meaningful if your eyes speak. True despair is the agony of death, the grave or the abyss. If he speaks, if he reasons, above all if he writes, immediately the brother reaches out his hand, the tree is justified, love is born. Literature of despair is a contradiction in terms. (*Lyrical* 159-60)[672]

In notebook entries that Beránková deserves credit for highlighting (175), Camus begins to express reservations regarding a life of uninhibited sexual indulgence. Probably, few of his admirers are aware of passages such as this one: "Sexual life has been given to man to divert him, perhaps, from his true path. It is his opium. In it, everything falls asleep. Outside it, things resume their life" (*Carnets II* 49).[673] Or this one: "Unbridled sexuality leads to a philosophy of non-signification of the world.

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[672] "*Dès l'instant où l'on dit que tout est non-sens, on exprime quelque chose qui a du sens. Refuser toute signification au monde revient à supprimer tout jugement de valeur. Mais vivre, et par exemple se nourrir, est en soi un jugement de valeur. On choisit de durer dès l'instant qu'on ne se laisse pas mourir, et l'on reconnaît alors une valeur, au moins relative, à la vie. Que signifie enfin une littérature désespérée? Le désespoir est silencieux. Le silence même, au demeurant, garde un sens si les yeux parlent. Le vrai désespoir est agonie, tombeau ou abîme. S'il parle, s'il raisonne, s'il écrit surtout, aussitôt le frère nous tend la main, l'arbre est justifié, l'amour naît. Une littérature désespérée est une contradiction dans les termes*" (*Essais* 865).

What does Camus mean when he says that the "tree is justified"? Mary Ann Caws, Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature, English, and French at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, told me on February 7, 2006, that the tree signifies the totality of nature. It would, in this interpretation, be a synecdoche. In contrast, Professor Beaujour believes that Camus is alluding to the life-giving tree mentioned in *Rev* 22:2: the tree that provides fruit and medicinal leaves in the heavenly, eschatological city. If Professor Beaujour is correct, then there may be an underlying, secondary allusion to the cross of Jesus's crucifixion in Camus's text, since the New Testament elsewhere refers to the Cross as the ξύλον (*xulon* or "wood, tree,"); see *Acts* 5:30, *Gal* 3:13, and *1 Pet* 2:24.

[673] "*La vie sexuelle a été donnée à l'homme pour le détourner peut-être de sa vraie voie. C'est son opium. En elle tout s'endort. Hors d'elle, les choses reprennent leur vie*" (my translation).

Chastity, on the contrary, restores a meaning (to the world)" (*Carnets II* 55).[674] Or this one: "Chastity, O liberty!" (*Carnets III* 80).[675] Any unbelieving Western intellectual who can say things like these in the middle of the twentieth century is ready for Catholicism. Indeed, in his preface to Dunwoodie's *Une histoire ambivalente: Le dialogue Camus-Dostoïevski*, Sturm says the following of *La Chute*, whose first-person narrator raises the issue of personal culpability in the area of sexuality by confessing how he mistreated women during his days of tomcatting around Paris: "At its appearance, numerous Catholic readers had believed that they had discerned in the existential dilemmas of Clamence that the conversion of his creator was imminent" (17).[676] But I wish to go further by posing this question: since Camus *himself* says that "[u]nbridled sexuality leads to a philosophy of non-signification of the world," may one not wonder whether at least one of the foundations for his earlier full-fledged absurdism was his own unbridled sexual life?

The very name of the protagonist of *La Chute*--Jean-Baptiste Clamence--has strong, and especially relevant, Catholic overtones. Thody (77, 146) reports that, in a talk broadcast on the BBC in January 1957, Donat O'Donnell proposed that Clamence's surname echoes the Latin Vulgate's designation of St. John the Baptist in *Mt* 3:3: *vox clamantis in deserto* ("the voice of one crying out in the desert"). Camus himself confirms this etymology in a June 10, 1958, letter to Belgian student Malvina Eeckhout

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[674] "*La sexualité débridée conduit à une philosophie de la non-signification du monde. La chasteté lui rend au contraire un sens (au monde)*" (my translation).

[675] "*Chasteté, ô liberté!*" (my translation).

[676] "*Lors de sa parution, de nombreux lecteurs catholiques avaient cru discerner à travers les dilemmes existentiels de Clamence que la conversion de son créateur était imminente*" (my translation).

(Todd 646-47, 818 [endnote 18]).[677] In keeping with the New Testament provenance of his given name, Clamence describes himself to his interlocutor as a "false prophet crying in the wilderness and refusing to come forth" (*Fall* 147).[678] That Clamence associates himself with St. John the Baptist should have been enough to make Catholic readers of *La Chute* in France and elsewhere wonder about Camus's possible conversion, for the Gospels depict St. John the Baptist as not merely a prophet, but also the herald and precursor of Christ. As a precursor, John is sent to prepare the people for the Messiah's arrival. Is Camus saying that Clamence is prophesying, and preparing for, the arrival of Christ in Camus's own life? In his wrestling with the scandals of death and moral evil--with moral evil now being understood as covering issues of personal and, even sexual, guilt in addition to questions of political and military ethics--has the Camus of *La Chute* abandoned, or at least started to disengage from, the atheistic humanism of Dr. Rieux in *La Peste* (and of Camus's second intellectual phase) and to move, however hesitantly, toward the faith of Father Paneloux?

"But Camus denies that Clamence is a Christian!" Such is the rejoinder that might be interjected by a reader familiar with Camus's statement in the interview that *Le Monde* published on August 31, 1956. Having been asked, in connection with his interest in Faulkner, whether some readers of *La Chute* are right to hope for Camus's conversion to the spirit, if not the doctrines, of Catholicism, Camus responds as follows:

> Nothing really justifies them in this. Doesn't my judge-penitent clearly say that he is Sicilian and Japanese? Not Christian for a minute. Like

[677] This is why Kirk's conjecture regarding French statesman Georges Clemenceau as the basis for Clamence's surname (126-27) has to be rejected.

[678] "*faux prophète qui crie dans le désert et refuse d'en sortir*" (*Théâtre* 1551).

> him, I have a good deal of affection for the first Christian. I admire the way he lived, the way he died. My lack of imagination keeps me from following him any further. [. . .] But I let myself get carried away with the idea: to paint a portrait of a small prophet like so many today. They proclaim nothing at all and find nothing better to do than accuse others in accusing themselves. (*Lyrical* 320)[679]

Reading the above response, I am reminded of one of Lepp's patients, discussed in a chapter provocatively entitled "The Unbelief of Believers." This was the Catholic who surprised the guests at a social gathering by fiercely defending the Inquisition. Using the techniques of depth psychology during a subsequent counseling session with this man, Lepp learned from the patient himself that he doubted the truth of the Faith, and that his unnecessary defense of the execution of heretics was a reflection of his inner turmoil (*Atheism in Our Time* 159-160).[680] By the same token, I believe that it is possible that Camus may have experienced the reverse side of this inner anguish: that of the person who has either begun to doubt atheism or who knows that he ought to return to the

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[679] "*Rien vraiment ne les y autorise. Mon juge-pénitent ne dit-il pas clairement qu'il est Sicilien et Javanais? Pas chrétien pour un sou. Comme lui j'ai beaucoup d'amitié pour le premier d'entre eux. J'admire la façon dont il a vécu, dont il est mort. Mon manque d'imagination m'interdit de le suivre plus loin. [. . .] Mais je me suis laissé emporter par mon propos: brosser un portrait, celui d'un petit prophète comme il y en a tant aujourd'hui. Ils n'annoncent rien du tout et ne trouvent pas mieux à faire que d'accuser les autres en s'accusant eux-mêmes*" (*Théâtre* 1881).

Translator Ellen Conroy Kennedy's "Japanese" should be corrected to "Javanese." I do not understand what Camus means by telling the interviewer that Clamence calls himself Sicilian and Javanese. In the text, Clamence merely informs his interlocutor that he likes all islands, and that he has visited the islands Sicily and Java (*Fall* 43; *Théâtre* 1498). Does Camus's cryptic and somewhat incoherent remark betray his conscious or subconscious uneasiness with discussing the Catholic overtones of *La Chute*? Is it another sign that he *was* groping his way back toward Catholicism at the close of his career?

[680] *Psychanalyse de l'athéisme moderne* (257-59).

At Vatican II, the Catholic Church, developing the Catholic concept of toleration in the council's *Declaration on Religious Liberty*, repudiated the Inquisition and other forms of religious coercion--while simultaneously emphasizing the fundamental Catholic teaching that Catholicism is the "one true religion [*unicam veram Religionem*]" (*Dignitatis humanae*, sect. 1; Abbott 677; *Sacrosanctum Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum* II 512).

practice of the Faith but finds an obstacle on his path to this outcome. Lepp writes of believers such as "Michael": "They are the prey of a painful psychic duality--their psychic structure is believing while their unconscious is far less so" (*Atheism in Our Time* 160).[681] One can invert this observation and wonder whether the psychic structure of some *atheists* is *unbelieving* while their unconscious is far less so.

I suggest that one of the signals for such a duality in Camus may be his admission that, in writing *La Chute*, he "got carried away." Perhaps, by the time of the interview in *Le Monde*, he realized that he had disclosed too much of himself in this text, possibly against his own conscious intention. In fact, some readers may ask themselves whether he is doing the same thing in this very interview. Another possible clue to Camus's state of mind is his claim that today's pseudo prophets "accuse others in accusing themselves." Is there a subtextual meaning, either conscious or subconscious, in this remark? Can we turn it around and ask whether Camus is indicting himself in the very act of indicting others? By falsely charging some of his readers with mistakenly seeing Christianity in Clamence, and Camus himself in Clamence, is Camus actually confirming that he *is* Clamence, who is, in turn, a potential convert to Catholicism? To be sure, many readers will challenge all the foregoing speculations, but I can appeal to an excellent authority, one whom I have already invoked in a different, but related, context:

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[681] "*Ils sont la proie d'une pénible dualité psychique, leurs structures conscientes étant croyantes, alors que leur inconscient l'est si peu*" (*Psychanalyse de l'athéisme moderne* 259).

> Doubtless, a novelist conveys himself and betrays himself in all his characters at the same time: each one represents one of his tendencies or his temptations. (*Essais* 1143)[682]

**Reverend Howard Mumma's Testimony**

Regarding the possibility that Camus may not have been far from returning to the Catholic Church right before his early death, there is a final, intriguing item to consider: the testimony of an American minister, Howard Mumma of the United Methodist Church. Mumma, a graduate of Yale Divinity School, states in his book *Albert Camus and the Minister*, published by Paraclete Press in 2000, that he and Camus conducted religious discussions in Paris, and that Camus requested a re-Baptism. Even though Paraclete Press is a small publishing house in Brewster, Massachusetts, Mumma's dialogues with Camus received wider attention especially because the flagship periodical of American liberal Protestantism, *The Christian Century*, published excerpts from Mumma's book. In addition, *Albert Camus and the Minister* was favorably reviewed by James W. Sire in the evangelical Protestant journal *Christianity Today*. Given its intrinsic interest and its pertinence to this dissertation, part of the passage in which Mumma's Baptism-related claim is made merits verbatim transcription. After having related that Camus had initiated a discussion in which he quoted the words that Jesus had spoken to Nicodemus concerning Baptism--"Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter

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[682] "*Sans doute, un romancier se traduit et se trahit dans tous ses personnages en même temps: chacun représente une des ses tendances ou de ses tentations*" (my translation).

Again, Camus writes the foregoing in "Roger Martin du Gard," published in *Nouvelle Revue Française* in 1955.

the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit (*Jn* 3:5)"[683]--Mumma proceeds to inform us of the following dialogue between him and Camus:

> Albert looked me squarely in the eye and with tears in his eyes, said, "Howard, I am ready. I want this. This is what I want to commit my life to."[684]
>
> Of course, I rejoiced and thanked God privately that he had come to this. I had a difficult time maintaining my composure. The man had been questioning me now for several years about Christianity and had attended services in the summer (possibly in the winter too, although he never indicated that he had.) He had heard my sermons on many occasions and I knew he had studied almost the whole Bible. Perhaps I should not have been shocked, but it did give me a sense of wonder and amazement that he would be considering taking this kind of step toward Christianity. Yet for some reason, I was unable to commit myself fully to the idea. "But Albert," I said, "haven't you already been baptized?"
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> "Yes," said Camus, "when I was a child . . . but it meant nothing to me. It was something done to me, no more meaningful than a handshake."

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[683] "Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ."

[684] Let me interrupt Mumma's narrative for an objection to its credibility. Is it implausible that a man such as Camus, whose personality was saturated with machismo, would cry on such an occasion? First, "with tears in his eyes" does not necessarily mean a flood streaming down his face; moist eyes would fit the report. Second, and more importantly, Camus has Caligula ask Caesonia: "Do you imagine love's the only thing that can make a man shed tears? [. . .] "Men weep because . . . the world's all wrong. [*Et ne peux-tu imaginer qu'un homme pleure pour autre chose que l'amour? [. . .]* "*Les hommes pleurent parce que les choses ne sont pas ce qu'elles devraient être*]" (*Caligula and Three Other Plays* 15; *Théâtre* 25-26; act 1, sc. 11).

"Well, the baptism of a child is not performed because the child has faith in God or in Christ, which a baby clearly does not have. It is given because God loves the child and welcomes him into the family of God. The baptism begins a process in which you begin to grow, even as an infant, into a new life with which the gift has been given to you."

"But it seems right that I should be baptized now that I have spent these months reading and discussing the Bible with you. . . ."

I had to interrupt, though I could not express my full thoughts. Christian doctrine holds that one baptism suffices; there is no reason for re-baptism. Only if there is some doubt that a person has been given a valid baptism do we re-baptize, and we call it a 'conditional baptism.' So on one hand, I wanted to deny his request for baptism on the grounds that it wasn't necessary. On the other hand, I also sensed that Albert needed the experience. My compromise was to bring up the matter of joining a church and experiencing the rite of confirmation. That proved to be a mistake.

Right away, he jumped on me and said, "Howard, I am not ready to be a member of a church! I have difficulty in attending church! I have to fight people all the time after a service, even at your church. When I come to your church, when you are preaching, I leave before the service is over to get away from them all." (89-91)[685]

[685] This quotation, from *Albert Camus and the Minister*, by Howard Mumma (copyright 2000 Howard Mumma), is used by permission of Paraclete Press (www.paracletepress.com).

Mumma's report is still startling even though he adds that Camus wanted no public ceremony, but merely wished the re-Baptism to be "[s]omething just between us" (93). Let us note in passing that Henri Peyre, for some reason which I do not understand, claims, in an essay entitled "Presence of Camus," that Camus was never baptized as a child: "Camus himself, never baptized, would not have accepted to be ranked among the nominal Catholics" (29). This is not accurate: Todd tells us that Camus was baptized on October 15, 1914 (33, 774 [endnote 24]).[686] And he received the sacrament of Confirmation at Saint-Bonaventure d'Alger (Todd 33). Mumma adds that he declined Camus's request for a second Baptism with this advice: "Let's wait while you continue your studies" (93). Let us also note that Camus's taking the unusual step of asking a Protestant minister to baptize him a second time is consonant with a strange, and intriguing, remark that McCarthy attributes to him on the basis of an interview with Paul Raffi, a friend of Camus's in Algeria: according to Raffi, Camus once called himself an "independent Catholic" (29, 330 [endnote 27]). Indeed, Camus showed his independence of the Catholic doctrine that prohibits a repetition of the sacrament of Baptism on the ground that a valid Baptism imprints an indelible spiritual mark on the soul (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 1272).

Mumma states that his sporadic verbal exchanges with Camus during the 1950's began when the French novelist attended an organ recital by Marcel Dupré at the American Church on the Quai d'Orsay and, as a consequence, was taken with Mumma's preaching. Camus's appreciation for the Methodist clergyman's homiletic skills led to his asking for appointments to discuss his difficulties with Christianity. But what degree

[686] Camus was born on November 7, 1913, in Mondovi, Algeria (according to the chronology in *Théâtre* xxvii). The attentive reader may notice that it took almost a year for Camus's mother to have Albert baptized. At that time, such a delay was unusual even in a lax Catholic family.

of confidence can we repose in Mumma's major assertion, given the fact that it was made forty years after Camus's death, and also given the fact that Mumma's narrative is flawed by a minor contradiction and a major blunder? While Mumma concedes that his reconstruction of these dialogues cannot be considered "verbatim" despite the extensive notes that he made at the time (4), and while he admits that "I am guilty of putting a few words into my acquaintance's mouth--and, for that matter, my own--to better capture the essence of our sessions" (4), those admissions do not explain why Mumma says that Camus was wearing a "dark, single-breasted suit" during their first meeting on the church steps (6), but that, at their first luncheon the next day, Camus was "again wearing a dark, double-breasted suit" (9). Granted, this is a tiny narrative discrepancy that can be ascribed to Mumma's hazy memory after about forty years (and to lack of care in proofreading), but much more serious is his stating that Camus's death was "obviously suicide" (98).

On the contrary, Reverend Mumma, it could not have been suicide![687] Mumma appears to be unaware of one or more crucial facts. There were three other passengers in the car that was involved in Camus's death: Michel Gallimard, Janine Gallimard (Michel's wife), and Anne (Janine's daughter). And, most important, Camus was not driving the vehicle when it left the road near the French village of Villeblevin and hit two trees in succession. It was Michel Gallimard who was at the wheel. Camus, seated next to him in what is often called the death seat, died instantly of a broken neck and fractured skull, but Michel died six days later. There was speculation concerning the possibilities

[687] In view of the Christian condemnation of suicide, is the blunder about Camus's alleged suicide fatal to the veracity of Mumma's narrative regarding Camus's having requested another Baptism? No. Even if Camus *had* killed himself, this subsequent occurrence would not have rendered nonexistent a previous desire for Baptism or a prior intention to return to Catholicism. The suicide of Judas Iscariot (*Mt* 27:5) does not make it impossible that he originally believed in Jesus.

that Michel may have been speeding, or that the Facel Vega may have broken an axle. All these points are covered by Lottman (661-65) and McCarthy (319-21). To be sure, Mumma's unfounded conviction that Camus committed suicide is a serious blunder, but it does not necessarily undermine his report that Camus asked him to baptize him again.

If Mumma's assertion about Camus's request for another Baptism is to be credited, then Camus's initial movement toward Christianity as evidenced in this unusual request could have developed subsequently into a decision to return to the Catholicism of his childhood, in keeping with Frank Sheed's statement. But why did Mumma wait four decades before disclosing Camus's interest in a second Baptism? Mumma's explanation for this delay is plausible: he originally acceded to Camus's insistence that their religious discussions be kept confidential. It was only after so many years had elapsed that the clergyman now considered himself exempted from keeping this promise since--so Mumma reasoned--the benefits of disclosure trumped confidentiality (3-4).[688]

**"I Have the Impression of Having Lied My Whole Life"**

It is against the background set forth above that the following question may be posed: did Camus ultimately achieve a *rapprochement* with Dostoyevsky on the resolution of the scandal of evil--even though both authors, despite their literary achievements, fall short in their engagement with this urgent issue? A point that we should bear in mind when considering Mumma's report is that, early in his career, when

[688] Despite his sincere conviction in this matter, Mumma's decision to publish the contents of his confidential conversations with Camus is ethically indefensible, regardless of the passage of time and the significance of this disclosure for literary research. Such conversations with a clergyman fall into two categories of secrets that should not be revealed: *promised* secrets and *professional* secrets. Nonetheless, once the obligation of secrecy has been contravened by publication, the information improperly divulged may be discussed, as in a doctoral dissertation. See Connell's *Outlines of Moral Theology* (157-58).

he reacts in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* to Dostoyevsky's Christianity, Camus makes a remark that leads Davison to think that Camus may have "secretly felt that one day he too would fall victim to illusion of some sort" (20, 200 [endnote 25]). The remark to which Davison refers is this: "There is so much stubborn hope in the human heart. The most destitute men often end up by accepting illusion" (*Myth* 103).[689] If the claim that Frank Sheed heard is correct or partially correct, and Camus had made up his mind to return to Catholicism, or had experienced at least some attraction to Catholicism toward the end of his life, then was it the fear of succumbing to illusion that thwarted his intention or blocked this attraction? Or did other factors hold him back from conversion?

Despite the remarks that Camus committed to his *Carnets* to praise the liberating force of sexual abstinence, is it possible that one of those inhibiting factors was not intellectual, but moral? Lottman reports that, in his last year, Camus spent time with a "ravishing young woman associated with neither his literary life nor his theater, and so a companion of relaxed moments" (651). Lottman does not name this woman, who also traveled with the novelist (despite the fact that Camus was still married to Francine, his second wife), but perhaps this mysterious lady is to be identified as a concrete reason for Camus's having made no public move to exchange Dr. Rieux's secular humanitarianism for the demanding faith of Father Paneloux. Camus had told the Paris Dominicans that he was St. Augustine before the conversion. Should we also say that he was an Augustine who refused to give up his mistress? One thinks of Augustine's prayer in his

[689] "*Il y a tant d'espoir tenace dans le coeur humain. Les hommes les plus dépouillés finissent quelquefois par consentir à l'illusion*" (*Essais* 180).

*Confessions*: "Give me chastity and self-control, but not right now."[690] Is this the actual motive, operating either consciously or subconsciously, behind Camus's telling a group of foreign students in Aix, on December 14, 1959 (during his final public address), that "the Christian God was not for him, that he felt no spiritual need to look for Him" (Lottman 658)? Note that he does not say that the Christian God does not exist, but only that this God is "not for him."

A Dostoyevskian reference is in order at this point. In *Crime and Punishment*, Raskol'nikov, while being uncomfortably interrogated--actually, politely browbeaten--by the police investigator Porfirii Petrovich, answers Porfirii's religious questions by telling him that he believes in God and in the raising of Lazarus (221).[691] These responses made under pressure do not prevent Dostoyevsky from having Sonia try, during her emotional reading of the Lazarus passage from the Gospel of St. John, to instill faith into Raskol'nikov through this reading (274-78).[692] Though lacking psychological training, Sonia has enough fundamental human insight to know that Raskol'nikov no longer believes in Russian Orthodoxy, and she may well have realized this even had she known how Raskol'nikov had answered Porfirii. (Sonia would thus disagree with June Ellen Pachuta. In her Ohio State University master's degree thesis entitled "The Concepts of Metaphysical Rebellion and Freedom in the Works of Dostoevsky and Camus," Pachuta appears to believe that Raskol'nikov answered Porfirii sincerely.)[693] Just as one must

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[690] "*da mihi castitatem et continentiam, sed noli modo*" (1: 96 [bk. 8, ch. 7, sect. 17]; my translation of the Latin text in O'Donnell's bilingual edition).

[691] *PSS* 6: 201; pt. 3, ch. 5.

[692] *PSS* 6: 249-52; pt. 4, ch. 4.

[693] Pachuta writes: "To condone and actually idolize a man-god like Napolean [sic], Raskolnikov must reject any concept of good and evil and faith in God. And yet, when asked, he says that he does believe in

question the veracity of Raskol'nikov's profession of belief during his interrogation by Porfirii, so, too, may one reasonably adopt a prudent reserve concerning Camus's final public profession of unbelief, even though Camus was a well-known proponent of atheistic humanism. In this regard, we should be aware of something that Camus writes to himself in his notebooks for March 1951-July 1954:

> Letter from Green. Every time people tell me they admire the man in me, I have the impression of having lied my whole life. (*Carnets III* 81)[694]

Let us also recall that the dying, now repentant, Stepan Verkhovenskii in Dostoyevsky's *The Devils* also says: "[. . .] I have lied all my life" (666).[695]

In reference to Camus's final public statement on faith, there is an even more intriguing statement to be considered, and it comes from one of his own literary texts: *La Chute*. In an unexpected segment, Clamence contends that there are public atheists who are clandestine believers. They refuse to convert openly because--this is Clamence's contention--they lack the courage to defy secularist conformism and ostracism:

> Take our moral philosophers, for instance, so serious, loving their neighbor and all the rest--nothing distinguishes them from Christians, except that they don't preach in churches. What, in your opinion, keeps them from becoming converted? Respect perhaps, respect for men; yes,

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God and in the Resurrection. This is the partial cause of his failure; he is an earlier version of Ivan and like Ivan still has vestiges of morality in him which he struggles against" (46-47).

[694] "*Lettre de Green. Chaque fois qu'on me dit qu'on admire l'homme en moi, j'ai l'impression d'avoir menti toute ma vie*" (my translation).

If Green is Catholic convert Julien Green--as is probably the case--then the identity of the author of the fan letter is especially relevant. As has already been pointed out, Green was present when Camus delivered his talk to the Paris Dominicans in 1946.

[695] "[. . .] я всю жизнь мою лгал" (*PSS* 10: 497; pt. 3, ch. 7, sect. 2).

> human respect. They don't want to start a scandal, so they keep their feelings to themselves. For example, I knew an atheistic novelist who used to pray every night. That didn't stop anything: how he gave it to God in his books! What a dusting off, as someone or other would say. A militant freethinker to whom I spoke of this raised his hands--with no evil intention, I assure you--to heaven: "You're telling me nothing new," that apostle sighed, "they are all like that." (*Fall* 133-34)[696]

When he refers in Clamence's voice to supposedly unbelieving "moral philosophers," is Camus thinking of himself? It is impossible to say for certain, but, in any case, Clamence adds that a committed secularist had told him that eighty percent of French writers fall into the category of the hypocritical novelist who actually believes in God privately while attacking belief in public (*Fall* 134).[697] This remarkable segment of *La Chute* may have disconcerted not a few French intellectuals, and I suggest that it confirms my view that Camus's final public dismissal of faith as the answer to the scandal of evil does not necessarily annul the possibility of Camus's movement in the direction of Catholicism at the end of his life. Regardless of what was actually going on in the depths of Camus's soul right before the car in which he was a passenger spun out

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[696] "*Tenez, nos moralistes, si sérieux, aimant leur prochain et tout, rien ne les sépare, en somme, de l'état de chrétien, si ce n'est qu'ils ne prêchent pas dans les églises. Qu'est-ce qui les empêche, selon vous, de se convertir? Le respect, peut-être, le respect des hommes, oui, le respect humain. Ils ne veulent pas faire scandale, ils gardent leurs sentiments pour eux. J'ai connu ainsi un romancier athée qui priait tous les soirs. Ça n'empêchait rien: qu'est-ce qu'il passait à Dieu dans ses livres! Quelle dérouillée, comme dirait je ne sais plus qui! Un militant libre penseur à qui je m'en ouvris, leva, sans mauvaise intention d'ailleurs, les bras au ciel: «Vous ne m'apprenez rien, soupirait cet apôtre, ils sont tous comme ça»*" (*Théâtre* 1544).

In a preface to an edition of Faulkner, Camus refers to the clandestine believer's fear of ostracism and scandal: "Paradox of our intellectual society, when it claims to be advanced: it excommunicates those who become Christians. [*Paradoxe de notre société intellectuelle, quand elle se prétend avancée: elle excommunie ceux qui deviennent chrétiens*]" (*Théâtre* 1869 [footnote]; my translation).

[697] *Théâtre* 1544.

of control on January 4, 1960, Professor Beaujour, implicitly referring to Camus's abandonment of communism and thoroughgoing absurdism, and to his angry rupture with Sartre and much of the French intellectual world, once made the following observation to this dissertation's author: "He had nowhere else to go." In the words of Marmeladov to Raskol'niko*v* in *Crime and Punishment*: "Every man must needs have somewhere to turn to" (11).[698]

Perhaps Camus found it too hard to return to the Catholic Church, even after having written *La Chute*, because of an androcentric perspective that may have led him, even in middle age, to associate religious commitment with women and the enfeebled, and thus to regard it as something from which a man must fight to keep his distance. In this outlook, a man guts out the rigors of absurdism, looking on faith as something that falls into the categories of weakness and capitulation, and is thus off limits.[699] A tough guy cannot give in to this temptation. Beránková, commenting on Dostoyevsky's presentation of Alesha Karamazov as an anti-absurdist, anti-Camusian exemplar in whom deep faith coexists with masculinity and strength, seems justified in describing Camus's universe with the following schema: "a system of very simple binary oppositions: awareness of the absurd (strength, youth, health, virility) against faith (weakness, old age, sickness, femininity)" (245).[700] This is paradoxical, for Camus enjoyed the company of

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[698] "Ведь надобно же, чтобы всякому человеку хоть куда-нибудь можно было пойти" (*PSS* 6: 14; pt. 1, ch. 2).

[699] In the wonderfully oxymoronic jargon of the United States Navy, these areas are, in this perspective, "secured." When a sailor finds the sign "Secured" at the end of the mess line, it means that the mess line is closed.

[700] "*un système d'oppositions binaires très simples: la conscience de l'absurde (force, jeunesse, santé, virilité) contre la foi (faiblesse, vieillesse, maladie, féminité).*"

Resistance activists Leynaud and Father Bruckberger, both of whom were ardent Catholics, yet sufficiently masculine to meet Camus's criteria. Camus discussed boxing with Leynaud (Todd 326), who gave his life for France during the Resistance, and Camus "relished Bruckberger's maleness" (McCarthy 181). Nonetheless, any man adhering to a schema that links manhood to atheism would obviously find it hard to embrace Catholicism, regardless of the degree of his longing for the faith of his childhood, and in spite of his growing appreciation for the logic and coherence of the Catholic approach to his privileged ethical topics: the evils of murder, suicide, totalitarianism, terrorism, and nuclear devastation.

As we have seen, Camus's failure to come fully to grips with the scandal of evil lies in the realm of philosophy. It is a fundamental failure to confront, fully and consistently, the lacunae of the absurdism that still underlies atheistic humanism. These are the gaps that never cease to overwhelm him as he reacts to the suffering and death of children and all other human beings. As we have also seen, however, by the time of *La Chute*, and even in the late 1940's, Camus may have been experiencing what Beránková conjectures may have been "a profound nostalgia for faith" (20).[701] In the light of everything discussed in this dissertation, it is not out of place to wonder whether nostalgia for faith has something to do with the "secret" that Camus says he will take to his grave:

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Without denying that Alesha's personality combines faith with manhood, I wish to point out, in view of my previous argument for replacing Alesha with Dmitrii as Ivan's debating partner in the tavern scene of *The Brothers Karamazov*, that an even better example of this combination is Dmitrii.

[701] "*une profonde nostalgie de la foi*."

> What I have said, I have said for the good of everyone and of that part of me that belongs to the everyday side. But another part of me knows a secret that is not made for being disclosed--and with which it will be necessary to die. (*Carnets III* 38)[702]

This secret--is it that Camus wanted to have the Catholic Faith again? After all, less than a year before his death, in the April 1959 "Prière d'insérer" ["Insertion"] for *Les Possédés*, he says that his contemporaries resemble Dostoyevsky's characters in *The Devils*. Why? Because those characters are "torn up or dead souls, incapable of loving and suffering from not being able to do so, wanting and not being able to believe" (*Théâtre* 1886).[703] On what grounds can we say that Camus is excluding himself from the category of those modern people who desperately long to believe? Consider, too, the singular apostrophe that occurs near the end of *La Chute*:

> O young woman, throw yourself into the water again so that I may a second time have the chance of saving both of us! (*Fall* 147)[704]

This poignant evocation of Clamence's burning contrition (or potential contrition)--has it ever been equaled, in merely literary terms, even in the pages of the Bible? Earlier, Clamence refers to St. Peter's having betrayed Jesus after the young women in the high priest's courtyard have accused the leader of the Apostles of being one of Jesus's followers: "Peter, you know, the coward, Peter denied him: 'I know not the

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[702] "*Ce que j'ai dit, je l'ai dit pour le bien de tous et de cette part de moi qui est du côté de tous les jours. Mais une autre part de moi connaît un secret qui n'est pas fait pour être révélé--et avec lequel il faudra mourir*" (my translation).

[703] "*des âmes déchirées ou mortes, incapables d'aimer et souffrant de ne pouvoir le faire, voulant et ne pouvant croire*" (my translation).

[704] "*Ô jeune fille, jette-toi encore dans l'eau pour que j'aie une seconde fois la chance de nous sauver tous les deux!* " (*Théâtre* 1551).

man . . . I know not what thou sayest . . . etc.'" (*Fall* 115-16).[705] Anticipating Clamence's words, the disgraced Apostle could have said: "O young woman in the high priest's courtyard, accuse me again of knowing Jesus the Galilean!" If my speculation concerning Camus's possible movement toward the Catholic Church is correct, then Clamence's reference to St. Peter's cowardly denial of Jesus is immensely significant, for that reference can then be read as mirroring Camus's failure to summon the courage necessary to declare publicly his belief in the religion whose truth he surreptitiously acknowledges toward the close of his life. In this hypothesis, the analogue for the peril lurking in the courtyard of Caiaphas during the night of Jesus's arrest would be the hostility of the intellectual world of post-Catholic France. Camus reinforces the reference to the cravenness of St. Peter, the first Pope, by having Clamence tell us that he was elected "Pope" by his fellow internees in a World War II prison camp (*Fall* 124-27).[706]

Clamence's having callously allowed the young woman to risk death in the cold waters of the Seine without even an attempt to save her emblematizes his personal participation in the scandal of evil. As *La Chute* ends, we do not know for certain that Clamence's remorse is strong enough to lead him eventually to full contrition and to re-embracing the Catholic Faith as his own resolution of this scandal. Nor, despite the conjecture that has been presented in this final chapter, can we be certain that Camus himself finally resolved this scandal by intending to return to Catholicism. The only

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[705] "*Pierre, vous savez, le froussard, Pierre, donc, le renie: «Je ne connais pas cet homme . . . Je ne sais pas ce que tu veux dire . . . etc.»* " (*Théâtre* 1534).

For St. Peter's denials to the young women in the high priest's courtyard, see *Mt* 26:69-75. For his triple retraction of the denials on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, see *Jn* 21:15-19.

[706] *Théâtre* 1539-41.

certitude that we can reach is that Camus, like Dostoyevsky, indeed like every other human being, had to fight with evil on all levels, in keeping with the declaration that Dmitrii Karamazov makes to his half brother Alesha in Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*:

> God and the devil are fighting there and the battlefield is the heart of man (97).[707]

[707] "Тут дьявол с богом [sic] борется, а поле битвы--сердца людей" (*PSS* 14: 100; pt. 1, bk. 3, ch. 3).

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# AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

My full name is Stephen Michael Joseph O'Brien, and I was born on May 15, 1946, in the borough of the Bronx in New York City. My parents are William Barrett O'Brien, born in 1924 in the borough of Manhattan in New York City, and Lillian Helen O'Brien (*née* Healy), who was born in 1926 in the Bronx and died in 1993 in Nashville, Tennessee. Like Andrei Prozorov in Anton Chekhov's play *The Three Sisters*, I have three sisters: Eileen Anne O'Brien, Kathleen Mary McKeon, and Elizabeth Edna de Felice. My father, sisters, their husbands, and most of their children live in or near Nashville. I reside on Staten Island in New York City but consider Nashville my second home.

Having been graduated from Hicksville Senior High School in Hicksville, New York, in 1964, I attended St. John's University in Jamaica, New York. I received a baccalaureate degree from St. John's with a major in classical languages and minors in English and philosophy in 1968. I was granted a master's degree in classics from New York University in 1969. In 1973, I received a *certificat de scolarité* from the Alliance Française in Paris for courses in French.

I was employed by the Human Resources Administration of the City of New York from 1971 to 2000. My most challenging assignment with the City was as a social service supervisor providing on-site crisis intervention services to residents of a Staten Island hotel housing homeless families (1984-86). During my civil service career, I had the following short-time employments while on authorized leaves of absence from the City: as a translator for Manufacturers Hanover Trust Company (1978) and as an

interpreter trainee for the United Nations (1983-84). In both cases, the second languages were French and Spanish.

In 1986, I entered the Russian Area Studies Graduate Program at Hunter College of The City University of New York (CUNY), from which I received a master's degree in 1993. The title of my master's degree thesis was "Faces of the Possessed: Portraits of Revolutionaries in Dostoyevsky's *The Devils*." Professor Elizabeth K. Beaujour was the advisor for this thesis. In 1993, I was admitted to the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature at the CUNY Graduate Center, where I specialized in French, Greco-Roman, and Russian literatures.

In 1990, I received a diploma from the Preparatory Faculty of Moscow State University for a summer course in Russian.

After my retirement from civil service, I took three assignments as a Central Texas College civilian instructor in the Navy College Program for Afloat College Education (2001-02). In this capacity, I taught college English, literature, and remedial courses aboard underway ships of the United States Navy: USS *Gunston Hall* (LSD 44), USS *Hawes* (FFG 53), and USS *Ponce* (LPD 15).