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Julia Kristeva

BLACK SUN

DEPRESSION AND MELANCHOLIA

Translated by Leon S. Roudiez

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*Why so downcast, my soul,
why do you sigh within me?*

Psalms 42:5 & 11

*Man's greatness resides in his knowing himself to be
wretched.*

Pascal, *Thoughts*, 165

*That is perhaps what we seek throughout life, that and nothing
more, the greatest possible sorrow so as to become fully
ourselves before dying.*

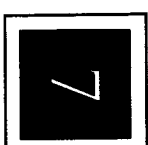
Céline, *Journey to the End of the Night*

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Nerval, the Disinherited Poet

Sublimation is a powerful ally of the Disinherited, provided, however, that he can receive and accept another one's speech. As it happened, the other did not show up at the appointment of him who went to join—without a lyre this time, but alone in the night, under a street lamp—“the sighs of the saint and the screams of the fay.”



*Dostoyevsky,
The Writing of Suffering,
and Forgiveness*



Claude Lorrain, *Arts and Galatea*. Staatliche Kunstsammlungen,
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In Praise of Suffering

The tormented world of Dostoyevsky (1821–1881) is ruled more by epilepsy than by melancholia in the clinical sense of the term.¹ While Hippocrates used the two words interchangeably and Aristotle distinguished them while comparing them, present clinical practice views them as basically separate entities. Nonetheless, one should keep in mind the despondency that precedes or above all follows, in Dostoyevsky's writings, the attack as he himself describes it; one should also take note of the hypostasis of suffering, which, without having any explicit, immediate relation to epilepsy, compels recognition throughout his work as the essential feature of his outlook on humanity.

Oddly enough, Dostoyevsky's insistence on locating the presence of a precocious or at least primordial suffering on the fringe of consciousness brings to mind Freud's thesis concerning a primal "death drive," bearing desires, and "primary masochism" (see chapter 1). Whereas with Melanie Klein projection most frequently precedes introjection, aggression comes before suffering, and the paranoid-schizoid position subtends the depressive position, Freud stresses what one might call a zero degree of psychic

life where noneroticized suffering ("primary masochism," "melancholia") would be the primordial psychic inscription of a break (remembering the leap from inorganic to organic matter; affect of the separation between body and ecosystem, child and mother, etc.; but also death-bearing effect of a permanent, tyrannical superego).

Dostoyevsky seems very close to such an insight. He views suffering as a precocious, primary affect, reacting to a definite but somehow preobject traumatism, to which one cannot assign an agent distinct from the subject and thus liable to attract energies, psychic inscriptions, representations, or outward actions. As if under the impact of an equally precocious superego that recalls the melancholy superego seen by Freud as a "cultivation of death drive," the drives of Dostoyevsky's heroes turn back on their own space. Instead of changing into erotic drives, they are inscribed as a suffering mood. Neither inside nor outside, in between, on the threshold of the self/other separation and before the latter is even possible, that is where Dostoyevsky's brand of suffering is set up.

Biographers point out that Dostoyevsky preferred the company of those who were prone to sorrow. He cultivated it in himself and exalted it in both his texts and his correspondence. Let me quote from a letter to Maikov, dated May 27, 1869, written in Florence: "The main thing is sadness, but if one talks about it or explains it more, so much more would have to be said. Just the same, sorrow is such that if I were alone, I should perhaps have become ill with grief. . . . At any rate sadness is dreadful, and worse yet in Europe, I look at everything here as an animal might. No matter what, I have decided to return to Petersburg next spring. . . ."

Epileptic fits and writing are in the same way the high points of a paroxysmal sadness that reverses into a mystical jubilation outside time. Thus, in the *Notebooks of the*

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Possessed (the novel was published in 1873): "Attack at six in the morning (the day and almost the hour of Troppmann's torture). I did not hear it, woke up at eight with the consciousness of an attack. My head hurt, my body was exhausted. Generally, the repercussions of the attack, that is, nervousness, shortening of the memory, now persist longer than in preceding years. Before, it was over in three days, and now it was not over in six. Evenings especially, by candlelight, a *hypocondriac sadness without object, and a shade of red, blood-red* (not a color) covered everything. . . ."2 Or, "nervous laughter and mystical sadness,"3 he repeats in implicit reference to the medieval monks' *acedia*. Or still, "*How can one write? One must suffer, suffer a lot. . . .*"

Suffering, here, seems to be an "excess," a power, a sensual pleasure. The "black spot" of Nerval's melancholia has given way to a torrent of passion, a hysterical affect if you wish, whose fluid overflow carries away the placid signs and soothed compositions of "monological" literature. It endows Dostoyevsky's text with a breathtaking polyphony and imposes as ultimate truth of his characters a rebellious flesh that delights in not submitting to the Word. A sensual pleasure in suffering that has "no coldness and no disenchantment, nothing of what was made fashionable by Byron," but has an "inordinate, insatiable thirst for sensual delights," an "inextinguishable thirst for life," including "delight in theft, in crime, sensual delight in suicide."<4 Such an exaltation of moods, which can revert from suffering to immeasurable jubilation, is admirably described by Kirillov for the moments that precede suicide or an attack:

There are seconds—they come five or six at a time—when you suddenly feel the presence of the eternal harmony perfectly attained. It's something not earthly

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—I don't mean in the sense that it's heavenly—but in that sense that man cannot endure it in his earthly aspect. He must be physically changed or die. The feeling is clear and unmistakable; . . . it's not being deeply moved. . . . It's not that you love—oh, there's something in it higher than love—what's most awful is that it's terribly clear and such joy. If it lasted more than five seconds, the soul could not endure it and must perish. . . . To endure ten seconds one must be physically changed. . . .

—Don't you have fits, perhaps?

—No.

—Well, you will. Be careful, Kirillov. I've heard that's just how [epileptic] fits begin.

And concerning the slow duration of this state:

Remember Mahomet's pitcher from which not a drop of water was spilt while he circled Paradise on his horse. That was a case of five seconds too; that's too much like your eternal harmony, and Mahomet was an epileptic. Be careful, it's epilepsy!⁵

Irreducible to feelings, the affect in its twofold aspect of energy flow *and* psychic inscription—lucid, clear, harmonious, even though outside language—is translated here with an extraordinary faithfulness. The affect does not go through language, and when referring to it language is not bound to it as it is to an idea. The verbalization of affects (unconscious or not) does not use the same economy as the verbalization of ideas (unconscious or not). One may suppose that the verbalization of unconscious affects does not make them conscious (the subject knows no more than before wherefrom and how joy or sadness emerges and modifies neither one), but causes them to work differ-

ently. On the one hand, affects *redistribute the order of language* and give birth to a style. On the other, they *display* the unconscious through characters and actions that represent the most forbidden and transgressive drive motions. Literature, like hysteria, which Freud saw as a "distorted work of art," is a *staging* of affects both on the intersubjective level (characters) and on the intralinguistic level (style).

It is probably because of such an intimacy with affect that Dostoyevsky was led to a vision according to which man's humanity lies less in the quest for pleasure or profit (an idea that subtends even Freudian psychoanalysis in spite of the prominence finally granted a "beyond the pleasure principle") than in a longing for voluptuous suffering. Such suffering differs from animosity or rage, it is less objectal, more withdrawn into its own person, and beyond it there would be only the loss of self within the darkness of the body. It is an inhibited death drive, a sadism hampered by a guarding consciousness, turned back on a self that is henceforth painful and inactive. "Again, in consequence of those accursed laws of consciousness, my spite is subject to chemical disintegration. You look into it, the object flies off into air, your reasons evaporate, the criminal is not to be found, the insult becomes fare rather than an insult, something like the toothache, for which no one is to blame. . . ." ⁶ Finally, there is a plea in favor of suffering that is worthy of the medieval *acedia* or even of Job: "And why are you so firmly, so triumphantly convinced that only the normal and the positive—in short, only prosperity—is to the advantage of man? Is not reason mistaken about advantage? After all, perhaps man likes something besides prosperity? Perhaps he likes suffering just as much? Perhaps suffering is just as great an advantage to him as prosperity? Man is sometimes fearfully,

passionately in love with suffering and that is a fact." Quite typical of Dostoyevsky is the definition of suffering as asserted freedom, as *caprice*:

After all, I do not really insist on suffering or on prosperity either. I insist on my caprice, and its being guaranteed to me when necessary. Suffering would be out of place in vaudevilles, for instance; I know that. In the crystal palace it is even unthinkable; suffering means doubt, means negation. . . . Why, after all, suffering is the sole origin of consciousness. . . . consciousness, in my opinion, is the greatest misfortune for man, yet I know man loves it and would not give it up for any satisfaction.⁷

The transgressor, that Dostoyevskian "overman" who searches for his identity through an apologia for crime with Raskolnikov, for instance, is not a nihilist but a man of values.⁸ His suffering is the proof of that, and it results from a permanent quest for meaning. He who is conscious of his transgressive act is by the same token punished, for he suffers on account of it—"he will suffer for his mistake. That will be his punishment—as well as the prison";⁹ "Pain and suffering are always inevitable for a large intelligence and a deep heart. The really great men must, I think, have great sadness on earth. . . ." ¹⁰ Thus, after Nikolay confesses to having committed a crime although he is innocent, Porfiry thinks he can detect in that zealous self-accusation the old Russian mystical tradition that glorifies suffering as a sign of one's humanity: "Do you know . . . the force of the word 'suffering' among some of these people! It's not a question of suffering for someone's benefit, but simply, 'one must suffer.' If they suffer at the hands of the authorities, so much the better."¹¹ "Suffer! Maybe Nikolay is right in wanting to suffer."¹²

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Suffering would be an act of consciousness; consciousness (for Dostoyevsky) says: suffer.

Conscious implies suffering, but I do not wish to suffer, since why should I consent to suffering? Nature, through the medium of my consciousness, proclaims to me some sort of harmony of the whole. Human consciousness has produced religions out of this message. . . . abase myself, accept suffering because of the harmony of the whole, and consent to live. . . . And why should I bother about its preservation after I no longer exist—that is the question. It would have been better to be created like all animals—*i.e.*, living but not conceiving myself rationally. But my consciousness is not harmony, but, on the contrary, precisely disharmony, because with it I am unhappy. Look: who is happy in the world and what kind of people *consent* to live?—Precisely those who are akin to animals and come nearest to their species by reason of their limited development and consciousness.¹³

In such a view, nihilistic suicide would itself be a fulfillment of man's condition—of man endowed with consciousness but . . . deprived of forgiving love, of ideal meaning, of God.

A Suffering That Precedes Hatred

Let us not too hastily interpret those remarks as an acknowledgment of pathological masochism. Is it not by *signifying* hatred, the destruction of the other, and perhaps above all his own execution, that the human being survives as a symbolic animal? An inordinate but checked violence opens onto the execution of the self by itself in order that the subject be born. From a diachronic stand-

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point, we are there at the lower threshold of subjectivity, before an *other* stands out who might be the *object* of a hateful or loving attack. Now, this same checking of hatred also allows for the mastery of signs: I do not attack you, I *speak* (or write) *my* fear or *my* pain. My suffering is the lining of my speech, of my civilization. One can imagine the masochistic risks of that civility. As far as writers are concerned, they can extract jubilation out of it through the manipulation they are able, on that basis, to inflict upon signs and things.

Suffering and its solitary obverse, jouissance or "voluptuousness," in Dostoyevsky's sense, are essential as the ultimate indication of a break that immediately precedes the subject's and the Other's becoming autonomous (chronologically and logically). It can involve an internal or external bioenergetic break or a symbolic one caused by an abandonment, a punishment, a banishment. One cannot overemphasize the harshness of Dostoyevsky's father who was held in contempt by his muzhiks and perhaps even killed by them (according to some biographers, now disproved). Suffering is the first or the last attempt on the part of the subject to assert his "own and proper" at the closest point to threatened biological unit and to narcissism put to the test. Consequently this humoral exaggeration, this pretentious swelling of one's "own and proper" states an essential given of the psyche in the process of being set up or collapsing under the sway of an already dominant Other, although still unrecognized in its powerful otherness, under the gaze of the ego ideal riveted to the ideal ego.

Erotization of suffering seems to be secondary. Indeed, it shows up only by becoming integrated into the flow of a sadomasochistic aggressiveness turned against the other who tinges it with voluptuousness and caprice; the whole can then be rationalized as a metaphysical experience of

freedom or transgression. Nevertheless, at a logically and chronologically earlier stage, suffering appears as the ultimate threshold, the primary affect, of distinction or separation. In this perspective one needs to consider recent remarks according to which the feeling of harmony or joy caused by the coming of an epileptic fit would be only an aftereffect of the imagination, which, following the fit, attempts to appropriate in positive fashion the blank, disruptive moment of that suffering caused by discontinuity (violent energy discharge, break in symbolic order during the fit). Dostoyevsky would thus have misled doctors who, in his wake, thought they noticed, with epileptics, euphoric periods preceding the fit, whereas the moment of rupture would actually be marked only by the painful experience of loss and of suffering, and this according to the secret experience of Dostoyevsky himself.¹⁴

One might argue that, within *masochistic economy*, the psychic experience of discontinuity is experienced as trauma or loss. The subject represses or repudiates the paranoid-schizoid violence that, from this standpoint, would be subsequent to the painful psychic inscription of discontinuity. It then logically or chronologically regresses to the level where separations as well as bonds (subject/object, affect/meaning) are threatened. In *melancholy* persons this stage is revealed by the dominance of mood over the very possibility of verbalization, before an eventual affective paralysis.

One might, however, consider the *epileptic symptom* as another variation on the subject's withdrawal when, threatened with a lapse into the paranoid-schizoid position, it effects by means of motor discharge a silent acting out of the "death drive" (break in neural transmissibility, interruption of symbolic bonds, preventing the homeostasis of the living structure).

From this standpoint, *melancholia* as a mood-breaking

symbolic continuity but also *epilepsy* as motor discharge represent, on the subject's part, dodges with respect to the erotic relation with the other and particularly the paranoid-schizoid potentialities of desire. On the other hand, one can interpret idealization and sublimation as attempts to elude the same confrontation while signifying regression and its sadomasochistic ambivalences. In this sense *forgiveness*, coextensive with sublimation, diserotizes beyond Eros. The Eros/Forgiveness pair is substituted for Eros/Thanatos, so that the potential melancholia is not frozen as an affective withdrawal from the world but *inverses the representation* of aggressive and threatening bonds with the other. Within representation, to the extent that it is shored up by the ideal and sublimational economy of forgiveness, the subject is able not to act but to shape—*poien*—its death drive as well as its erotic bonds.

Dostoyevsky and Job

The suffering being, with Dostoyevsky, reminds one of Job's paradoxical experience, which had, moreover, made such a deep impression on the writer: "I am reading the Book of Job and it gives me a curiously painful delight: I stop reading and I walk about my room for an hour, almost weeping. . . . It is strange, Anya, but that book was one of the first to impress me in my life—I was almost an infant then."¹⁵ Job, a prosperous man, faithful to Yahweh, was suddenly stricken—by Yahweh or by Satan?—with various misfortunes. . . . But this "depressed" person, the object of mockery ("If one should address a word to you, will you endure it?" Job 4:2), is sad, when all is said and done, only because he values God. Even if that God is ruthless, unjust with the faithful, generous with the ungodly, that does not induce Job to

break his divine contract. On the contrary, he lives constantly under the eyes of God and constitutes a striking acknowledgment of the depressed person's dependency on his superego blended with the ideal ego: "What is man that you (God) should make so much of him?" (7:17); "Turn your eyes away, leave me a little joy" (10:20). And yet Job does not recognize God's true power ("Were he to pass me, I should not see him"; Job 9:11), and God himself will have to sum up before his depressed creature the whole of Creation, to assert his position as Lawmaker or superego susceptible of idealization, in order for Job to feel hopeful again. Would suffering persons be narcissistic, overtly interested in themselves, attached to their own value, and ready to take themselves for an immanence of transcendence? After having punished him, however, Yahweh finally rewards him and places him above those who disparaged him. "I burn with anger against you . . . for not speaking truthfully about me as my servant Job has done" (42:8).

Likewise, with Dostoyevsky the Christian, suffering—a major evidence of humanity—is the sign of man's dependency on a divine Law, as well as of his irremediable difference in relation to that Law. The coincidence of bond and lapse, of faithfulness and transgression are to be found again on the very ethical plane where Dostoyevsky's character is an idiot through holiness, an enlightener through criminality.

Such a logic postulating interdependence of law and transgression cannot be extraneous to the epileptic fit being triggered by what is very often a strong contradiction between love and hatred, desire for the other and rejection of the other. One might wonder, on the other hand, whether or not the well-known *ambivalence* of Dostoyevsky's heroes, which led Bakhtin to postulate a "dialogism"

at the foundation of his poetics,¹⁶ was an attempt to *repress*, through the ordering of discourses and the conflicts between characters, the opposition, without a synthetic solution, of the two forces (positive and negative) specific to drive and desire.

Nevertheless, if the symbolic bond were broken, Job would turn into Kirillov, a suicidal terrorist. Merezhkovsky is not completely wrong to see in Dostoyevsky the precursor of the Russian revolution.¹⁷ Certainly he dreads it, he rejects and denounces it, but it is he who experiences its underhanded advent in the soul of his suffering man, ready to betray Job's humility in favor of the manic excitement of the revolutionary who thinks he is God (such, according to Dostoyevsky, is the socialist faith of atheists). The depressed person's narcissism becomes inverted in the mania of atheistic terrorism: Kirillov is the man without God who has taken God's place. Suffering ceases so that death might assert itself; was suffering a dam against suicide and against death?

Suicide and Terrorism

One will recall at least two solutions, both fatal, to suffering in Dostoyevsky—the ultimate veil of chaos and destruction.

Kirillov is convinced that God does not exist but, in abiding by divine authority, he wants to raise human freedom to the level of the absolute through the utterly free, negating act that suicide constitutes for him. *God does not exist—I am God—I do not exist—I commit suicide—* such would be the paradoxical logic of the negation of an absolute paternity or divinity, which is nevertheless maintained so that I might take hold of it.

Raskolnikov, on the other hand, and as if in a manic

defense against despair, redirects his hatred not on himself but on another disavowed, denigrated person. Through his gratuitous crime, which involves killing an insignificant woman, he breaks the Christian contract (“You must love your neighbor as yourself”). He disavows his love for the primal object (“Since I do not love my mother my neighbor is insignificant, and this allows me to suppress him without bother,” is what he seems to say) and, on the basis of such implicitness he takes it upon himself to actualize his hatred against a family circle and a society experienced as persecuting.

We know that the metaphysical meaning of such behavior is the nihilistic negation of the supreme value, which also reveals an inability to symbolize, think, and assume suffering. With Dostoyevsky, nihilism arouses the believer's revolt against transcendental erasing. The psychoanalyst will take note of the ambiguous, to say the least, fascination of the writer with certain manic defenses set up against suffering, and with the exquisite depression he otherwise nurtures as well, as necessary and antinomical linings of his writing. Such defenses are contemptible, as the relinquishment of morality, the loss of the meaning of life, terrorism, or torture, so frequent in current events, do not cease reminding us. As far as the writer is concerned, he has chosen to support religious orthodoxy. Such “obscurantism,” so violently denounced by Freud, is, all thing considered, less harmful to civilization than terrorist nihilism. With and beyond ideology, writing remains—a painful, continuing struggle to compose a work edge to edge with the unnameable sensuous delights of destruction and chaos.

Are religion or mania, daughter of paranoia, the only counterbalances to despair? Artistic creation integrates and expands them. Works of art thus lead us to establish rela-

tions with ourselves and others that are less destructive, more soothing.

A Death Without Resurrection: Apocalyptic Time

In front of Holbein's "Dead Christ" Myshkin and Ippolit as well, in *The Idiot* (1869), have doubts as to the Resurrection. This body's death, so natural, so implacable, seems to leave no room for redemption: "[Christ's] swollen face is covered with bloody wounds, and it is so terrible to behold" Anna Grigorievna Dostoyevskaya wrote in her reminiscences.

The painting had a crushing impact on Fyodor Mikhailovich. He stood there as if stunned. And I did not have the strength to look at it—it was too painful for me, particularly in my sickly condition—and I went into other rooms. When I came back after fifteen or twenty minutes, I found him still riveted to the same spot in front of the painting. His agitated face had a kind of dread in it, something I had noticed more than once during the first moments of an epileptic seizure.

Quietly I took my husband by the arm, led him to another room and sat him down on a bench, expecting the attack from one minute to the next. Luckily this did not happen. He calmed down little by little and left the museum, but insisted on returning once again to view this painting which had struck him so powerfully.¹⁸

A sense of time abolished weighs on that picture, the inescapable prospect of death erasing all commitment to a project, continuity, or resurrection. This is an apocalyptic time that Dostoyevsky is familiar with: he evokes it before the mortal remains of his first wife Marya Dmitriyevna ("There should be time no longer"), referring to the Book

of Revelation (10:6), and Prince Myshkin speaks of it in the same terms to Rogozhin ("At this moment I feel that I understand those peculiar words, *There should be time no longer*"), but, like Kirillov, he contemplates, Mohammad-like, a happy version of that temporal suspension. With Dostoyevsky, to suspend time means to suspend faith in Christ: "Everything thus depends on this: does one accept Christ as the definitive ideal on earth? This amounts to saying that everything depends on one's faith in Christ. If one believes in Christ one also believes in life eternal."¹⁹ And yet what forgiveness can there be, what salvation in the face of the irremediable void of the lifeless flesh, the absolute solitude of Holbein's picture? The writer is disturbed, as he was before the corpse of his first wife in 1864.

What Is Tact?

The meaning of melancholia? Merely an abyssal suffering that does not succeed in signifying itself and, having lost meaning, loses life. That meaning is the weird affect that the analyst will be looking for with utmost empathy, beyond the motor and verbal retardation of the depressed, in the tone of their voice or else in cutting up their devitalized, vulgarized words—words from which any appeal to the other has disappeared—precisely attempting to get in touch with the other through syllables, fragments, and their reconstruction (see chapter 2). Such an analytic hearing implies *tact*.

What is tact? To hear true, along with forgiveness. *Forgiveness*: giving in addition, banking on what is there in order to revive, to give the depressed patient (that stranger withdrawn into his wound) a new start, and give him the possibility of a new encounter. The solemnity of

that forgiveness is best displayed in the conception Dostoyevsky elaborates in connection with the meaning of melancholia: between suffering and acting out, aesthetic activity constitutes forgiveness. This is where one notices the imprint of Dostoyevsky's orthodox Christianity, which thoroughly imbues his work. This is also where—more so than at the place of his imaginary complicity with the criminal—the feeling of discomfort aroused by his texts builds up in the contemporary reader who is caught up in nihilism.

Indeed, any modern imprecation against Christianity—up to and including Nietzsche's—is an imprecation against forgiveness. Such "forgiveness," however, understood as connivance with degradation, moral softening, and refusal of power is perhaps only the image one has of decadent Christianity. On the other hand, the *solemnity* of forgiveness—as it functions in theological tradition and as it is rehabilitated in aesthetic experience, which identifies with abjection in order to traverse it, name it, expend it—is inherent in the economy of psychic rebirth. At any rate, that is how it appears under the benevolent impact of analytic practice. In that locale, the "perversion of Christianity" that Nietzsche denounced in Pascal²⁰ but that is also forcefully displayed in the ambivalence of aesthetic forgiveness with Dostoyevsky is a powerful fight against paranoia, which is hostile to forgiveness. An example of this is the path followed by Raskolnikov, who went through melancholia, terrorist negation, and finally gratitude, which proved to be a rebirth.

Death: An Inability to Forgive

The notion of forgiveness fully occupies Dostoyevsky's work.

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In *The Insulted and Humiliated* (1861) we meet, in the very first pages, a living corpse. This body, resembling that of a dead man but actually on the threshold of death, haunts Dostoyevsky's imagination. When he saw Holbein's picture in Basel in 1867, his feeling was doubtless that of having met an old acquaintance, an intimate ghost:

Another thing that amazed me was his extraordinary emaciation: he had hardly any flesh left, it seemed there was nothing but skin stretched over his bones. His large, but lustreless eyes, set as they were in blue circles, always stared straight before him, never swerving, and never seeing anything—of that I feel certain. . . . What is he thinking about? I went on wondering. What goes on in his mind? And does he still think of anything at all? His face is so dead that it no longer expresses anything.²¹

That was a description not of Holbein's painting but of an enigmatic character who appears in *The Insulted and Humiliated*. He is an old man named Smith, the grandfather of Nelly, the little epileptic, the father of a "romantic and unreasonable" daughter whom he never forgave her relationship with Prince P. A. Valkovsky, a relationship that was to wipe out Smith's fortune, destroy the young woman and Nelly herself, the prince's illegitimate child.

Smith displays the rigid, death-bearing dignity of one who does not forgive. In the novel, he is the first in a series of deeply humiliated and insulted characters who cannot forgive and, at the hour of death, curse their tyrant with an impassioned intensity that leads one to suspect that at the very threshold of death it is the persecutor who is desired. Such was the case with Smith's daughter and with Nelly herself.

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That series contrasts with another—the narrator's, a writer like Dostoyevsky, and the Ikhmenev family who, in circumstances similar to those of the Smith family, are humiliated and insulted but end up forgiving not the cynic but the young victim. (I shall return to that difference when emphasizing the crime's stature of limitations, which does not erase it but allows the forgiven person to "start a new life.")

Allow me to stress, for the time being, the impossibility of forgiving. Smith forgives neither his daughter nor Valkovsky; Nelly forgives her mother but not Valkovsky; the mother forgives neither Valkovsky nor her own embittered father. As in a dance of death, humiliation without forgiveness calls the tune and leads the "selfishness of suffering" to sentence everyone to death within and through the narrative. A hidden message seems to emerge: he who does not forgive is condemned to death. The body deemed by old age, disease, and solitude, all the physical signs of inescapable death, illness, and sadness itself would in that sense point to an inability to forgive. Consequently, the reader infers that the "Dead Christ" himself would be a Christ viewed as one to whom forgiveness is unknown. In order to be so "truly dead," such a Christ could not have been forgiven and will not forgive. On the contrary, the Resurrection appears as the supreme expression of forgiveness: by bringing his Son back to life the Father becomes reconciled with Him but, even more so, in coming back to life Christ indicates to the faithful that He is not leaving them. "I come to you," he seems to say, "understand that I forgive you."

Unbelievable, uncertain, miraculous, and yet so basic to Christian faith as well as to Dostoyevsky's aesthetics and morals, forgiveness is almost madness in *The Idiot*, a *deus ex machina* in *Crime and Punishment*.

Indeed, apart from his convulsive fits, Prince Myshkin is an "idiot" only because he holds no grudges. Made ridiculous, insulted, jeered at, even threatened with death by Rogozhin, the prince forgives. Mercy finds in him its literal psychological fulfillment: having suffered too much, he takes upon himself the miseries of others. As if he had had an inkling of the suffering that underlies aggressions, he ignores them, withdraws, and even gives solace. The scenes of arbitrary violence he is subjected to and that Dostoyevsky evokes with tragic and grotesque power cause him pain, to be sure. Let us remember his compassion for the Swiss peasant girl, who was held in contempt in her village following a sexual transgression and whom he taught the children to love; or the childish and lovingly edgy mocking on Aglaya's part, which does not fool him in spite of his absentminded, goodnatured appearance; or Nastasya Filippovna's hysterical aggressions against this fallen prince, who she knows is the only one to have understood her; or even Rogozhin lunging at him with a knife on the dark stairs of that hotel where Proust saw Dostoyevsky's genius displayed as fashioner of new spaces. The prince is shocked by such violence, evil causes him pain, horror is far from being forgotten or neutralized within him, but he takes a hold on himself, and his benevolent uneasiness shows how fine "the essential part of [his] mind" is, as Aglaya put it: "For although you really are ill mentally (you will not, of course, be angry with me for saying this, for I don't mean it at all derogatively), yet the most essential part of your mind is much better than in any of them. Indeed, it's something they never dreamed of. For there are two sorts of mind—one that is essential and one that isn't. Isn't that so?"²² That sort of mind leads him to soothe his aggressor and to harmonize the group of which he consequently appears to be not a minor ele-

ment, a "stranger," an "outcast,"²³ but a spiritual leader, discreet and unmasterable.

The Object of Forgiveness

What is the object of forgiveness? Insults, of course, any moral and physical wound, and, eventually, death. Sexual lapse is at the heart of *The Insulted and Humiliated* and it goes with many of Dostoyevsky's feminine characters (Nastasya Filippovna, Grushenka, Natasha), and it is also signaled in masculine perversions (Stavrogin's rape of minors, for instance) in order to represent one of the principal grounds for forgiveness. Absolute evil, however, is still death, and whatever the delights of suffering or the reasons that lead his hero to the limits of suicide and murder, Dostoyevsky implacably condemns murder, that is, the death that the human being is capable of inflicting. He does not seem to distinguish the senseless murder from murder as moral punishment imposed by men's justice. If he were to set up a distinction between them, he would favor torture and pain, which, through eroticization, seem to "cultivate" and thus humanize murder and violence in the eyes of the artist.²⁴ He does not, on the other hand, forgive cold, irrevocable death, the very "clean" death inflicted by the guillotine: there is "no greater agony." "Who says that human nature is capable of bearing this without madness?"²⁵ Indeed, for one condemned to the guillotine, forgiveness is impossible. "The face of a condemned man a minute before the fall of the guillotine blade, when he is still standing on the scaffold and before he lies down on the plank"²⁶ reminds Prince Myshkin of the picture he had seen at Basel. "It was of agony like this and of such horror that Christ spoke."²⁷

Dostoyevsky, who was himself sentenced to death, was

pardoned. Did forgiveness, in his vision of the beautiful and the just, draw its importance from such a tragedy, resolved at the last moment? It is possible that forgiveness, coming as it did after an already imagined death, a lived death if one may say so, and which necessarily kindled a sensitivity as excitable as Dostoyevsky's, might actually put death *in abeyance*: erasing it and reconciling the condemned man with the condemning power? A great surge of reconciliation with the deserting power, which has again become a desirable ideal, is doubtless necessary for the life given again to continue and for contact with newly found others to be established.²⁸ Below this surge, however, there remains the often unquenched melancholy anguish of the subject who has already died once, even though miraculously resurrected. . . . The writer's imagination is then beset with an alternation between the unsurpassability of suffering and the flash of forgiveness, and their eternal return articulates the whole of his work.

Dostoyevsky's dramatic imagination, his tormented characters, particularly suggest the difficulty, even the impossibility of such forgiveness/love. The most compact statement of the turmoil triggered by the necessity and the impossibility of forgiveness/love may perhaps be found in the writer's notes jotted down on the death of his first wife, Marya Dmitriyevna: "To love man *as oneself* according to Christ's instruction, that is impossible. Is one bound by the law of the individual on earth? The *Self* prevents it."²⁹

The illusoriness of forgiveness and resurrection, imperative as they nevertheless are for the writer, explodes in *Crime and Punishment* (1866).

From Sorrow to Crime

Raskolnikov described himself as a sad person: "Listen, Razumihin . . . I gave them all my money . . . I am so sad, so sad . . . like a woman."³⁰ And his own mother senses his melancholia: "Do you know, Dounia, I was looking at you two. You are the very portrait of him, and not so much in face as in soul. You [Raskolnikov and his sister Dounia] are both melancholy, both morose and hot-tempered, both haughty and both generous" (p. 236).

How does such sadness become inverted into crime? Here Dostoyevsky probes an essential aspect of depressive dynamics—the seesawing between self and other, the projection on the self of the hatred against the other and, vice versa, the turning against the other of self-depreciation. What comes first, hatred or depreciation? Dostoyevsky's praise of suffering suggests, as we have seen, that he gives greater place to self-depreciation, self-humiliation, or even a sort of masochism under the stern gaze of a precocious and tyrannical superego. From that standpoint, crime is a defense reaction against depression: murdering the other protects against suicide. Raskolnikov's "theory" and criminal act demonstrate that logic perfectly. The gloomy student who allows himself to go on living like a bum constructs, as one will recall, a "division of people into ordinary and extraordinary": the first serve only to procreate and the second "have the gift or the talent to utter a *new word*." In "the second category all transgress the law; they are destroyers or disposed to destruction according to their capacities" (pp. 255–56). Does he himself belong in that second category? Such is the fateful question the melancholy student will try to answer by *daring* or *not* to take action.

The murderous act takes the depressive out of passivity and dependency by confronting him with the only desirable object, which, for him, is the prohibition embodied by the law and the master. To act like Napoleon, "the real *Master* to whom all is permitted" (pp. 268–69; trans. modified). The correlative of the tyrannical and desirable law that is to be challenged is but an insignificant thing, a louse. Who is the louse? It is the murderer's victim, or the melancholy student himself, temporarily glorified as murderer, but who knows he is basically worthless and abominable? The confusion persists, and Dostoyevsky thus brilliantly brings to the fore the identification of the depressed with the hated object: "The old woman was a mistake perhaps. . . . I was in a hurry to overstep. . . . I didn't kill a human being, but a principle" (p. 269). "There is only one thing, one thing needful: one has only to dare! . . . to go straight for it and send it flying to the devil! I . . . I wanted to *have the daring* . . . and I killed her. . . . I went into it like a wise man, and that was just my destruction . . . or that if I asked myself whether a human being is a louse it proved that it wasn't so *for me*, though it might be for a man who would go straight to his goal without asking questions. . . . I wanted to murder without casuistry, *to murder for my own sake, for myself alone!* . . . I wanted to find out then and quickly whether I was a louse like everybody else or a man. Whether I can step over barriers or not. . . ." (pp. 405–6). And finally, "I murdered myself, not her" (p. 407). "And what shows that I am utterly a louse . . . is that I am perhaps viler and more loathsome than the louse I killed" (p. 270). His friend Sonia reaches the same conclusion: "What have you done—what have you done to yourself?" (p. 399).

Mother and Sister: Mother or Sister

Between the two reversible focuses of depreciation and hatred, the self and other, taking action asserts not a subject but a paranoid position that repudiates suffering at the same time as the law. Dostoyevsky considers two antidotes for that catastrophic motion: recourse to suffering, and forgiveness. The two movements take place at the same time and, perhaps thanks to an underground, dark revelation, difficult to grasp in the tangle of Dostoyevsky's narrative, are nevertheless perceived with sleepwalking lucidity by the artist . . . and the reader.

The tracks of that "illness," that insignificant thing or "louse," converge on the despondent student's mother and sister. Loved and hated, attractive and repulsive, these women meet the murderer at the crucial moments of his actions and reflections, and, like two lightning rods, draw to themselves his ambiguous passion, unless they be its origin. Thus: "Both rushed to him. But he stood like one dead; a sudden intolerable sensation struck him like a thunderbolt. He did not lift his arms to embrace them, he could not. His mother and sister clasped him in their arms, kissed him, laughed and cried. He took a step, tottered and fell to the ground, fainting" (p. 191). "Mother, sister—how I loved them! Why do I did hate them now? Yes, I hate them, I feel a physical hatred for them, I can't bear them near me. . . . H'm. She [his mother] must be the same as I am. . . . Ah, how I hate the old woman now! I feel I should kill her again if she came to life!" (p. 270). In those last words, which he utters in his frenzy, Raskolnikov indeed reveals the confusion between his debased self, his mother, the old murdered woman . . . Why such a confusion?

The Svidrigailov-Dounia episode throws a little light on the mystery. The "debauched" man who recognizes Raskolnikov as the old woman's murderer desires his sister Dounia. The gloomy Raskolnikov is again ready to kill, but this time in order to defend his sister. To kill, to transgress, in order to protect his unshared secret, his impossible incestuous love? He almost knows it: "Oh, if only I were alone and no one loved me and I too had never loved anyone! *Nothing of all this would have happened!*" (p. 504).

The Third Way

Forgiveness appears as the only solution, the third way between dejection and murder. It arises in the wake of erotic enlightenment and appears not as an idealizing movement repressing sexual passion, but as its working through. The angel of the paradise reached after the apocalypse is called Sonia, a prostitute out of compassion to be sure and concern for her unfortunate family, but a prostitute just the same. When she follows Raskolnikov to Siberia in a burst of humility and abnegation, the prisoners call her "our dear, good little mother" (p. 528). Reconciliation with a loving mother, though she might be unfaithful or even a prostitute, beyond and in spite of her "lapses," thus appears as a condition for reconciliation with one's self. The "self" finally becomes acceptable because henceforth placed outside the tyrannical jurisdiction of the master. The forgiven and forgiving mother becomes an ideal sister and replaces . . . Napoleon. The humiliated, warring hero can then calm down. We have reached the pastoral scene at the end; a clear, mild day, a land flooded with sunlight, time has stopped. "There time itself seemed to stand still, as though the age of Abraham and his flocks

had not passed" (p. 530). And even if seven years of penal servitude remain, suffering is henceforth linked to happiness. "But [Raskolnikov] had risen again and he knew it and felt in all his being, while [Sonia]—she only lived in his life" (p. 531).

Such an outcome could seem contrived only if one ignored the fundamental importance of idealization in the sublimational activity of writing. Through Raskolnikov and other interposed devils, does the writer not relate his own unbearable dramatic scheme? Imagination is that strange place where the subject ventures its identity, loses itself down to the threshold of evil, crime, or asymbolia in order to work through them and to bear witness . . . from elsewhere. A divided space, it is maintained only if solidly fastened to the ideal, which authorizes destructive violence to be *spoken* instead of being *done*. That is sublimation, and it needs *for-giving*.

The Timelessness of Forgiving

Forgiveness is ahistorical. It breaks the concatenation of causes and effects, crimes and punishment, it stays the time of actions. A strange space opens up in a timelessness that is not one of the primitive unconscious, desiring and murderous, but its counterpart—its sublimation with full knowledge of the facts, a loving harmony that is aware of its violences but accommodates them, elsewhere. Confronted with that stay of time and actions within the timelessness of forgiving, we understand those who believe that God alone can forgive.³¹ In Christianity, however, the stay, divine to be sure, of crimes and punishment is *first* the work of men.³²

Let me emphasize this timelessness of forgiving. It does not suggest the Golden Age of ancient mythologies. When

Dostoyevsky considers that Golden Age, his musing is introduced by Stavrogin (*The Possessed*), by Versilov (*A Raw Youth*), and in "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" (*The Diary of a Writer*, 1877) his presentation is done through the medium of Claude Lorrain's *Acis and Galatea*.

In a true counterpoint to Holbein's "Dead Christ" the representation of the idyll between the river-god Acis and the sea-nymph Galatea, under the wrathful but, for the time being, subdued gaze of Polyphemus who was then her lover, depicts the Golden Age of incest, the preoedipal narcissistic paradise. The Golden Age is outside time because it avoids the desire to put the father to death by basking in the fantasies of the son's almightiness within a "narcissistic Arcadia."³³ This is how Stavrogin experiences it:

In the Dresden gallery there is a painting by Claude Lorrain, called in the catalogue *Acis and Galatea*, if I am not mistaken, but which I always called *The Golden Age*, I don't know why. . . . It was this picture that appeared to me in a dream, yet not as a picture but as though it were an actual scene. . . . As in the picture, I saw a corner of the Greek archipelago the way it was some three thousand years ago: caressing azure waves, rocks and islands, a shore in blossom, afar a magic panorama, a beckoning sunset—words fail one. European mankind remembers this place as its cradle, and the thought filled my soul with the love that is bred of kinship. Here was mankind's earthly paradise, gods descended from heaven and united with mortals, here occurred the first scenes of mythology. Here lived beautiful men and women! They rose, they went to sleep, happy and innocent; the groves rang with their merry songs, the great overflow of unspent energies

poured itself into love and simple-hearted joys, and I sensed all that, and at the same time I envisaged as with second sight, their great future, the three thousand years of life which lay unknown and unguessed before them, and my heart was shaken with these thoughts. Oh, how happy I was that my heart was shaken and that at last I loved! The sun poured its rays upon these isles and this sea, rejoicing in its fair children. Oh, marvelous dream, lofty illusion! The most improbable of all visions, to which mankind throughout its existence has given its best energies, for which it has sacrificed everything, for which it has pined and been tormented, for which its prophets were crucified and killed, without which nations will not desire to live, and without which they cannot even die! . . . But the cliffs, and the sea, and the slanting rays of the setting sun, all that I still seemed to see when I woke up and opened my eyes, for the first time in my life literally wet with tears. . . . And all of a sudden I saw clearly a tiny red spider. I remembered it at once as it had looked on the geranium leaf when the rays of the setting sun were pouring down in the same way. It was as if something had stabbed me. . . . That is the way it all happened!³⁴

The Golden Age dream is actually a negation of guilt. Indeed, immediately following Claude Lorrain's picture, Stavrogin sees the little creature of remorse, the spider, which maintains him in the web of a consciousness unhappy to be under the sway of a repressive and vengeful law, against which precisely he had reacted by a crime. The spider of guilt brings forth the image of little Matryosha who was raped and committed suicide. Between *Acis and Galatea* or the spider, between flight into regression or the eventually guilt-provoking crime, Stavrogin is

as if cut off. He is without access to the mediation of love, he is a stranger to the world of forgiveness.

Of course it is Dostoyevsky who hides behind the masks of Stavrogin, Versilov, and the ridiculous man dreaming of the Golden Age. But he no longer puts on a mask when describing the scene of forgiveness between Raskolnikov and Sonia: as artist and Christian, it is he, the narrator, who assumes responsibility for that strange device that informs the forgiveness epilogue in *Crime and Punishment*. The scene between Raskolnikov and Sonia, while recalling that of *Acis and Galatea* because of the pastoral joy and heavenly radiance that imbues it, refers neither to Claude Lorrain's work nor to the Golden Age. A strange "Golden Age" indeed, lying at the very heart of hell, in Siberia, near the prisoner's shed. Sonia's forgiveness evokes the narcissistic regression of the incestuous lover but does not merge with it: Raskolnikov crosses the break in loving happiness by plunging into the reading of Lazarus' story from the New Testament that Sonia lent him.

The time of forgiveness is not the time of the chase nor that of the mythological cave "Under the living rock, where midsummer sun, / Midwinter cold, do never come."³⁵ It is that of the deferment of crime, the time of its *limitation*. A limitation that knows the crime and does not forget it but, without being blinded as to its horror, banks on a new departure, on a renewal of the individual.³⁶

Raskolnikov came out of the shed on to the river bank, sat down on a heap of logs by the shed and began gazing at the wide deserted river. From the high bank a broad landscape opened before him, the sound of singing floated faintly audible from the other bank. In the vast steppe, bathed in sunshine, he could just see, like

black specks, the nomad's tents. There there was freedom, there other men were living, utterly unlike those here; there time itself seemed to stand still, as though the age of Abraham and his flocks had not passed. Raskolnikov sat gazing, his thoughts passed into daydreams, into contemplation; he thought of nothing, but a vague restlessness excited and troubled him. Suddenly he found Sonia beside him; she had come up noiselessly and sat down at his side. . . . She gave him a joyful smile of welcome, but held out her hand with her usual timidity. . . . How it happened he did not know. But all at once something seemed to seize him and fling him at her feet. He wept and threw his arms round her knees. For the first instant she was terribly frightened and she turned pale. She jumped up and looked at him trembling. But at the same moment she understood, and a light of infinite happiness came into her eyes. She knew and had no doubt that he loved her beyond everything and that at last the moment had come. . . . [pp. 530-31]³⁷

According to Dostoyevsky, forgiveness seems to say: Through my love, I exclude you from history for a while, I take you for a child, and this means that I recognize the unconscious motivations of your crime and allow you to make a new person out of yourself. So that the unconscious might inscribe itself in a new narrative that will not be the eternal return of the death drive in the cycle of crime and punishment it must pass through the love of forgiveness, be transferred to the love of forgiveness. The resources of narcissism and idealization imprint their stamps upon the unconscious and refashion it. For the unconscious is not structured like a language but like all the imprints of the Other, including and most particularly so

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those that are most archaic, "semiotic," it is constituted by preverbal self-sensualities that the narcissistic or amorous experience restores to me. Forgiveness *renews the unconscious* because it inscribes the right to narcissistic regression within History and Speech.

These turn out to be modified by it. They are neither linear flight forward nor eternal return of the revenge/death recurrence, but a spiral that follows the path of death drive *and* of renewal/love.

By staying the historical quest in the name of love, forgiveness discovers the regenerative potential peculiar to narcissistic satisfaction and idealization, both intrinsic to the loving bond. It thus simultaneously takes into account two levels of subjectivity—the *unconscious level*, which stops time through desire and death, and the *love level*, which stays the former unconscious and the former history and begins a rebuilding of the personality within a new relation for an other. *My unconscious is reinscribable beyond the gift that an other presents me by not judging my actions.*

Forgiveness does not cleanse actions. It raises the unconscious from beneath the actions and has it meet a loving other—an other who does not judge but hears my truth in the availability of love, and for that very reason allows me to be reborn. Forgiveness is the luminous stage of dark, unconscious timelessness—the stage at which the latter changes laws and adopts the bond with love as a principle of renewal of both self and other.

Aesthetic Forgiveness

One grasps the seriousness of such forgiveness with and through the unacceptable horror. Such seriousness is perceivable in analytical listening that neither judges nor cal-

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culates but attempts to untangle and reconstruct. Its spiraled temporality is accomplished within the time of writing. Because I am *separated* from my unconscious through a new transference to a new other or a new ideal I am able to *write* the dramatic unfolding of my nevertheless unforgettable violence and despair. The time of that separation and renewal, which underlies the very act of writing, does not necessarily show up in the narrative themes, which might reveal only the inferno of the unconscious. But it can also display itself through the device of an epilogue, like the one in *Crime and Punishment*, that stays a novelistic experience before causing it to be reborn by means of another novel. The crime that is not forgotten but signified through forgiveness, the written horror, is the requirement for beauty. There is no beauty outside the forgiveness that remembers abjection and filters it through the destabilized, musicalized, resensualized signs of loving discourse. *Forgiveness is aesthetic* and the discourses (religions, philosophies, ideologies) that adhere to the dynamics of forgiving precondition the birth of aesthetics within their orbit.

Forgiveness at the outset constitutes a will, postulate, or scheme: *meaning exists*. This is not necessarily a matter of a disavowal of meaning or a manic exaltation in opposition to despair (even if, in a number of instances, this motion may be dominant). Forgiveness, as a gesture of assertion and inscription of meaning, carries within itself, as a lining, erosion of meaning, melancholia, and abjection. By including them it displaces them; by absorbing them it transforms them and binds them for someone else. "There is a meaning": this is an eminently transferential gesture that causes a third party to exist for and through an other. *Forgiveness emerges first as the setting up of a form*. It has the effect of an acting out, a doing, a *poiesis*. Giving

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shape to relations between insulted and humiliated individuals—group harmony. Giving shape to signs—harmony of the work, without exegesis, without explanation, without understanding. Technique and art. The "primary" aspect of such an action clarifies why it has the ability to reach, beyond words and intellects, emotions and bruised bodies. That economy, however, is anything but primitive. The logical possibility for taking over (*Aufhebung*) that it implies (nonmeaning and meaning, positive burst integrating its potential nothingness) follows upon a sound fastening of the subject to the oblatory ideal. Whoever is in the realm of forgiveness—who forgives and who accepts forgiveness—is capable of identifying with a loving father, an imaginary father, with whom, consequently, he is ready to be reconciled, with a new symbolic law in mind.

Disavowal is fully involved in this process of taking over or identifying reconciliation. It provides a perverse, masochistic pleasure in going through suffering toward the new bonds constituted by forgiveness as well as the work of art. Nevertheless, in opposition to the disavowal of negation that voids the signifier and leads to the empty speech of melancholia (see chapter 2), another process now comes into play in order to insure the life of the imagination.

This involves the forgiveness that is essential to sublimation, that leads the subject to a complete identification (real, imaginary, and symbolic) with the very agency of the ideal.³⁸ It is through the miraculous device of that identification, which is always unstable, unfinished, but constantly threefold (real, imaginary, and symbolic), that the suffering body of the forger (and the artist as well) undergoes a mutation—Joyce would say, a "transubstantiation." It allows him to live a second life, a life of forms

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and meaning, somewhat exalted or artificial in the eyes of outsiders, but which is the sole requisite for the subject's survival.

East and West: Per Filium or Filioque

The clearest source for the notion of forgiveness, which Christian thought has elaborated upon for centuries, goes back in the New Testament to Paul and Luke.³⁹ Like all basic principles of Christianity it was expanded by Augustine. It is, however, in the works of John of Damascus (in the eighth century) that one finds a hypostasis for the "benevolence of the father" (*eudoxia*), "affectionate mercy" (*eusplankhna*), and condescension (the Son lowers himself to our level—*synkatathasis*). Contrarily, such notions may be interpreted as paving the way for the uniqueness of orthodox Christian thought up to the schism of *Per Filium/Filioque*.

There is one theologian who seems to have deeply determined the orthodox faith that is so powerfully expressed with Dostoyevsky and gives to the inner experience specific to his novels that emotional intensity and that mystical pathos that are so surprising to the West. He is Symeon the New Theologian (999–1022).⁴⁰ The account of this *agranmatos*' conversion to Christianity bears a style that has been termed Paulian: "Weeping without cease, I that has been termed Paulian: "Weeping without cease, I went in quest of you. Unknown, I would forget everything. . . . Then you appeared, you, invisible, elusive. . . . It seems to me, oh Lord, that you, motionless, moved me, you, unchanging, you changed, you, featureless, assumed features. . . . You were excessively radiant and seemed to appear before me fully, completely. . . ." ⁴¹ Symeon understands the Trinity as a merging of the dif-

ferences constituted by the three persons and expresses it intensely through the metaphor of light.⁴²

Light and hypostases, unity and visions—such is the logic of Byzantine Trinity.⁴³ It at once finds, with Symeon, its anthropomorphic equivalent: "As it is impossible that there be a man endowed with speech and spirit but without soul, thus is it impossible to think the Son but without the Father without the Holy Spirit. . . . For your own spirit, like your soul, lies within your intellect, and all your intellect is in all your speech, and all your speech is in all your spirit, without separation and without confusion. It is the image of God within us."⁴⁴ Along this path, the believer becomes deified by merging with the Son and with the Spirit: "I give you thanks for having, without confusion, without change, become a single Spirit with me, although you are God above all, become for me everything in everything."⁴⁵

Here we touch upon the "originality of orthodoxy." It led, by way of many institutional and political controversies, to the schism broached in the ninth century and completed with the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders in 1204. On a strictly theological level, it was Symeon, more so than Photius, who formulated the Eastern doctrine of *Per Filium* as opposed to the Latin's *Filioque*. Emphasizing the Spirit, he asserted the identity of life in the Spirit with life in Christ, and he set the origin of that powerful pneumatology within the Father. Nonetheless, such a paternal agency is not merely an authority principle or a simple mechanical cause: in the Father the Spirit loses its immanence and identifies with the kingdom of God as defined through germinal, floral, nutritional, and erotic metamorphoses that imply, beyond the cosmic energy theory often viewed as specific to the East, the openly sexual fusion with the Thing at the limits of the nameable.⁴⁶

Within such a dynamics, the Church itself appears as a *soma pneumatikon*, a "mystery," more than an institution made in the image of monarchies.

The ecstatic identification of the three hypostases with one another and of the believer with the Trinity does not lead to the concept of the Son's (or the believer's) *autonomy*, but to a pneumatological *belonging* of each to the other; this is expressed through the phrase *Per Filium* (the Spirit descends from the Father *through* the Son) as opposed to *Filiogue* (the Spirit descends from the Father *and* the Son).⁴⁷

It was impossible at the time, to find the rationalization for that mystical motion, internal to the Trinity and to faith, in which, without losing its value as a person, the Spirit merges with the two other centers and, by the same token, endows them, beyond their value as distinct identities or authorities, with an abyssal, breathtaking, and certainly also sexual depth, where the psychological experience of loss and ecstasy finds its place. The Borromean knot that Lacan used as metaphor of the unity *and* the difference between the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic perhaps allows one to think out this logic, assuming that it is necessary to rationalize it. Now, precisely, this did not seem to have been the intention of Byzantine theologians from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, preoccupied as they were with describing a new postclassical subjectivity rather than subjecting it to the reason then in existence. On the other hand, the Fathers of the Latin Church, more logically inclined, and who had just discovered Aristotle (while the East had been nurtured on him and sought only to differentiate itself from him), logicized the Trinity by seeing God as a simple intellectual essence that could be articulated as dyads—the Father engenders the Son; Father and Son as a set cause the Spirit to come

forth.⁴⁸ Developed through the syllogistic of Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, at the council of Bari in 1098, the argumentation concerning the *Filiogue* was taken up again and expanded by Thomas Aquinas. It had the advantage of providing a basis for the political and spiritual authority of the papacy on the one hand, and on the other for the autonomy and rationality of the believer's person, identified with a Son having power and prestige equal to that of the Father. What had thus been gained in equality and therefore in performance and historicity had perhaps been lost at the level of the experience of *identification*, in the sense of a permanent instability of identity.

Difference and identity, rather than autonomy and equality, did on the contrary build up the Eastern Trinity, which consequently became the source of ecstasy and mysticism. Orthodoxy nurtured it by adoring, beyond oppositions, a sense of fullness where each person of the Trinity was linked to and identified with all others—an erotic fusion. In that "Borromean" logic of Orthodox Trinity, the psychic space of the believer opened to the most violent movements of passion for rapture or death, distinguished merely to be joined in the unity of divine love.⁴⁹

It is against that psychological background that one needs to understand the daring of Byzantine imagination in representing the death and Passion of Christ in iconic art, as well as the propensity of Orthodox discourse to explore suffering and mercy. Unity may be lost (that of Christ on Golgotha, of the believer in humiliation or death), but in the motion of the Trinitarian knot it may recover its temporary consistency thanks to benevolence and mercy, before resuming the eternal cycle of disappearance and reappearance.

"I" *Is Son and Spirit*

Let me recall, with that in mind, some of the theological, psychological, and pictorial events that prefigure the schism as well as, later, the Russian Orthodox spirituality, which is at the basis of Dostoyevsky's discourse. For Symeon, the New Theologian, light was inseparable from the "painful affection" (*katanyxis*) that opened up to God through humility and a flood of tears, for it knew right away that it was forgiven. Moreover, the pneumatic conception of the Eucharist, expounded for instance by Maximus the Confessor (twelfth century), leads one to believe that Christ was *at the same time* deified and crucified, that death on the cross is innate in life and living. On that basis painters permitted themselves to present Christ's death on the Cross—because death was living, the dead body was an incorruptible body that could be kept by the Church as image *and* reality.

As early as the eleventh century the simplicity of ecclesiastical architecture and iconography became enriched with a representation of Christ surrounded by apostles, offering them goblet and bread—a Christ "who offers and is being offered," according to John Christostom's expression. As Olivier Clement emphasized, the very art of mosaic imposes the presence of light, the gift of grace and splendor, at the same time as the iconic representation of the Marian cycle and Christ's Passion calls for having individual believers identify with characters in the scriptures. Such a subjectivism, in the light of grace, finds one of its privileged expressions in Christ's Passion: just like man, Christ suffers and dies. And yet the painter can show it, and the believer can see it, his humiliation and suffering being submerged in the affection of mercy for the Son within

the Spirit. As if resurrection made *death visible* and at the same time even more moving. Scenes from the Passion were added to the traditional liturgical cycle in 1164 at Nerez, in a Macedonian church founded by the Comneni.

The progressiveness of Byzantine iconography compared with the classical or Judaic tradition was nevertheless to be stalled later on. The Renaissance was Latin, and it is likely that political and social causes or foreign invasions were not alone in contributing to the decline of Orthodox pictorial art into oversimplicity. The Eastern conception of the Trinity definitely gave less autonomy to individuals when it did not subject them to authority, and it surely did not encourage them to turn into "artistic individualities." Nevertheless, through meanderings that were less spectacular, more intimate, and therefore less restrainable—those of the verbal arts—a blossoming did indeed take place in spite of the delay one knows, with, as a bonus, a refinement of the alchemy of suffering, particularly in Russian literature.

Coming late after the Byzantine expansion and that of the southern Slavs (Bulgarians, Serbs), the Russian church intensified its pneumatologic and mystic tendencies. Pagan, Dionysiac, Eastern, the pre-Christian tradition imprinted on the Byzantine Orthodoxy as it passed into Russia a heretofore unattained paroxysm. There were the *khlysti*, a mystic sect of Manichean inspiration, who favored excesses in suffering and eroticism, in order to achieve a complete fusion of their followers with Christ; the theophany of the earth (which led to the notion of Moscow as the "third Rome," after Constantinople . . . but also, according to some, to the Third International); the praise of salvation/love and especially the hypostasis of affection (*oumlilientie*), at the intersection of suffering and joy and within Christ; the movement of "those who have under-

gone the Passion" (*strastiotpiytsy*), that is, those who have actually been brutalized or humiliated but respond to evil only with forgiveness. Such are some of the most paroxysmal and concrete expressions of Russian Orthodox logic.

It would be impossible to understand Dostoyevsky without it. His dialogism, his polyphony,⁵⁰ undoubtedly spring from multiple sources. It would be a mistake to neglect that of Orthodox faith whose Trinitarian conception (difference and unity of the three Persons within a generalized pneumatology inviting any subjectivity to a maximal display of its contradictions) inspires the writer's "dialogism" as well as his praise of suffering *at the same time* as forgiving. In that view, the image of the tyrannical father, present in Dostoyevsky's universe and in which Freud saw the source of epilepsy as well as play dissipation (the addiction to gambling),⁵¹ needs to be balanced—in order to understand not the neurotic Dostoyevsky but Dostoyevsky the artist—with that of the benevolent father specific to Byzantine tradition, his affection and forgiveness.

The Spoken Forgiveness

The writer's position is one of speech: a symbolic configuration absorbs and replaces forgiveness as emotional impulse, mercy, anthropomorphic compassion. To say that the work of art is a forgiving already implies leaving psychological forgiveness (but without ignoring it) for a singular act—that of naming and composing.

One will thus be unable to understand why art is forgiveness without examining all the levels at which forgiveness functions and is exhausted. One should begin with that of psychological, subjective identification, with suffering, and the affection of others, the "characters" and

oneself, supported in Dostoyevsky's writings with Orthodox faith. One should next and necessarily go on to examine the logical formulation of the effectiveness of forgiving as an undertaking of transpersonal creation, as Thomas Aquinas understands it (inside the *Filioque* this time). Finally, one should observe the shifting of forgiveness, beyond the work's polyphony, to the morals of aesthetic performance alone, to the jouissance of passion as beauty. Potentially immoralistic, the third moment of the performance/forgiveness returns to the point of departure of that circular motion—to the suffering and affection of the other for the stranger.

The Act of Giving Reduces the Affect

Thomas Aquinas linked "God's mercy" with his justice.⁵² After having stressed that "[God's] justice observes a divine decency and renders to himself what is due to himself," Aquinas takes care to establish the truth of that justice, it being understood that "the order of things matching the exemplar of his wisdom, namely his law, is appropriately called truth." As to mercy itself he does not fail to mention the very anthropomorphic, and therefore psychological opinion of John the Damascene, who said, "mercy is a sort of sorrow." Aquinas dissociates himself from that opinion; he deems, "Above all is mercy to be attributed to God, nevertheless in its effect, not in the affect of feeling." "To feel sad about another's misery is no attribute of God, but to drive it out is supremely his, and by misery we mean here *any sort of defect*."⁵³ By remedying the defect with perfection in mind, mercy would be a *donation*. "For a pardon is a sort of present; St. Paul calls forgiving a giving, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you" (one can translate, "Render thanks to one

another" as well as "Forgive one another"). Forgiveness makes up for the lack, it is an additional, free gift. I give myself to you, you welcome me, I am within you. Neither justice nor injustice, forgiveness would be a "fullness of justice" beyond judgment. This is what causes James to say, "Mercy triumphs over judgment."⁵⁴

While it is true that human forgiveness does not equal divine mercy, it attempts to mold itself after the latter's image: a gift, an oblation distancing itself from judgment, forgiveness assumes a potential identification with that effective and efficient merciful divinity of which the theologian speaks. Nevertheless, and in contrast to divine mercy, which excludes sadness, forgiveness gathers on its way to the other a very human sorrow. Recognizing the lack and the wound that caused it, it fulfills them with an ideal gift—promise, project, artifice, thus fitting the humiliated, offended being into an order of perfection, and giving him the assurance that he belongs there. Love, all in all, beyond judgment, takes over from sadness, which is nevertheless understood, heard, displayed. It is possible to forgive ourselves by releasing, thanks to someone who hears us, our lack or our wound to an ideal order to which we are sure we belong—and we are now protected against depression. How can one be sure, however, of joining that ideal order by going through the lack, without once more negotiating the narrow pass of identification with flawless ideality, loving fatherhood, primitive guarantor of our safeties?

Writing: Immoral Forgiveness

Whoever creates a text or an interpretation is more than anyone else drawn to accept the fully *logical* and *active* agency of Thomistic mercy beyond emotional effusion. He accepts its value of justice in the act, and even more so

of the act's appropriateness. It is by making his words suitable to his commiseration and, in that sense, accurate that the subject's adherence to the forgiving ideal is accomplished and effective forgiveness for others as well as for oneself becomes possible. At the boundaries of emotion and action, writing comes into being only through the moment of the negation of the affect so that the effectiveness of signs might be born. Writing causes the *affect* to slip into the *effect*—*actus purus*, as Aquinas might say. It conveys affects and does not repress them, it suggests for them a sublimatory outcome, it transposes them for another in a threefold, imaginary, and symbolic bond. Because it is forgiveness, writing is transformation, transposition, translation.

From that moment on, the world of signs lays down its own logic. The jubilation it affords, that of performance as well as reception, intermittently erases the ideal as well as any possibility of external justice. Immoralism is the fate of that process, which Dostoyevsky is well acquainted with: writing is bound to evil not only at the outset (in its pre-text, in its objects) but also at the end, in the absoluteness of its universe that excludes all otherness. Dostoyevsky is also conscious of the aesthetic effect being locked in an exteriorless passion—with the risk of a deathly as well as joyful closure through imaginary self-consumption, through the tyranny of the beautiful; that is perhaps what prompts him to cling violently to his religion and its principle—forgiveness. The eternal return of a threefold motion thus gets under way: affection tied to suffering, logical justice and appropriateness of the work, hypothesis, and finally unease over the final, masterful accomplishment. Then, once again, in order to forgive himself, he resumes the threefold logic of forgiveness. . . . Do we not need it in order to give a live—erotic, immoral—meaning to the melancholy hold?

- Those connections between Nerval's text and the alchemical corpus have been established by Georges Le Breton, "La Clé des *Chimères*: l'alchimie," *Fontaine* (1945), 44:441-60; see also "L'Alchimie dans *Aurélia*: 'Les Mémoires,' " *Fontaine* (1945), 45:687-706. Many works have dealt with Nerval and esotericism, among which Jean Richer, *Expérience et création* (Paris: Hachette, 1963); François Constant, "Le Soleil noir et l'étoile ressuscitée," *La Tour Saint Jacques* (January-April 1958), nos. 13-14, and so forth.
5. Richer, *Expérience et création*, pp. 33-38.
 6. See Dhaenens, *Le Destin d'Orphée*.
 7. See Emilie Noullet, *Etudes littéraires, l'hermétisme de la poésie française moderne* (Mexico: Talleres Gráficos de la Editorial Cultura, 1944).
 8. Jacques Geminasca, "El Desdichado," *Archives Nervaliennes*, no. 59, pp. 9-53.
 9. Nerval, *Selected Writings*, trans. Geoffrey Wagner (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1957), pp. 118-19.
 10. See "Lettres à Jenny Colon," in *OC* 1:726ff.
 11. See Jean Guillaume, *Aurélia: prologomène à une édition critique* (Namur: Presses Universitaires de Namur, 1972).
 12. See Marcel Détéenne, *Diomyssos à ciel ouvert* (Paris: Hachette, 1986).
 13. Nerval, *Selected Writings*, p. 209. [Trans. slightly modified by LSR.]
 14. *Aurélia*, in *Selected Writings*, p. 173.
 15. See Dhaenens, *Le Destin d'Orphée*, p. 49.
 16. Nerval, "Chanson gothique," in *OC* 1:59.
 17. "Les Papillons," in *OC* 1:53.
 18. "Anteros," in *Selected Writings*, p. 219.
 19. See Dhaenens, *Le Destin d'Orphée*, p. 59.
 20. See M. Jeanneret, *La Lettre perdue: écriture et folie dans l'oeuvre de Nerval* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978).
 21. Nerval, "Le Christ des Oliviers," in *OC* 1:37.
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
 24. "Gilded Verses," in *Selected Writings*, p. 225.
 25. "Fragments du manuscrit d'*Aurélia*," in *OC* 1:423.

26. *Aurélia*, in *Selected Writings*, p. 118. Further page references are given in the text.
7. *Dostoyevsky, the Writing of Suffering, and Forgiveness*
 1. Freud's canonical text on Dostoyevsky examines the writer from the point of view of epilepsy, amorality, parricide, and gambling, and merely alludes to the "sado-masochism" that underlies suffering. See "Dostoyevsky and Parricide," *SE* 21:175ff. For a discussion of that thesis, see Philippe Sollers, "Dostoyevski, Freud, la roulette," in *Théorie des exceptions* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986).
 2. Dostoyevsky, "Carnets des Démon," in *Les Démons* (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), pp. 810-11. Emphasis mine. [Translated from the French by LSR.]
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 812.
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 1154.
 5. *The Possessed*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Random House, 1936), p. 601.
 6. *Notes from the Underground*, trans. Ralph E. Matlaw (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1960), p. 16.
 7. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
 8. Nietzsche links Napoleon and Dostoyevsky in a meditation on "the criminal and those who are like him": those two extraordinary men would reveal the presence of a "Catinarian existence" at the basis of any exceptional experience involving a transmutation of values. "The testimony of Dostoyevsky is relevant to this problem —Dostoyevsky, the only psychologist, incidentally, from whom I had something to learn. He ranks among the most beautiful strokes of fortune in my life, even more than my discovery of Stendhal. This profound human being, who was ten times right in his low estimate of the superficial Germans, lived for a long time among the convicts in Siberia" (*The Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann [New York: Viking Press, 1954], p. 549). And according to the W. II. 6. version: "The criminal type is the type of the strong human being under unfavorable circumstances; as a consequence, all instincts, branded with scorn, fear, dishonor, are usually inextricably fused with depressive feelings, that

is, physiologically speaking, they *degenerate*' (Nietzsche, *Oeuvres complètes* [Paris, Gallimard, 1974], p. 478—translated from the French by LSR). While appreciating Dostoyevsky's praise for the "aesthetic" and "criminal genius," Nietzsche often rebels against what appears to him as Christianity's pathological psychology, caught in the snare of love, which the Russian writer displays: there would be an "infantile idiom" in the Gospels, as in a "Russian novel," according to the *Antichrist*. One should not emphasize Nietzsche's fascination with Dostoyevsky, who is seen as the forerunner of his own overman, without especially pointing out the discomfort aroused in the German philosopher by Dostoyevsky's Christianity.

9. Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. by Constance Garnett (New York: Random House, 1930), p. 259.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, p. 441.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 445.

13. Dostoyevsky, "The Verdict," in *The Diary of a Writer*, trans. by Boris Brasol (New York: George Braziller, 1954), p. 471.

14. See J. Cateau, *La Création littéraire chez Dostoyevsky* (Paris: Institut d'Etudes Slaves, 1978), pp. 125–80.

15. Dostoyevsky, *The Letters of Dostoyevsky to His Wife*, trans. Elizabeth Hill and Doris Muddie (London: Constable, 1930), p. 181.

Concerning Dostoyevsky's interest in Job, see the essay in Russian by B. Bourssov, "Dostoyevsky's Personality," in *Zvezda* (1970), 12:104: "He suffered on account of God and the universe, for he did not want to uphold the eternal laws of nature and history to the extent of refusing to acknowledge that what was in the process of being accomplished had actually been accomplished. And so he went on, as it were, counter to everything."

16. See Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1973).

17. See the work in Russian by Dmitri S. Merezhkovsky, *Prophet of the Russian Revolution* (1906).

18. Anna Dostoyevsky, *Dostoyevsky/Reminiscences*, trans. and ed. by Beatrice Stillman (New York: Liveright, 1975), p. 134. The reference is to their stay in Switzerland in 1867. In the stenographic notes of her diary, the writer's wife wrote: "In the city museum

there [Basel], Fyodor Mikhailovich saw Hans Holbein's painting. It struck him with terrible force, and he said to me then, 'A painting like that can make you lose your faith.'"

According to L. P. Grossman, Dostoyevsky would have known about this painting in his childhood from the *Letters of a Russian Traveler* by Karanzin who deems that there is "nothing divine" in Holbein's Christ. The same critic believes it is likely that Dostoyevsky had read *The Haunted Pool* by George Sand, who emphasized the impact of suffering in Holbein's work. See L. P. Grossman, *F. M. Dostoyevsky* (Molodaia Gvardia, 1962) and *A Seminar on Dostoyevsky* (1923)—both in Russian.

19. *Literary Heritage* (Moscow: Nauka, n.d.), 83:174, as quoted in Cateau, *La Création littéraire . . .*, p. 174.

20. ". . . The corruption of Pascal, who believed in the corruption of his reason through original sin when it had in fact been corrupted only by his Christianity" (*The Antichrist*, in Kaufmann, ed., *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 572).

21. Dostoyevsky, *The Insulted and Humiliated* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 10–11.

22. Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*, p. 438.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 434.

24. Eroticizing suffering along with rejecting the death penalty suggest similar attitudes by the Marquis de Sade. The parallel between the two writers was drawn, not without malice, by Dostoyevsky's contemporaries. Thus, in a letter dated February 24, 1882, addressed to Saltykov-Shchedrin, Turgenev notes that Dostoyevsky, like Sade, "describes in his novels the pleasures of sensuous people," and is indignant because "Russian bishops have celebrated mass and given praise to this superman, our own Sade! What strange times do we live in?"

25. *The Idiot*, p. 46.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

28. One will recall in this connection the filial bond that Dostoyevsky established with the Procurator Constantine Prodonosov, a despotic figure embodying tsarist obscurantism. See Tsvetan Stoyanov, *The Genius and his Guardian* (Sofia, 1978).

29. Dostoyevsky, *Literary Heritage* (1971), 83:173-74, note dated April 16, 1864. Dostoyevsky continues his thoughts: "Only Christ was able to do so, but Christ was eternal, a specular ideal to which man aspires and according to the laws of nature should aspire. In the meantime, after the coming of Christ as the ideal of man in the flesh it appeared clear as day that the superior and supreme development of the individual must precisely come to this . . . that the supreme use to which man might put his individuality, the complete development of his *Self*—was in some way to obliterate that *Self*, giving it wholly to each and everyone, completely and frantically. That is supreme happiness. Thus the law of the *Self* becomes one with the law of humanism and, in the merging of the two, the *Self* and *All* . . . their mutual and reciprocal abolishment is accomplished, and at the same time each one in particular reaches the goal of his individual development.

"That is precisely Christ's paradise. . . ."

"But it will be, in my opinion, completely absurd to reach that supreme goal if, when it is reached, everything is snuffed out and disappears, that is, if human life does not go on after that goal has been achieved. Therefore there is a future, heavenly life.

"Where is it, on which planet, in which center, is it the ultimate center, at the heart of universal synthesis, that is, in God? We know nothing about it. We know only one feature of the future nature of the future being, who perhaps may not even be called a man (hence we have no idea of the kind of beings we shall be)."

Dostoyevsky goes on by considering that this utopic synthesis where the limits of the *Self* were erased within an amatory merging with the others would be accomplished by suspending sexuality, which produces tensions and conflicts: "Over there we have an entirely synthetic being, eternally joying and complete, for whom it will be as if time no longer existed." The impossibility of sacrificing the *Self* out of love for a different being ("Me and Macha") brings about a sense of suffering and the state of sin: "Thus, man must incessantly experience a suffering that is balanced by the heavenly jouissance of the accomplishment of the Law, that is, by sacrifice."

[Translated from the French by LSR.]

30. *Crime and Punishment*, pp. 189-90. Further page references are given in the text.

31. As Hannah Arendt notes, "The only rudimentary sign of an awareness that forgiveness may be the necessary corrective . . . may be seen in the Roman principle to spare the vanquished (*parcere subiectis*)—a wisdom entirely unknown to the Greeks" (*The Human Condition* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958], p. 239).

32. Thus, among others, Matthew 6:14-15: "Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either."

33. The phrase is that of Alain Besançon, *Le Tsarévitch immobile* (Paris: Plon, 1967), p. 214.

34. *The Possessed*, pp. 715-16.

35. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), p. 332.

36. Hannah Arendt reminds us of the connotations of the Greek words corresponding to certain key words in Luke, *aphienai* and *metanoein*—"dismiss," "release," for the first, "change of mind," "return," and "trace back one's steps" for the second (*The Human Condition*, p. 240, note 78).

37. Concerning dialogue and love in Dostoyevsky see Jacques Rolland, *Dostoevski: La question de l'autre* (Paris: Verdier, 1983).

38. Concerning identification, see my *Tales of Love* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 24-48.

39. Ephesians 4:32: "Be friends with one another, and kind, forgiving each other as readily as God forgave you in Christ." Luke 1:78: "This by the tender mercy of our God / Who from on high will bring the rising Sun to visit us."

40. See Symeon the New Theologian, *Works* (Moscow, 1890—in Russian).

41. Quoted by O. Clement, *L'Essor du christianisme oriental* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), pp. 25-26.

42. "The God light, the Son light, and the Holy Spirit light—those three lights are a same eternal light that is indivisible, without confusion, uncreated, completed, immeasurable, invisible, insofar that it is the source of all light" (Sermon 57, in Symeon, *Works* 2:46): "There is no difference between God who inhabits light and light itself, which is his abode; just as there is no difference between God's light and God. But they are one and the same, the abode and

the inhabitant, the light and God" (Sermon 59, *ibid.* 2:72): "God is light, infinite light, and God's light is revealed to us indistinctly inseparable into hypostases (aspects, faces). . . . The Father is light, the Son is light, the Holy Spirit is light, and the three are a single simple light, uncomplicated, having the same essence, the same value, the same glory" (Sermon 62, *ibid.* 2:105).

43. "For the Trinity is a unit of three principles and that unit is called a trinity in hypostases (faces, aspects). . . . and none of those hypostases has for a single instant existed before the others. . . . the three aspects are without origin, they are coeternal and coessential" (Sermon 60, *ibid.* 2:80).

44. Sermon 61, *ibid.* 2:95.

45. "Preface to Hymns of Divine Love," PG 612, cols. 507-9, quoted by O. Clément, *L'Essor du christianisme oriental*, p. 29.

46. "I do not speak in my own name, but in the name of the very treasure that I have just found, that is, Christ who speaks through me: 'I am the resurrection and the life' (John 11:25), 'I am the mustard seed' (Matthew, 13:31-32), 'I am the fine pearl' (Matthew, 13:45) . . . 'I am the yeast' (Matthew 13:33)" (Sermon 89, *ibid.* 2:479). Symeon confides that one day as he was in a state of "infernal excitement and discharge" he spoke to God and received his light with "warm tears," having recognized in his own experience the very heavenly kingdom that the scriptures have described as a pearl (Matthew 13:45-46), a mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32), yeast (Matthew 13:33), living water (John 4:10), flames of fire (Hebrews 1:8), bread (Luke 22:19), a bridegroom (Matthew 25:6; John 3:29; Revelations 21:9): "What more can be said about the unspeakable. . . . While we have all that at the core of ourselves, placed there by God, we cannot understand it through reason and clarity it through speech" (Sermon 90, *ibid.* 2:490).

47. "The Holy Spirit is given and sent, not in a sense that he himself would not have wished, but in the sense in which the Holy Spirit, *through the Son who is a hypostasis of the Trinity*, accomplishes, as if it were his own will, that which is the Father's wish. For the Holy Trinity is inseparable by nature, essence, and will, even though by hypostases it is called by persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and those three names are a single God and his name is Trinity" (Sermon 62, *ibid.* 2:105).

48. Clément, *L'Essor du christianisme oriental*, p. 74.

49. At the heart of this painful and joyful osmosis of the three hypostases, the self's individuality is perceived as the necessary barrier to biological and social life, which nevertheless prevents experiencing forgiveness—love for others. See above, Dostoyevsky's thoughts in connection with the self as barrier at the time of his wife Maria's death.

50. See Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*.

51. See Freud, "Dostoyevsky and Parricide."

52. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, Latin text and English trans. Thomas Gilby. O.P. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), vol. 5, question 21, p. 77.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 79 and 81. Emphasis added.

54. Quoted by Thomas Aquinas, *ibid.*, p. 81.

8. *The Malady of Grief: Duras*

1. Paul Valéry, "La Crise de l'esprit," *Variété*, in *Oeuvres*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), 1:988.

2. *Ibid.*, 1:991. Emphasis added.

3. "Even though man worries to no avail, nevertheless he proceeds within the image" (Augustine, "Images," *On the Trinity*, XIV, IV, 6)

4. See Maurice Blanchot, "Où va la littérature?" in *Le Livre à venir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), p. 289.

5. Roger Caillois recommends, in literature, "techniques permitting the exploration of the unconscious": "accounts, with or without comments, of *depressions, confusion, anxiety*, and personal emotional experiences," in "Crise de littérature," *Cahiers du Sud* (Marseille, 1935). Emphasis added.

6. Marguerite Duras, *Le Ravissement de Lol V. Stein* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 14 [All quotations in this chapter are from the French editions of Duras' novels; trans. by LSR]

7. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 151.