

Dostoyevsky, Bernanos, and Knowing Joy as the Unknown

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Abstract: In her article "Dostoyevsky, Bernanos, and Knowing Joy as the Unknown" Ruth Karin Lévai analyzes the concept of joy in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and Georges Bernanos's *The Diary of a Country Priest*. Lévai follows five main aspects of the experience of joy common to the characters of both novels: 1) joy as prerequisite to true freedom, 2) joy as risk, 3) joy as the ability to love, 4) joy as the ability to give and receive prosaic gifts, and 5) joy as community. Lévai argues that in both works joy is portrayed as a starting point rather than a destination and that it grows out of knowledge rather than circumstance. Further, she posits that Dostoyevsky's and Bernanos's understanding of joy was shaped by their Christian faith.

Ruth Karin LÉVAI

Dostoyevsky, Bernanos, and Knowing Joy as the Unknown

The novels of Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Georges Bernanos, among their many other insights, are rich in scenes of unbounded joy and ecstasy. Some of the most memorable moments of joy in *The Brothers Karamazov* occur when Mitya Karamazov is in prison, not a likely place for discovering joy. Yet I believe the key lies in something that Mitya says to Alyosha shortly after his arrest: "I see the sun, and if I don't see the sun, I know it's there. And there's a whole life in that, in knowing that the sun is there" (556). Similarly, the curate of Ambricourt in Bernanos's novel, before his ride on the motorcycle, one of his greatest experiences of joy prior to his painful and untimely death, says that "by a presentiment which I cannot explain, I also understood, I knew that God did not wish me to die without knowing something of that risk — just enough, maybe, for my sacrifice to be complete when the time came ... for one poor short minute I was to taste that glory" (235-36). In both cases the emphasis is on the knowledge each had above and beyond the conditions in which they found themselves, namely the knowledge of some fixed and absolutely unchanging point outside themselves, a will not their own, a source that would continue to sustain them and all other life although for a time eclipsed from their vision out of the reach of their senses. Mitya knows the sun to be constantly generating warmth and light, stimulating growth and new birth in nature, and this is enough not only to keep him from despair, but to inspire and elate him. The curate knows god's intentions to be consistently good and that despite the brevity of his individual life his own pleasure and suffering play a part in the greater spiritual life that god will continue to direct even after he is gone. Their knowledge is solidified by their trust in an innate order.

In the study at hand, I explore how the source of joy is demonstrated as being one of knowledge rather than one of circumstance in Dostoyevsky and Bernanos. As the curate of Ambricourt writes in his journal, "how is it that we fail to realize that the mask of pleasure, stripped of all hypocrisy, is that of anguish?" (124). Good fortune, comfort, felicitous circumstances only serve as a cover to a desperation waiting to burst forth just beneath the surface. Pleasure can never pretend to the heights attained by unwavering knowledge of an eternal constant. Within the framework of this hypothesis I examine *The Brothers Karamazov* and the *Diary of a Country Priest* and discuss five aspects of this source of knowledge: 1) experiencing joy as a prerequisite to freedom rather than a product of it, 2) experiencing joy as risk, 3) experiencing joy as the ability to love, 4) experiencing joy through giving and 5) experiencing joy through community. These, I believe, will afford a deeper understanding of the vision that each of the writers had of unbounded joy.

We are rather accustomed to thinking of joy as the product of freedom coupled with the satisfaction of desire. Yet both Dostoyevsky and Bernanos portray a reality in which not only does joy exist before freedom, it can even exist without freedom, at least that freedom which is nothing more than an infinity of choices and possibilities. Why must joy precede freedom? Peter Jones notes in *Philosophy and the Novel* that "Zossima asserts that it is a distortion of human nature to see freedom as the satisfaction and multiplication of desires; for by thinking up desires for himself a man sets himself in bondage, withdraws his concern for the rest of humanity, and becomes isolated from it" (117). And the Inquisitor throws the following accusation in Christ's face: "Didst thou forget that man prefers peace, and even death, to freedom of choice in the knowledge of good and evil? Nothing is more seductive for man than his freedom of conscience, but nothing is a greater cause of suffering" (234). Human nature seeks freedom in one of two ways: either in the removal of all boundaries and limits to the fulfillment of individual desires, the freedom of conscience, which Zossima claims leads to bondage and the Inquisitor cites as the greatest cause of suffering or in the willful limiting of choices and the surrendering of desires to a visible authority, the freedom from conscience, which makes love impossible and can only lead to death. Neither of these options result in a state of ecstatic joy; rather, it would seem, in something like existential despair or at best indifference. Freedom is an apparent curse rather than a blessing.

The Inquisitor further challenges the mute Christ with regard to the merit of the freedom he has paid such a high price for: "Thou didst desire man's free love, that he should follow Thee freely, enticed and taken captive by Thee ... but didst thou not know he would at last reject even Thy image and Thy truth, if he is weighed down with the fearful burden of free choice" (234). Humanity thirsts for freedom without responsibility, yet it would seem that such a reality does not exist. Freedom presupposes the necessity of being freed from something or someone, otherwise it becomes utterly meaningless. Yet if the true reality of freedom entailed no responsibility before anyone, then humanity could not in any way be connected to life to other existent beings. And naturally people would not need to be freed from themselves because they themselves would have become the absolute. Thus this type of freedom is a logical paradox. In Bernanos's *Diary of a Country Priest* the countess has chosen freedom from conscience living outwardly piously within the confines of the Catholic Church while renouncing any responsibility with regard to her daughter's suicidal intentions. The meek young priest unabashedly disarms her, however, claiming that "all disorder comes of the same father, the father of

lies ... we know there's only one kind of order, that which comes from charity" (149). By closing her heart to her daughter while justifying herself with religious sacrifice the countess was falling for the Inquisitor's ploy. She was desperately trying to establish a new order, one in which knowledge of the eternal constant was disregarded, declared irrelevant. Yet as the curate asserts, this is no order but disorder. Any attempt at attaining freedom while either eschewing responsibility or denying all boundaries seems doomed.

So where in Dostoyevsky's and Bernanos's texts does true freedom begin? Of what does its enduring foundation consist? The curate of Ambricourt says that "we know there is only one order, that of love" (175), but how do we, how did he know this? What did it mean to know this? In her final letter to the curate, shortly before her physical death, the countess acknowledges how she "lived in the most horrible solitude, alone with the desperate memory of a child" (175). She describes her chief guilt as having been that of sinning "willfully ... against hope, every day for eleven years" (175). She chose to reject hope in the reality of any relationship based on unconditional love. Yet, at last, following her powerful encounter with the curate, although she had feared surrendering her grief, feared resigning herself to the divine order of relational vulnerability which risked exposure to more pain, she allows this reality to envelop her, to become the cocoon she needed rather than the prison she had feared: "I'm not resigned, I'm happy. I don't want anything" (175). She experienced joy as the freedom to surrender desire itself. Rather than feeling herself trapped in the grip of a moral vise, constrained to do the right thing, the countess experienced release in relinquishing her desire for justice and revenge, proving the truth of the order of love. Mitya also grasped a profound connection between the eternal order of love, joy and freedom. Speaking of his possible prison sentence he says "Oh, yes, we shall be in chains and there will be no freedom, but then, in our great sorrow, we shall rise again to joy, without which man cannot live nor God exist, for God gives joy: it's his privilege — a grand one" (556). He knows that he is innocent of his father's murder, yet he is willing to take responsibility for it, the consequences upon himself, even the loss of his physical freedom, an utterly absurd proposition within the reality of either the satisfaction of desires or of avoiding guilt. Still, in his willingness to surrender his freedom, he finds joy just as the countess finds joy in confessing her own part in the pain of the world, namely that of her daughter. Each came to understand that the freedom they thought they possessed and needed to guard so carefully was only an illusion and was in fact the prison of their fears, fear of injustice, fear of punishment, fear of the non-reality of love. Mitya and the countess knew the reality of the order of love by experiencing the mercy of joy. In the moment when they were least expecting it, when they realized they least deserved it, it was granted to them without their having to retain anything in their grasp. And this joy far surpassed any other reality they found themselves in, evidence of an order independent of the laws of time and space.

Peter Jones writes that "it is important to note that the regenerations of Dmitri and Ivan are indicated by the feeling of joy which is a necessary stage towards achieving the proper ecstasy referred to by Zosima" (127). Joy is the first stepping stone in the process of regeneration, the first outward sign that a person is being freed not from all limitations of desire, nor from responsibility, but rather from the disorder within. In her *The Poetic Imagination of Bernanos* Gerda Blumenthal emphasizes the significance of this change of posture: "the mystery of the Incarnation begins to cast a light of its own, in which the earth is displayed not as humiliated but as triumphant in its very poverty. Chosen by the infinite divine spirit as a partner and co-creator, the earth invites and makes possible God's most beautiful and unpredictable inspirations" (130). In knowing their true relationship to the creator, and by imitating his humility, Dmitri and the countess were set free to countless beautiful and unpredictable possibilities, and this was indeed cause for joy. However, even in this new kind of freedom there is risk and its unpredictable element is not a harbinger of pleasant surprises alone. The risk rather than diminishing the original joy only intensifies it, even when, as in the case of Mikhail, Zosima's mysterious visitor, all that was risked seems to be lost. Highlighting the apparent tragedy of his case, Caryl Emerson notes in *A New Word on the Brothers Karamazov* that in the other "'foolish' acts in the novel (Markel's deathbed ecstasies, Zosima's ringing laughter at his duel, Alyosha's gathering of the boys around Ilyusha's grave), there is joy, a suspension of both judgment and resentment, a profound (if incomprehensible) sense of humanity's oneness ... in contrast, after Mikhail's 'action' we witness increased resentment. There is recrimination, the collapse of family, the falling away of communally expressed love, all capped by Zosima leaving town in an aura of disgrace" (168). Can there be joy in such great risk and loss? It is certainly one thing to risk punishment, but to risk the integrity, the reputation of one's family? Surely this is too much. Nevertheless, even before his confession, Mikhail proclaims to Zosima "I know it will be heaven for me, heaven, the moment I confess. Fourteen years I've been in hell. I want to suffer. I will take my punishment and begin to live" (285-86). Not only does Mikhail expect to feel relief from his burden, but he describes it in the highest possible terms of ecstasy: heaven. He knows that come what may, order will begin to replace disorder within him, and he will begin to live. Indeed, after his confession, although his family and neighbors have been unable to accept the truth of it, Mikhail feels more reconciled to them than he ever had before: "I know I am dying, but I feel joy and peace for the first time after so many years. There was heaven in my heart

from the moment I had done what I had to do. Now I dare to love my children and to kiss them ... and now I feel God near, my heart rejoices as in Heaven" (289).

There can be no joy in social interaction in interpersonal relationships if it is not based on truth. The joy of risking the truth of one's being is the starting point for meaningful connection. Any relationship which has not undergone this trial by fire, which has not been risked for the sake of the truth cannot be a source of joy. In Bernanos's *Diary of a Country Priest* the elder curate de Torcy, mentor and friend to the younger hero of the story, describes risk as a necessary prerequisite for the existence of "supernatural conditions": "You've got to be crazy to refuse to see that the sole justification of inequality in the supernatural order is its risk. Our risk! Both yours and mine" (118). These supernatural conditions would seem to correspond to the elation, the "heaven" experienced by Mikhail after his confession. What other explanation could there be for the joy he felt in the face of such painful circumstances? Joy here was a miracle induced by risk. Later the curate of Ambricourt even goes so far as to call the risk involved in the experience of joy "blessed": "I realized that youth is blessed — that it is a risk worth running, a risk that is also blessed ... I felt happy, released, so far from everything" (235-37). Unlike the countess or Mikhail, the priest faces a different kind of risk, not the risk of punishment for any crimes he had committed, nor the risk of losing loved ones or the memory of them, but the risk of total abandon to the unknown, of losing any sense of control on the direction of his life, even being prepared to face death. Earlier in the novel the young curate expressed a desire to suffer, presumably to more closely identify with Christ: "what I wouldn't give to be able to suffer! ... no fear of death, it is just as indifferent to me as life ... first I was no more than a spark, an atom of the glowing dust of divine charity" (106). Yet interestingly, perhaps precisely because life had become as indifferent to him as death, the suffering he so much desires eludes him. The priest longs for a suffering which is known to him, a suffering which he can foresee, but in this there is neither joy nor risk. His motorcycle ride with Olivier opens his eyes to the necessity of risk "for his sacrifice to be complete ... and by a presentiment which I cannot explain, I also understood, I knew that God did not wish me to die without knowing something of that risk — just enough, maybe, for my sacrifice to be complete when the time came. For one poor short minute I was to taste that glory" (235-36). Without risk, there can be no true, meaningful sacrifice or suffering. If it is only what is known that is surrendered, then its loss can be calculated and prepared for in advance, its eventual substitution can be undertaken. But when the unknown is surrendered there is no way to estimate the possible consequences or rewards. Risk is the seed of the tree of joy. And what greater risk than an experience wholly unfamiliar to us? The joy of both Mikhail and the priest soars to new heights when each abandons himself to the control of a will not their own, acting on the knowledge of its true purpose.

And what, in fact, is that purpose, that it reassured Mikhail and the young curate? As the latter had earlier so confidently asserted to the countess that "we know there's only one kind of order, that which comes from charity" (149). Joy liberates as we witness in the case of Dmitri and the countess: it inspires us to take risks which then intensify its presence as demonstrated in the lives of Mikhail and the priest and joy is supremely known in the ability to love. Strikingly, both Zosima and the curate of Ambricourt define hell, the antithesis of joy, as the inability to love. While trying to persuade the countess of the injustice of her view of god, the priest declares that "hell is not to love any more, madame" (163). Likewise, Zosima recounts to his disciples that "fathers and teachers, I ponder 'What is hell?' I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love. Once in infinite existence, immeasurable in time and space, a spiritual creature was given on his coming to earth, the power of saying, 'I am and I love.' Once, only once, there was given him a moment of active living love and for that was earthly life given him, and with it times and seasons" (299). So the highest expression of the experience of joy is an imitation of that principle which orders reality. Alyosha becomes convinced of this truth following his own encounter with the risk and pain of the unknown, the death of his beloved teacher and mentor experiencing it first through his meeting with Grushenka and then through his vision of heaven facilitated by the reading of the passage about the miracle at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. What his head and heart have known are now experienced in every part of his body. Awakening from his dream, Alyosha goes outside and it is as if all of his senses are now infused with the knowledge of joy, empowering him to love:

The vault of heaven, full of soft, shining stars, stretched vast and fathomless above him. The Milky Way ran in two pale streams from the zenith to the horizon. The fresh, motionless, still night enfolded the earth. The white towers and golden domes of the cathedral gleamed out against the sapphire sky. The gorgeous autumn flowers, in the beds round the house, were slumbering till morning. The silence of earth seemed to melt into the silence of the heavens. The mystery of earth was one with the mystery of the stars ... Alyosha stood, gazed, and suddenly threw himself down on the earth. He did not know why he embraced it. He could not have told why he longed so irresistibly to kiss it, to kiss it all. But he kissed it weeping, sobbing and watering it with his tears, and vowed passionately to love it, to love it for ever and ever. „Water the earth with the tears of your joy and love those tears," echoed in his soul. (337-38)

In his "The God of Onions: *The Brothers Karamazov* and the Mythic Prosaic" Gary Saul Morson elaborates on the spiritual significance of Alyosha's meeting with Grushenka and her tale of the wicked peasant woman almost rescued from hell by the onion she once gave to a beggar: "when Alyosha

returns from Grushenka's to the monastery, he feels joy, and joy itself reminds him of Father Zosima, who preached the small joys of life. Alyosha thinks, "He who loves men loves their gladness, too" ... He was always repeating that it was one of his leading ideas" (116). As joy grows, it produces fruit manifesting itself in the physical and tangible while remaining firmly rooted in ideas. Alyosha reflects on his faith in the nature of Christ and his inexplicable joy is at once elucidated and transformed into a determination to love. His ability to love is contrasted with Ivan's compassion for all of humanity. Ivan has not yet allowed joy to set him free; he is trapped, like the countess of Ambricourt, in his denial of responsibility. He longs to be the liberator rather than the liberated. Yet perceiving his own impotence he, as Morson writes, concludes that meaning cannot be found, but his conclusion does not follow. Meaning can be found, but not by theory. It comes not from the top down but from the bottom up, not by argument but by experience — the experience of active love, of sharing people's joy and exchanging onions with them" (121). So ironically, Morson notes, "out of compassion he [Ivan] becomes the most profound misanthrope in world literature" (110). Ivan is so certain of the superiority of the Inquisitor's plan and his own plan of what could be or should be that he is rendered incapable of rejoicing in reality and thus immune to the risk of the unknown and completely impotent in face of the gargantuan task of love.

Bernanos's young priest articulates what he has learned about the true nature of this active love towards the end of his life saying "for I only succeed in small things, and when I am tried by anxiety, I am bound to say it is the small joys that release me" (293). He goes on to observe that "for human agony is beyond all an act of love" (294). He, like Alyosha, comes to perceive the greatest beauty in a moment of deep pain and understands that the battle is not his to win in any ultimate kind of sense. He can simply embrace the earth, the mundaneness of the present, admit its ecstasy and be set free to the unknown appointments of love where he can choose again and again to say yes. Ultimately the curate, like Alyosha, encounters that epitome of joy, the ability to love, even when it means loving his own weakness, even loving his diseased body. Even these he is empowered to greet with a firm yes. It is a reflection of the higher order of love, finally eradicating that pride which looks at reality from without rather than from within. Consummate joy is summarized in the closing lines of the novel: „Yet if pride could die in us, the supreme grace would be to love oneself in all simplicity — as one would love any one of those who themselves have suffered and loved in Christ" (296). Seeing and understanding who one is without trying to hide or escape from it effaces all need for pretense. In his extensive biography of the life and work of Bernanos, Hans Urs von Balthasar notes the uniqueness of this joyful ability to love: "for the deepest aspect of Christianity is God's love for the earth ... through his Incarnation he put himself in a position of demonstrating to his creatures this his suffering out of love" (191). Both Alyosha and the curate knew the truth of this Reality which was not satisfied with being the subject but made itself the object. Joy, rather than being the destination, is the starting point, the source of empowerment for moving on to ever greater heights through the risk of the unknown and the pain of love.

Yet Bernanos and Dostoyevsky do not leave us to digest the main courses of responsibility, risk and self-sacrificial love, nourishing and satisfying they may be, without the promise of some wine and dessert. At the very heart of the *Brothers Karamazov*, just after the death of Zosima, Dostoyevsky highlights the significance of the story of Christ's first miracle at Cana of Galilee in the gospel of John. Morson notes that "the story Father Paissy is now reading over the body, 'Cana of Galilee,' emphasizes the peculiar theology that regards Jesus as the bringer of small prosaic delights" (116). Peculiar indeed. What possible connection could there be between the death of a beloved spiritual mentor and the story of a wedding celebration? Yes, the beginning of joy is taking responsibility for oneself; yes, joy cannot be sustained without the courage to take risks; and yes, the consummate experience of joy is in loving another as one loves oneself. However, joy would not be joy without "small prosaic delights," without the ability to generously bestow upon those we love the smoothness of silk, the sweetness of chocolate, the richness of wine, and indeed to enjoy it together with them. Christ does not merely take on our suffering, his love also compels him to delight in our pleasure. Thus are pain and joy, the macabre and the sensual forever inextricably intertwined. In his vision of heaven Alyosha hears Zosima tell him that "he has made Himself like into us from love and rejoices with us. He is changing the water into wine that the gladness of the guests may not be cut short" (337). This is a pleasure distinct from that of the avoidance of pain, from that of comfort and felicitous circumstances, although it encompasses them. This is a pleasure which is the fruit of resurrection, of intimate knowledge of death and of that eternal constant which continues on even past that dark curtain. Only this renders the small prosaic delights something sacred, something far more than passing sparks of empty hedonism.

Thus, with a view to Zosima's own resurrection, there is perhaps nothing more fitting to read than the story of Christ's delight in the sensual pleasure of those he came to suffer for. Similarly, in Bernanos's *Diary of a Country Priest*, following the countess' death the curate of Ambricourt remembers with joy the hope and the peace that he was able to instill in her and of which she had written so ardently in her final letter to him. He speaks of his awe in the face of the uncanny possibility of being able to give something meaningful: "oh, miracle — thus to be able to give what we ourselves do not possess,

sweet miracle of our empty hands!" (180). He did not rejoice in his role in her eternal salvation alone, but also in the physical relief and delight that she was able to experience before her untimely death thanks to their moment of communion. Michael R. Tobin writes of this passage in his biography *Georges Bernanos: The Theological Source of His Art* that when in the central scene the priest rescues the countess from her despair, she rediscovers that "hope is the flesh of my flesh" (175). This hope was not merely for an intangible, non-corporeal existence, but one that began to take effect in the reality of flesh and blood where at once wounds ache and fester yet also where a kiss can send warm sensations. All the carnal pleasures of this life can only be truly savored as gifts either given to another and born from responsibility, risk and self-sacrifice, or received from another who has undertaken the aforementioned on our behalf. The delights of the flesh are the children of joy.

There remains yet an aspect of joy distinct from the satisfaction received from self-sacrificial love for others and the sharing of prosaic gifts, although it is indeed an integral part of these practices: the joy of community. Thirst for community is perhaps the innate driving force behind the search for joy as an experience, whether or not we are fully aware of it. This sense of community is not merely the assurance afforded by love that another will do whatever it takes to be with us, nor the luxurious comfort of gifts expressing affection, but the recognition that another is like us, that there is a mutual resemblance although not necessarily an obvious one. At the moment when he realizes that Alyosha is not so far removed from him as he imagined, the young boy Kolya exclaims: "oh, how I love you and admire you at this moment just because you are rather ashamed! Because you are just like me" (523). Dostoyevsky goes on to add that he said it "in positive ecstasy. His cheeks glowed, his eyes beamed" (523). Interestingly, the resemblance that Kolya perceived is not something related to a character trait he is particularly proud of or a cause he feels passionately about: it is a resemblance of weakness, an acknowledgement that Alyosha is vulnerable, too, and that although he does not try to hide it, he blushes to speak if it. What joy there is in seeing that another is open to and can be touched by pain just as much as we ourselves can. What unspeakable happiness and relief in recognizing that another shares the burden of our guilt, that we are not the sole individual cause of all that is amiss in life. For Bernanos's curate of Ambricourt this community of shame, of guilt, or pain originates first of all in god and is only sustainable through him: "true pain coming out of a man belongs primarily to God, it seems to me. I try and take it humbly to my heart, just as it is. I endeavor to make it mine — to love it. And I understand all the hidden meaning of the expression which has become hackneyed now: to commune with. Because I really 'commune' with his pain" (83).

The fact that god chooses to resemble us in our shame and guilt, chooses to blush, hide his face, and feel the weight of crooked imperfection, this alone enables us to experience joy, connection, reciprocity rather than despair and isolation in the face of our own or another's iniquity and/or suffering. Kolya sensed that Alyosha was no longer someone on the outside looking into him, but instead a fellow traveler in his inner world of pain, fear and unbearable self-reproach. In the same way, the curate experienced joy in knowing that his Master "not only judges our life but shares it, takes it upon Himself" (84). His mentor, the curate de Torcy speaks of the sense of helplessness that is at the heart of a child's joy, mirroring humanity's euphoric vulnerability in the face of divine incarnation: "but that very sense of powerlessness is the mainspring of a child's joy. He just leaves it all to his mother, you see. Present, past, future — his whole life is caught up in one look, and that look is a smile" (18-19). The child recognizes three crucial truths: an utter dependence upon the mother, resemblance to the one he is dependent upon, and the goodness of the mother reflected in her smile. The curate asserts that this sense of utter dependence, made possible through absolute trust, is the source of joy. Like Kolya, every child yearns to be unconditionally accepted by one who is at the same time in essence as they are and can yet take care of them and not betray them. These comprise the foundation of the joy of community.

For Dostoyevsky and Bernanos joy has its source in something wholly other than human will, experience, or imagination. It is only through a relational acknowledgment of the other, higher absolute that joy could begin to grow and be known in its many facets, liberating the heroes from disorder, giving them the courage to take risks and empowering them to love. The curate of Ambricourt finds in Christ the source of his joy, Christ, who had the power to do anything he wanted but chose to take all responsibility and all risk, sacrificing even his life so that humans could savor the delights of prosaic gifts and find solace in true community with god and each other. Towards the end of his life, thinking of Christ's example, the curate is even able to find joy in community with his enemies: "even from the Cross, when Our Lord in His agony found the perfection of His saintly Humanity — even then He did not own Himself a victim of injustice ... and so I find great joy in thinking that much of the blame, which sometimes hurt me, arose from a common ignorance of my true destiny" (292). In recognizing his likeness to the Savior, the curate is able to perceive his likeness to his enemies and even in this there is joy. In one of his notebooks Dostoyevsky wrote of the joy of sacrificial love made possible by knowledge of and community with Christ: "I define Orthodoxy not by mystical beliefs but by love of humanity, and I rejoice in this" (Dostoyevsky qtd. in Scanlan 55). In his *A Writer's Diary*, Dostoyevsky noted that "in Russian, genuine Christianity, there is no mysticism at all; in it there is only love for humanity, only the image of Christ — at least that is the main thing" (Dostoyevsky qtd. in Scanlan

55). Seeing Christ, allowing him to immerse in one's being when face-to-face with him, was for Dostoyevsky the very core of joy for it transformed one's whole outlook. It is this intimate knowledge of Christ which is central in the final scene of *The Brothers Karamazov*: when the boy Kolya asks incredulously about the reality of the resurrection at the graveside of their friend Ilyusha, Alyosha Karamazov enthusiastically responds, "certainly we shall all rise again, certainly we shall see each other and shall tell each other with joy and gladness all that has happened!" Alyosha answered, half laughing, half enthusiastic" (728). As in the case of the curate of Ambricourt, sharing such a measure of community with Christ so as to even become like him, allows Alyosha, Kolya, and the other boys to find joy in the realization of their own inevitable mortality. This is the joy Dostoyevsky and Bernanos deemed worthy of desiring: a joy which affords triumph even in the face of apparent defeat before our enemies and the surety of our own demise, a joy which allows our lives to overflow with simple yet profound gifts, and enables the experience of true community, although it may come by way of heavy responsibility, costly risk, and painfully sacrificial love.

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