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# *Crime and Punishment* and Jules Janin's *La Confession*

**PRISCILLA MEYER**

Several of the greatest Russian scholars have studied the effect of French literature of the 1820s and 1830s on Russian prose. Viktor Vinogradov, Grigorii Gukovsky, Leonid Grossman, and Boris Tomashevsky have established the importance of the French feuilleton and the “roman furieux” for Gogol and, later, Dostoevsky. With the exception of Vinogradov’s study of the influence of Jules Janin’s *Dead Donkey and the Guillotined Woman* on Gogol’s *Nevsky Prospect*, their interest was predominantly in the history of genre rather than on the interpretation of particular literary texts.<sup>1</sup> Here I would like to show that Janin’s *La Confession* was an important (and entirely unexamined) subtext for *Crime and Punishment*.

Jules Janin and Eugene Sue were the best known writers of feuilleton literature of the late 1820s and 1830s. Dostoevsky’s relationship to Sue’s work is briefly alluded to in the criticism: he considered translating Sue’s *Mathilde* (1841) and read his *Wandering Jew* when it came out in 1845, commenting that it “isn’t bad (*neduren*),” but that “Sue is pretty dim (*ves’ma nedalek*).”<sup>2</sup> A. S. Dolinin observes that Dostoevsky’s *Netochka Nezvanova* is indebted to *Mathilde* for the correspondence between the two girls, which he terms “direct influence, bordering on plagiarism,” and *The Mysteries of Paris* (1843) is generally considered to have contributed to the realist ballast of *Crime and Punishment*.<sup>3</sup> No one, however, has examined Dostoevsky’s relationship to Janin.

Janin (1804–74) caused a furor when his first book, *The Dead Donkey and the Guillotined Woman*, appeared in 1829 in both France and Russia. Aware that its gruesome descriptions of a Paris abbatoir, a hospital for venereal diseases, a prison, and an execution would be controversial, Janin published the book anonymously. In April 1830, Pushkin wrote to Petr Viazemsky, “You’re right to find *Dead Donkey* delicious. It’s one of the most characteristic works of the moment. It is being attributed to V. Hugo—I see more talent in it than in *The Last Day of a Condemned Man*, where there is a lot.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>V. V. Vinogradov, “Zhiul’ Zhanen i Gogol’,” *Evoliutsiia russkogo naturalizma* (Leningrad, 1929), 153–204.

<sup>2</sup>F. M. Dostoevsky, letter to M. M. Dostoevsky, 4 May 1845, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh* (PSS) (Leningrad, 1972–90), 28:1:110.

<sup>3</sup>See, for example, G. Fridlender, *Dostoevskii i mirovaia literatura* (Moscow, 1979), 31.

<sup>4</sup>B. Tomashevskii, “Pushkin i frantsuzskaia literatura,” *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* 31–32 (1937–39): 1–76, 65;

Janin, who wrote a weekly feuilleton for the *Journal des débats* for forty years (1829–69) and produced novels, stories, literary portraits, and translations, was an important presence in the French press for half a century. His contemporaries had extreme reactions to him: while Mirecourt accuses him of misusing his journalistic influence and calls him a “jealous pygmy” for his treatment of Balzac (who called him “that fat little man who bites”), Piedagnel praises his loyalty to his editor, his generosity as a professional always ready to help young writers, and recalls Twist, a Dutch horticulturalist who named a tulip for him.<sup>5</sup> As a young writer, Regnier-Destourbet dedicated his tale, *Louisa, ou les douleurs d'une fille de joie*, to Janin, and Alphonse Carr was considered to have been influenced by his Sternian mix of genres.<sup>6</sup>

Janin was such a well-known figure in Russia in the 1830s that Gogol nicknamed his friend Annenkov “Jules.” Vinogradov, Tomashevsky, and Sergei Makashin consider *Dead Donkey* the foundation of the Russian horror novel, just as French critics consider Janin the founder of the frenetic school.<sup>7</sup> Belinsky wrote in *Teleskop* in 1836 that Janin was “a true Frenchman, a good fellow without pretensions, simple, naive, amusing, often witty, often touching,”<sup>8</sup> and Pushkin found Janin’s novels the most interesting of the French literature of the early 1830s.

Pushkin was as impressed by Janin’s second work as he was by his first: *La Confession* appeared in 1830, and was published in Russian the following year. Pushkin even translated chapter 4 of Janin’s *Confession* into verse in a variant of “Tebia poiū na tomnoi lire” (1830).<sup>9</sup> Given the importance of Janin to Russian writers, it is curious that this remarkable work has received little attention, but then even the French had ignored it until Janin’s centenary in 1974.<sup>10</sup> Vinogradov does discuss a passage in *La Confession* describing a five-story house whose tenants’ social class corresponds to the floors they inhabit, probably because Janin himself excerpted it in the *Revue de Paris* in 1830 to illustrate the new naturalist poetics. Vinogradov accordingly cites it as evidence of the influence of the French school on Russian physiological descriptions, an observation Donald Fanger repeats some forty years later.<sup>11</sup>

But the realistic sociological description is not typical of Janin’s narrative, nor essen-

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also in idem, “Frantsuzskaia literatura v pis'makh Pushkina k E. M. Khitrovo,” in *Pushkin i Frantsiia* (Leningrad, 1960), 65–174, 377.

<sup>5</sup>See Eugène de Mirecourt, “Jules Janin,” *Histoire Contemporaine: Portraits et silhouettes au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1867), 24:31; Balzac, quoted by Joseph-Marc Bailbe, “Situation,” *Jules Janin 1804–1874: Une sensibilité littéraire et artistique*, no. 33 (Paris, 1974), 13; and Alexandre Piedagnel, *Jules Janin* (Paris, 1874), 61.

<sup>6</sup>Abbé Tiberge (pseudonym of Regnier-Destourbet), *Louisa, ou les douleurs d'une fille de joie* [1830] (Paris, 1865), preface, 3.

<sup>7</sup>See Tomashevskii, *Pushkin i Frantsiia*, 377; and S. A. Makashin, “Literaturnye vzaimootnosheniia Rossii i Frantsii XVIII–XIX vv.,” *Literaturnoe nasledstvo* 29–30 (1937): xxxvi.

<sup>8</sup>Quoted by Emile Haumant, *La culture française en Russie (1700–1900)* (Paris, 1910), 361.

<sup>9</sup>The fragment is from Aleksandr Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow, 1948), 3:1:465, as noted by Tomashevskii, *Pushkin i Frantsiia*, 67.

<sup>10</sup>See Bailbe, *Jules Janin*, 11.

<sup>11</sup>Donald Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism* (Cambridge, MA, 1967), 23–24. The only other Russian critical notice of *La Confession* I have found is for its brief mention of opium in the context of Gogol’s *Nevskii prospekt* and de Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. See Vinogradov, “O literaturnoi tsiklizatsii: Po povodu «Nevskogo prospekta» i «Ispovedi opiofaga» De Kvinsi,” in *Evolutsiia*, 89–126, 91.

tial to it. *La Confession* is not a naturalistic physiological work but a despairing deliberation on the loss of religion in postrevolutionary France. Its hero is an educated young murderer who is torn between remorse and the desire to conceal his crime as he searches for a way to appease his conscience, a theme shared with *Crime and Punishment*.

In a letter to his brother written in 1859, Dostoevsky excitedly reported his intention to write a confessional novel, “isповед’-roman,” which he had thought up in prison, “lying on my bunk (*lezha na narakh*),” to be called *The Confession (Ispoved’)*.<sup>12</sup> The commentators to the *Collected Works* consider that the title refers to *Notes from Underground*, an opinion shared by Joseph Frank. I dispute their argument: The editors argue that the image of Raskolnikov arose only in 1865, yet they cite as evidence for their position Dostoevsky’s 1859 statement that he is abandoning the novel about “a young man ... who goes to Siberia.” They point out that *Notes from Underground* is a first person narrative in two parts (though Dostoevsky had spoken of three for his *Confession*), but do not mention in this context that *Crime and Punishment* began as a first-person narrative. The editors further assume that the “sensual (*strastnyi*) element” in the projected *Confession* must confirm that the title refers to *Notes from Underground*, but it has other interpretations, as I will suggest. There appears to be insufficient evidence to controvert Grossman’s earlier conclusion: “Hints sprinkled throughout Dostoevsky’s letters and notebooks show that by ‘Confession’ he meant the story of Raskolnikov.”<sup>13</sup> An examination of Janin’s *Confession* provides material that supports Grossman’s claim.

The editors of the *Collected Works* consider that Dostoevsky’s projected title for *Crime and Punishment* alludes to Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Confessions*; I propose that it refers at least equally to Jules Janin’s *Confession*.<sup>14</sup> Grossman suggests four other confessions as well, but their content bears only generic, not thematic, relationship to *Crime and Punishment*.<sup>15</sup>

Early in *La Confession* Janin throws out a challenge that would have urgency for an aspiring young writer. He discusses the difficulty of his generation caught between past faith and present spiritual vacuum: “The history of this painful hesitation is a lacuna in the psychological novel; others than I, philosophers much better at expressing themselves, will doubtless try to render intelligible ... this deplorable position between being and non-being, incredulity and doubt, in which we find ourselves.”<sup>16</sup>

The plot is simple: A young man, Anatole, comes from a rich family that counts on him to reestablish its prerevolutionary station. Anatole is “simple and good, thoughtful and ambitious when there was nothing better to do,” and has a “superior intelligence” (*une intelligence avancée*) (p. 28). He marries at the wish of his parents, and on his wedding night in a moment of (ambiguous) passion strangles the wife that his mother chose for him. The motive for the crime is unclear and never examined. The murder is

<sup>12</sup>Dostoevskii, *PSS* 3:493 and 7:308n; Frank, *Dostoevsky: The Miraculous Years, 1865–1871* (Princeton, 1995), 61.

<sup>13</sup>Leonid Grossman, *Dostoevskii* (Moscow, 1962), 331 (translation mine).

<sup>14</sup>Dostoevskii, *PSS* 5:378.

<sup>15</sup>They are Alfred de Musset, *La Confession d’un enfant du siècle*; George Sand, *La Confession d’une jeune fille*; Frédéric Soulié, *Confession générale*; and de Quincey, *The Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. See Leonid Grossman, “Poetika Dostoevskogo,” in Grossman, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 5 vols. (Moscow, 1928), 2:2:143.

<sup>16</sup>Jules Janin, *La Confession* (Paris, 1861), 25–26 (all translations from the French are mine).

merely the pretext for the rest of the book, which chronicles the excruciating remorse Anatole experiences and his attempts to find a priest whom he considers sufficiently spiritual to confess to.<sup>17</sup> But faulting the priest is Anatole's way of disguising his own ambivalence about accepting guilt for his act. Each time Anatole seems about to achieve relief from his agony, he finds the priest deficient and at the last minute decides not to confess to him. In the final short chapter his parents put him in a madhouse, but he recovers and himself becomes a priest: "He prays, he sings, he sleeps; he gives himself over to a well-being that is not of this earth, and when he gets out of his carriage he abandons himself to his lackeys with the soft languor of a woman who has just gotten up from childbed" (pp. 260–61).

The points of contact with *Crime and Punishment* are clear: a heretofore decent young man, intelligent and proud, commits a murder, goes unsuspected, and is plunged into despair by pangs of conscience; he repeatedly oscillates between his pride and his desire to free himself from guilt, ultimately to pass from painful incarceration to an ambiguous spiritual peace. Like Dostoevsky, Janin is concerned with the spiritual condition of his generation in a society that has abandoned its former religious and moral ideals in favor of "calculation" and intellectualization. There are many more particular moments common to the two works in which an idea of Janin's can be seen to give rise to Dostoevsky's fuller exploration of it. I will begin by emphasizing the points of similarity.

By chapter 15, Anatole is considering having himself executed on the scaffold. "This was at first a vague and confused religious idea, a vain caprice; then soon it became a need" (p. 87). He recalls his childhood faith: "First he remembered his beliefs of his early years, his lively, pure faith, and his childlike joy when at the first silvery sounds of the bell he would set out on Sunday toward the church of his village, all proud of giving his arm to his grandmother" (p. 88). There follows a happy description of praying, singing with the women, leaving the church through the crowd, village dances in the evening; he remembers being his sister's godfather at age eight, when the priest asks him to renounce the Devil and his works. This closely resembles the scene of Raskolnikov at age seven in his village that provides the setting for the mare-beating in his dream; Raskolnikov recalls his childhood pleasure at the family's twice-yearly visits to attend mass for his grandmother and his love of the village church (whose bells become part of an important motif) and its icons.

The seeds of faith present in both heroes from childhood allow them to turn to faith as a remedy for their agonies; Janin embodies the idea in a realistic village scene as an idyll of purity and community, but after committing the murder, these are "bitter memories" (p. 90). Dostoevsky makes that bitterness part of the village scene in Raskolnikov's dream of the mare-beating. He shows Raskolnikov's village childhood to be the source of his religious faith and love of family, but it is equally the source of murderous violence.

Anatole is conscious that his crime has isolated him totally: "The criminal has friends

<sup>17</sup>Compare Marmeladov's words in the tavern to Raskolnikov, to whom he tells the tale of his sins: "I am looking for a sensitive and educated man" (Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. Sidney Monas [New York, 1968], 25; all citations will be from this edition). But inversely to Anatole, Marmeladov confesses to everyone while continuing to commit the same sins.

no more; the presence of a man is killing to me” (p. 108). But his desire to confess is countered by his former pride:

Yes, it's me ... this pale, thin face, it's me; this lost reason, it's me, this boundless despair, it's me. ... This man who wants to confess to you ... is me, the same Anatole that you have seen so proud of his knowledge (*sa science*), so proud of his wit (*esprit*). This man who made a religion of his own all alone, here he is of the religion of the lowest beggar (*dernier lazzarone*) who repents having missed mass. (p. 103)

The idea of the man-God is addressed explicitly by a “young sceptic” whom Anatole encounters on his quest: “It was perhaps not too much for the ambitious of our times to want to make themselves gods when there was no one who hadn't been king once in his life; hence the sects, heresies, new theogonies, a bourgeois Olympus. ... Who of us has not been Mahomet? ... One is a prophet even in his own country now” (pp. 176–77).

One of the new possible religions is socialism. The young sceptic continues: “You want to believe? Do you want a brand-new religion, my son? Saint-Simon extends the hand to you, Saint-Simon whose ardent disciples began with industrialism and ended up with mysticism” (p. 178). Another continues, “Everything is connected: Mahomet and Bonaparte, St. Augustine and J.-J. Rousseau, Aristophanes and Judas, Anitus and Luther” (p. 179). The world will end “when all intelligences will be equal in the moral world” (p. 180)—the idea of Dostoevsky's ant heap, also identified with Mahomet, Napoleon, and, less directly, Rousseau.

Not only the social analysis but also the psychological portrait of the hero can be seen to be a progenitor of Raskolnikov's. Finding himself isolated, despairing, “he thinks first of turning himself over to human justice to satisfy the law he has violated, to have his *semblables* say ‘You are a murderer’” (p. 85); Dostoevsky incorporates the idea and actually has the artisan call Raskolnikov “murderer” on the street. Anatole is prevented from confessing by the thought of the shame he would cause his family, especially his sister. He discovers when he sees a chained group of prisoners pass by that he regards them as more honest than he; Dostoevsky enlarges upon the theme of Raskolnikov's isolation from the human community both through the artisan's accusation and his rejection by his fellow prisoners in Siberia.

Janin reports Anatole's dreams:

Whoever could recount Antole's sleep and give a history of his dreams would arrive at a horrible story: a hidden nervous pain, a pain without tears, and worst of all, an inexorable obstinacy at remembering that wedding night, so vivid that he felt again between his two hands the warm young imprint of a woman's neck; he would hear the death rattle; he would see again the funeral cortege followed by so many tears.

It was always the same scene, always the same horror, always, always the same ghost in the same dim, sad light, a light that is not from heaven, that comes from the earth, that has neither movement, nor life, nor heat...

Always before his eyes, immobile and pale. Poor child, whom he had seen

so joyous and alive, and who reached out her hand to him with the affection of a sister! (pp. 91–92)

Dostoevsky deploys this material in two separate dreams: The horror of repeating the crime endlessly is taken up in Raskolnikov's dream of smashing Aliona with the axe over and over again "while the old hag laughed, spluttering like a blown flame"; Dostoevsky distills the repetition into one dream, and has his hero relive his crime with intensified violence.<sup>18</sup>

The "sensual element" implied by the murder of a wife in bed on the wedding night is addressed in a separate dream. Anatole's "poor child" of a wife, "immobile and pale," is transformed in Svidrigailov's dream into the five year-old whose pallor becomes a flush as she turns into a "venal French whore."<sup>19</sup>

As one of Raskolnikov's amoral doubles, Svidrigailov represents the venal aspect of the "sensual element" Dostoevsky mentions in his letter to Mikhail. In Janin's work, the murder clearly relates sexuality and violence. Anatole's horror at murdering his wife is intensified by the victim's innocence, childlikeness, purity. In Svidrigailov's dream Dostoevsky combines the innocence and the sensuality—the five-year-old child turns into a mocking prostitute. Raskolnikov's dream of smashing the laughing hag with the axe is doubled by Svidrigailov's of the girl, suggesting the psychological link among innocence, sensuality, and violence in Raskolnikov's emotions. His murders reveal this same ambivalence: Aliona is an old crone, but Lizaveta is always pregnant. She is a holy fool (pure, innocent) but she is also a sensual being; as with Sonia, the disparity between body and spirit is emphasized. But Dostoevsky suggests a psychological relationship between childlike helplessness and murderous impulses: while Sonya's purity of spirit saves Raskolnikov, her naive faith also infuriates him, leading him to reduce her to tears with his verbal brutality. Sonya is Lizaveta's closest friend, doubled with her by the contradiction of their faith and innocence on the one hand, and their sensuality on the other.

Like Anatole, who suddenly finds himself murdering his wife on their wedding night, Raskolnikov is unexpectedly precipitated into murdering the pawnbroker's sister. He murders Lizaveta, but Sonya gives him a second life; she gives him her cross and keeps Lizaveta's in its place. Thus in Dostoevsky's geometric logic, the aspect of Anatole's wife that "reached out her hand to him with the affection of a sister" is given to Sonya, while the aspect that drove him to violence is allotted to Lizaveta.

Anatole is comforted by his mother's cross:

He could get comfort only by gazing at an ivory Christ that his mother had given him. It was a rather large image of the Passion from the chisel of an Italian artist; the face of Christ was beautiful, crowned with thorns and bent like the head of a God, but of a God who is about to die. (p. 95)

Sonia gives Raskolnikov her cross, but only when Raskolnikov decides to go to the police. Unlike Janin, Dostoevsky will not allow the sinner comfort unless s/he takes up

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 274.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 490.

the cross. Furthermore, through Sonya's exchange of crosses with Lizaveta, the cross Raskolnikov receives carries the association with his crime.

Like Raskolnikov, Anatole considers suicide, but decides that it would be too much of a cliché at a time when it was "everyone's monomania" (p. 210). One of Raskolnikov's reasons for rejecting suicide is equally trivial—he is repelled by the foul water of the Neva. But of course, there is a deeper dimension of Raskolnikov's character. His innate capacity for compassion and the seeds of faith planted in his childhood make him worthy of Sonya's sisterhood, and capable of regeneration. But his double, Svidrigailov, lacks a moral basis, making him unworthy of Dunya. Dostoevsky thus differentiates Raskolnikov from Svidrigailov, the meaninglessness of whose existence drives him to suicide. This is where Dostoevsky rejects Janin's resolution of his hero's insufficiently tragic dilemma, and takes up its implications.

Just as Raskolnikov has not repented when he goes to the police, Anatole "felt rather unhappy that he wasn't more ashamed. For a long time he wanted to finish with doubts ... to repent the way a Christian repents" (p. 96). He thinks that "formerly one would go to the Holy Land, build a monastery, and peace would return on the banks of the Jordan or on the last steps of a chapel" (p. 212). Dostoevsky realizes this thought at the climax of the novel, when Raskolnikov begins to accept Sonya's faith and achieves peace on the bank of the biblically peaceful Irtysh, where "time seemed to have stood still, as though the age of Abraham and his flocks had not yet passed."<sup>20</sup> The steps of the chapel are echoed by the stairs to the police station—only a way-station to repentance.

Anatole's scene of confession is the climax of his tale. Its method resembles Dostoevsky's psychological realism: it is initially unclear that the dialogue with his confessor is a dream, that the severe Spanish priest who appears to Anatole in his bedroom is the product of Anatole's inflamed imagination and agonized conscience. Anatole is slowly awakening from the first peaceful sleep since his crime, when suddenly someone pulls open his bed curtains:

When he could distinguish objects, he perceived two paces from his bed a pale and austere face, a lively firm gaze. The man was tall, dry, dressed in black, and patient enough to discourage a corpse.

He had closed the door to the room, and he stood immobile near the trembling young man. ...

[Anatole] felt dominated by this iron gaze which didn't leave him for an instant. (pp. 251–52)

Instead of rejoicing at the arrival of this priest whom he has gone to lengths to find, Anatole suggests they talk so he can judge if the priest is worthy.<sup>21</sup> But the priest is stern: "Confess yourself, sinner!" he insists. "As certain as that there is a God, before I leave here you will confess!" (p. 254) Anatole resists: "Impossible today, father! Today I feel

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 526.

<sup>21</sup>Anatole searches for the priest in the five-story building mentioned above. On the landing of the top floor he is laughed at by a crowd of mocking lodgers in a scene reminiscent of the scenes at the Marmeladovs'.



too happy.” This is his final oscillation between avoiding and confessing. But the priest says he reads “ineffable traces” on Anatole’s forehead.<sup>22</sup>

“What do you read on my forehead, Monsieur?”

“... I read on your forehead very little, almost nothing: a moment of error, an innocent sally, a casual epigram, a murder; what could be more innocent?”

Anatole trembled. A secret that had been his alone—discovered!

“What is that to you, young man? One woman less. ... After all, why do you need to confess? You need joy, lively pleasures, girls to seduce, the transports of ambition. ... Come, free man, what’s become of your will? Order your servants to throw me out. I am an impostor.” (pp. 255–56)

The scene resembles the end of part 3 and beginning of part 4 of *Crime and Punishment*, when Raskolnikov first encounters Svidrigailov. He awakens terrified from the dream of killing the pawnbroker:

He was breathing heavily. Strange though. The dream seemed still to be going on. His door was wide open, and a man he didn’t know at all stood on the threshold and was examining him intensely.

... The stranger stood in the same place and continued to gaze at him. All of a sudden he stepped cautiously over the threshold, closed the door carefully behind him, went up to the table, and waited a moment. All this time he did not take his eyes off Raskolnikov ... it was apparent that he was prepared to wait a long time.<sup>23</sup>

In the conversation that follows, Svidrigailov justifies his crimes in the same ironic tone that the priest uses to mock Anatole. Dostoevsky embodies Raskolnikov’s bad conscience in Svidrigailov who is introduced as his dream-hallucination (“‘Is the dream still going on or isn’t it?’ he thought”), just as Anatole dreams his confessor.<sup>24</sup> Anatole at first resists admitting his guilt; Raskolnikov can see Svidrigailov’s guilt clearly despite the latter’s sophistry, but cannot see through his own rationalization or recognize his murder as a sin.

But Anatole ends by confessing to the unrelenting priest, who asks: “When you refuse God as judge, when you deny that supreme justice which comes to you, do you think that human justice is satisfied? ... Divine law or human law claim you; one or the other must be satisfied” (pp. 257–58).

The priest’s knowledge of Anatole’s crime and his contrasting two kinds of law is allotted to Porfiry, during their final interview in Raskolnikov’s room, as eerie a scene in its way as the one with Svidrigailov which it echoes. “You committed the murders, yes,”

<sup>22</sup>In *Crime and Punishment* the word “traces” is taken up by the narrator in part 2, chapter 1 (pp. 95–97), and answered by Raskolnikov, just as here Anatole repeats the dream-priest’s word; Dostoevsky transfers Anatole’s dialogue with himself from dream dialogue to narrative technique in shifting from a first person confession to a third person narrative. Svidrigailov takes up the motif when claiming that there were “no traces” of his having beaten Marfa Petrovna (p. 278).

<sup>23</sup>Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 275.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 275.

Porfiry tells Raskolnikov. Raskolnikov keeps running his fingers through his hair as he sits silently resisting Porfiry's request that he confess.<sup>25</sup>

Anatole makes the same gesture while he continues to resist the priest's demand that he confess: "He kept passing his hand through his hair which was still beautiful and which he found obedient as before" (p. 254). The priest takes up the gesture in mocking his unwillingness to confess: "You kill, and when a priest comes to you, you run your hand through your hair, you uncover your murderer's forehead, and you say to him insolently: What do you read on my forehead?" (p. 257). In Janin's context, the gesture more clearly refers to the mark of Cain, the sign of divine mercy accorded the murderer;<sup>26</sup> in Dostoevsky's, the gesture could seem to be merely a realistic sign of Raskolnikov's tension under a detective's gaze. But with the insight afforded by Janin's tale, the gesture can be taken to refer not only to the mark of Cain but equally to the mark of the Beast from Revelation (pp. 13–19) that signifies acceptance of the false prophet.

When Porfiry says "Give yourself up and confess," he is advising Raskolnikov both to give himself up to human law as well as to find faith in God.<sup>27</sup> Dostoevsky examines the hero's movement toward confession by embodying his motives in distinct characters: the despised aspect of self, which Janin merely summarizes in a final paragraph, becomes Svidrigailov who confesses readily to his heinous acts but cannot repent them.<sup>28</sup> Dostoevsky renders the stern Spanish confessor, a man who has left human society and acts only as God's intermediary, as the "used up" Porfiry, the bachelor intermediary of human justice.

In *Crime and Punishment* Dostoevsky elaborates Janin's premise: even a misguided young man, if he has a moral basis in religion, will suffer such pangs of conscience for a crime that he will be driven to confess. He answers Janin's challenge to examine the psychology of a man born at the border between a religious generation and a new, faithless one. He translates the French postrevolutionary dilemma into Russia of the 1860s and treats it in far more realistic detail than does Janin.<sup>29</sup> Dostoevsky also makes explicit Anatole's implicit ambivalence; he creates characters to convey the warring aspects of Anatole's personality, allotting his absence of remorse to Svidrigailov, the rights of human justice to Porfiry, and divine law to Sonia.

Most characteristically, Dostoevsky changes Janin's cynical ending. In *La Confession* Anatole himself becomes one of the priests whose lack of religiosity had appalled him; rather than be elevated by his ordeal, Anatole capitulates to the spiritual vacuum, becoming a fat, languid priest. The "well-being not of this earth" he achieves is at best ambiguous, but more likely a bitter irony. Raskolnikov, however, at the novel's close, is on the brink of "gradual renewal and rebirth, of ... gradual transition from one world to another, of ... acquaintance with a new reality of which he had previously been com-

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 440.

<sup>26</sup>See Genesis 4:15.

<sup>27</sup>Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 257.

<sup>28</sup>Pages 259–60. Here in the context of all his other sins, the murder becomes merely "un péché presque vulgaire" (p. 259), just as Svidrigailov, without faith, can see all his misdeeds (for example, his various depraved acts of womanizing, his wife beating, his swindling, and causing Filip's suicide) as ordinary, and even hell as only a bathhouse with spiders.

<sup>29</sup>Robert Louis Jackson shows how Dostoevsky uses Chateaubriand's *Le génie du Christianisme* in *The Broth-*

pletely ignorant.<sup>30</sup> Like *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Crime and Punishment* ends with faith in the resurrection of the spirit. Thus Dostoevsky turns Janin's flippant picaresque tale into both a psychological novel and a kind of modern gospel,<sup>31</sup> genres that before Dostoevsky's work would have appeared antithetical.<sup>32</sup>

The close relationship between Janin's and Dostoevsky's works suggests that *La Confession* made a strong impression on Dostoevsky that remained with him in Siberia, where it was eventually distilled, along with many other literary sources—from French realism on one extreme to the Gospel on the other—into the projected novel of “a young man who goes to Siberia.”

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*ers Karamazov* to reaffirm the need for faith in “Chateaubriand and Dostoevsky: Elective Affinities,” *Dialogues with Dostoevsky: The Overwhelming Questions* (Stanford, 1993), 134–43.

<sup>30</sup>Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, 528.

<sup>31</sup>See Priscilla Meyer, “Crime and Punishment: Dostoevsky's Modern Gospel,” *Dostoevsky Studies, New Series*, vol. 2, no. 1 (1998): 69–79.

<sup>32</sup>Iurii Lotman describes precisely this pattern of difference between the West European and the Russian novel (fairy tale vs. mythological plot patterning) in “Siuzhetnoe prostranstvo russkogo romana XIX stoletia,” *Izbrannye stat'i*, 3 vols. (Tallin, 1993), 3:91–106, esp. 97. I am grateful to Otto Boele for pointing this out.