THE SUPERMAN CONNECTION: THE PHILOSOPHICAL LINK BETWEEN
FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE AND FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

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The great American author Mark Twain once said, "All you need in life is ignorance and confidence; then success is sure."

As in life, so in thesis writing. A measure of both of those qualities (though perhaps more of the former than the latter!) went into the successful completion of this project. There is another element to be acknowledged as well, however, and I would like to take this opportunity to do so. First, a sincere and heartfelt thank you goes to my thesis director, Dr. Joseph Ward, for his incredible patience and trust. My gratitude also to my readers, Dr. Richard Lambert and Fr. Bob Butko, for their advice and trust. Finally, a very special thanks to my family and all the friends whose support and interest kept me going through the times when confidence faltered.
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INTRODUCTION

The study of literary influence is an inexact one, at best. When one discovers a similarity in the thought of two different men, it is tempting to assume that one man influenced the other. Often, that influence can only be assumed. There exists another, more fascinating possibility, however. Two men, whether contemporaries or not, may arrive independently at very similar concepts. For example, several elements of the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche appear in the literary works of Fyodor Dostoevsky. Did Nietzsche influence Dostoevsky? The prospect is unlikely. The bulk of Dostoevsky's works were written before Nietzsche ever published a book. Did Dostoevsky influence Nietzsche? Also unlikely. Nietzsche only read three, perhaps four, of Dostoevsky's minor works, not the major ones. There remains, then, the conclusion that each man conceived of a particular idea independently of the other.

Each man, Friedrich Nietzsche and Fyodor Dostoevsky, offers within himself a fascinating, potentially lifelong study. The works of each encompass a vast range of concepts and themes. To condense and single out certain aspects of their achievements is a difficult task. For the purposes of this work, however, I have found it necessary to undertake a process of limitation and distillation. No part of Nietzsche's philosophy can be discarded as irrelevant to the whole, but I was faced with the task of picking and choosing those aspects which most directly relate to the topic at hand. Both Dostoevsky and Nietzsche boasted a
rather large literary output. If, therefore, some of those works have to be disregarded or only touched upon lightly, it is certainly not a judgment of the merit of these works, but simply a matter of time and relevance. While utilizing the other works, I have chosen to focus specifically upon one work of Nietzsche's, Thus Spake Zarathustra, and two of Dostoevsky's, Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov. I chose to concentrate upon Nietzsche's Zarathustra because, while his other works are primarily philosophical treatises, this one is written in the form of a story, thus lending itself better to comparison and contrast in character and theme with the novels of Dostoevsky.

The nature of this particular topic calls for a somewhat awkward presentation. I wish to focus upon Dostoevsky, but in order to perceive the Nietzschean elements in his writing, it is first necessary to devote some time and space to establishing just what Nietzsche's philosophy consists of. To understand Nietzsche's thought, one must understand his life and the influences brought to bear upon it which led to or contrasted with his philosophy.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

The Life of Nietzsche

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, named for the king whose birthday he shared, was born October 15, 1844, in Roecken, in the Prussian province of Saxony. His father, Ludwig Nietzsche, was a Lutheran minister and son of a minister; his mother was the daughter of a Lutheran minister as well. Before Friedrich was four years old, his father died. When, in
January, 1850, the Nietzsches' youngest son died, the mother moved her family to Naumburg. There she established a household consisting of herself, her daughter Elisabeth, Friedrich, her husband's mother and two sisters, Augusta and Rosalie. Friedrich was now the family's sole male member; due to his youth, he was susceptible to the influence of the women. "The tight little Lutheran home gave Nietzsche many lasting traits, including a contempt for common humanity, admiration for discipline, a habit of hero-worship and a haughty, anachronistic sense of honor." From his family, young Friedrich inherited a deep religious fervor and a pseudo-aristocratic, yet petty bourgeois outlook. In accordance with the views of his mother and grandmother, Friedrich learned to admire strong men in general, Napoleon in particular. Interestingly, the class to which Nietzsche's family belonged would later prove itself as the most susceptible to Hitler worship. When Hitler's star began to ascend, in 1933, the Nietzsches and Oehlers (his mother's family) accepted Hitler as the superman.

In 1858, Friedrich entered the celebrated German boarding school at Pforta with a full scholarship. He distinguished himself by his model behavior and talent as a student. At the age of ten, Friedrich wrote several plays and composed music. Demonstrating an early gift for self-analysis, he wrote his first autobiography at the age of fourteen.

In his twentieth year, Nietzsche began to write essays, the subjects of which were Ermenarich the Ostrogoth and Theognis of Megara. Theognis, a sixth century b.c. poet, lauded the virtues of the military and inspired Nietzsche with his theory that an aristocracy should be scientifically bred. At Pforta, Nietzsche was imbued with an image of himself
as an aristocrat with the virtues of fearlessness and the potential to become a leader.

He meditated on human excellence, on the masters of reality who had moulded affairs after their heart's desire. Proudly he felt his superiority to the mass of mankind. Were little people really necessary? For himself he knew there was one central, experienced reality: a great longing that could never be appeased, a longing for the kingdom, the power and the glory.³

Nietzsche graduated from Pforta in 1864 and moved on to the University of Bonn, where he took up the study of classical philology. He gained the attention and favor of Professor Friedrich Ritschl and, in 1865, followed his mentor to Leipzig. Ritschl recommended Nietzsche, now twenty-four years old, for a professorship at the University of Basel. Despite the fact that Nietzsche lacked a doctoral degree, the chair was conferred without examination or dissertation. Nietzsche taught at Basel from 1869 to 1879, when his poor health forced an early retirement. In the course of his tenure at Basel, Nietzsche distinguished himself as a brilliant professor, but also succeeded in alienating the academic community by charging it with betrayal of its calling.⁴

In 1870, Nietzsche served briefly in the military during the Franco-Prussian War. This experience resulted in his contracting dysentery and diphtheria.

It was during Nietzsche's professorship at the University of Basel that he developed friendships with Jacob Burkhardt, the composer Richard Wagner and Wagner's wife, Cosima. Nietzsche was attracted by Wagner's hostility toward Christianity and revival of German paganism. Nietzsche eventually turned away from Wagner though, a change of heart symptomatic of a lifelong inability to sustain lasting friendships.
Nietzsche's literary production began in 1872 with the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, an attempt to interpret Greek art and drama in the light of Schopenhauer's philosophy. The years between 1873 and 1876 showed the publication of *Untimely Meditations*, a series of essays which were, in part, critical and controversial, the last two of which were appreciative interpretations of the minds of Schopenhauer and Wagner. *Human All-too-Human* appeared between 1878 and 1880, followed by *The Dawn of Day* in 1881 and *The Gay Science* in 1882. Nietzsche's most famous work, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, took form between 1882 and 1885. In 1886 appeared *Beyond Good and Evil*, followed in 1887 by *The Geneology of Morals* and, in 1889, *The Twilight of the Idols*. *Antichrist* and *Ecce Homo* were published posthumously.

In 1889, Nietzsche's physical health, strained for many years by migraine headaches and stomach disorders, finally collapsed. His mental health collapsed as well and, in 1900, Friedrich Nietzsche died alone, friendless and insane. By the time of his death, however, Nietzsche's writings had begun to achieve a certain institutional respectability as well as some popular attention, focused on the "Nietzsche legend."

Shortly after Nietzsche's descent into madness, this legend began to develop and take on many different aspects under the auspices of his admirers who were unable to agree upon a single interpretation of his philosophy. As early as 1888 Georg Brandes had begun to give lectures on Nietzsche in Copenhagen, thus spreading the philosopher's fame somewhat. The Nietzsche legend was given impetus by a literary circle called the "George Kreis" founded by the poet Stefan George. This
circle made a hero of Nietzsche in their need to rally behind someone who could show them that a heroic life was still possible. The circle contributed to the literature concerning Nietzsche. The first and most successful of these contributions was Ernst Bertram's Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie, which presents the Nietzsche legend in its most fully developed form.5

While the intellectual communities were thus occupied with their versions of Nietzsche's philosophy, his sister, Elisabeth Forster, lost no time in applying herself to her brother's cause as well. While the now insane Friedrich convalesced in his mother's home, Elisabeth seized the opportunity to try to aid her husband, using her brother. Bernhard Forster, a leader of the German anti-Semitic movement had, several years earlier, established a Teutonic colony in Paraguay called "Nueva Germanica."6 Forster, however, committed suicide, leaving the affairs of the colony in the hands of his wife. Elisabeth sought to make of her husband a national hero, but her efforts served only to provoke attacks from the disillusioned "colonists." At this juncture, Elisabeth, realizing the potential within her brother's ideas for an interpretation supportive of her cause, became his chief apostle and contributor to the Nietzsche legend.

When Nietzsche died, Elisabeth, now conveniently surnamed Forster-Nietzsche, gained control of his literary estate. In spite of the fact that she knew very little about her brother's philosophy, Elisabeth Forster-Nietzsche's interpretations were generally accepted. She withheld publication of some of the major works and misinterpreted the others. Elisabeth's interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy resulted
in the commonly held opinion that his ideas are incoherent and ambiguous. In addition, and even more unfortunately, her linking of her brother's philosophy with the ideals and activities of her husband would lead toward the belief that Friedrich Nietzsche was a proto-Nazi. Not only, however, did Elisabeth Forster-Nietzsche prepare the way for that misconception, she later nurtured it by her dogged pursuance of the Nazis with the object of persuading them to accept Nietzsche as the philosopher of their movement.

In truth, Nietzsche was hardly an appropriate philosopher for the Nazi movement. Throughout his life, he held an extremely strong hatred for anti-Semitism, a hatred which contributed to his break with Wagner and prompted this letter to his sister, dated Christmas, 1887:

> You have committed one of the greatest stupidities--for yourself and for me! Your association with an anti-Semitic chief expresses a foreignness to my whole way of life which fills me again and again with ire or melancholy. . . . It is a matter of honor with me to be absolutely clear and unequivocal in relation to anti-Semitism, namely, opposed to it, as I am in my writings. I have recently been persecuted with letters and "Anti-Semitic Correspondence Sheets." My disgust with this party (which would like the benefit of my name only too well) is as pronounced as possible. . . .

Nietzsche knew, only too well, how susceptible his thought was to misinterpretation. He expresses this knowledge through a dream incident in Thus Spake Zarathustra. In a dream entitled "Child with the Mirror," Zarathustra is shown his face in the mirror of public opinion and is appalled by the misrepresentation of his doctrine. "Verily, all-too-well do I understand the sign and admonition of the dream: my teaching is in danger. . . .\(^8\)"
Nietzsche's fears were realized: he became a prophet of the ideology of national socialism due, for the most part, to the followers of Hitler who made little effort to respect the actual intent of a literary work but used random quotes out of context. Thanks to their efforts, Nietzsche has been made to suffer the fate of having contributed to a revolutionary movement which, were he alive, he would have denounced with vehemence.

Nietzsche's chosen audience was the few, the "yet to come"—not what it actually became. His proclamation of God's death struck a chord in the hearts of thousands who found in the superman a hero representative of their own lack of belief. The universalism of Nietzsche's philosophy lent itself to various interpretations. Thus, peaceful anarchists, nihilists, pan-Germanists and Socialists all found justification for their causes by reading their ideals into Nietzsche's works. This, in turn, led to the intensification of the Nietzsche legend into something of a cult.

The chief aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy which has, through the years, received the most attention is, of course, the idea of the "superman." In the light of the furor which this concept has caused, it is interesting to note that Nietzsche did not consider the notion of the superman to be the most radical of his ideas. Far more earth-shaking, in his opinion, was his doctrine of eternal recurrence.

Eternal Recurrence is the idea that whatever there is will return again and that whatever there is, is a return of itself, that it all has happened before, and will happen again, exactly in the same way each time forever. . . . There is no beginning and end, and no middle either to the story of the world. . . .

Nietzsche's opinion aside, the fact remains that the idea of the superman, in whatever incarnation, will always be identified with Nietzsche, usually to his detriment. The superman, or Ubermensch, was heralded in Nietzsche's work, Thus Spake Zarathustra.

The Philosophy of Nietzsche

Thus Spake Zarathustra

The work is written in the form of a parable about a lonely wanderer, a prophet named Zarathustra. Zarathustra descends from his mountain hermitage to spread the gospel of the superman.

According to Walter Kaufmann, the term "superman" is actually a less than accurate translation of the German Ubermensch. Kaufmann uses, instead, the term "overman." Throughout this section of this paper, the terms will be interchanged, depending upon the source. I prefer to use the term "superman" for reason of its more commonly known usage.

Zarathustra's Prologue concerns his decision to descend from the mountain and spread his message to the masses. His first encounter is with a saint who has isolated himself from mankind in order that he may love God and not man. Zarathustra, taking leave of the man, asks himself, "Could it be possible? This old saint in the forest has not yet heard anything of this, that God is dead!" Later, Zarathustra will quote the devil: "'God too has his hell: that is his love of man,'" and "'God is dead; God died of his pity for man.'"

God being dead, man must look for meaning in life elsewhere. That meaning lies in man's raising himself above the level of animals and the "all-too-human." Zarathustra enters a town and begins to exhort the people:
I teach you the overman. . . . All beings so far have created something beyond themselves; and do you want to be the ebb of this great flood and even go back to the beasts, rather than overcome man?13

In a succession of images, Zarathustra tries to impress upon the people the vision of the overman. Man is a polluted stream but should be a clean sea; as animals are to man, so must man be to the overman. The image frequently associated with the overcoming of man is that of a rope or bridge: "Man is a rope, tied between beast and overman. . . . What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not an end. . . ."14

Before the appearance of the overman, however, there must be the "last men." The last men will be the greatest that mankind can produce before the generation of the overman. The last men are not, however, necessarily something to be admired. Zarathustra says of them, "Let me speak to them of what is most contemptible: but that is the last man. . . . Alas the time of the most despicable man is coming, he that is no longer able to despise himself."15 The last men are despicable because they are still all-too-human; they do not realize their own degraded position in relation to the overman.

Zarathustra begins to search for disciples:

Living companions I need, who follow me because they want to follow themselves. . . . Zarathustra shall not become the shepherd and dog of a herd. To lure many away from the herd, for that I have come.16

The significance of this passage lies in the term "herd." Zarathustra considers the mass of mankind little more than a herd and holds Christianity partially responsible for this subjugation of the masses. At one point, Zarathustra comes upon a man, "The Voluntary Beggar," speaking
to a herd of cattle. The man says to Zarathustra, parodying the Bible, "Except we turn back and become as cows, we shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."17

It is from the masses, however, although a herd, that the overman will appear. He will neither appear directly nor immediately, but eventually, as the result of a creative act on the part of man.

Once one said God when one looked upon distant seas; but now I have taught you to say: overman.

God is a conjecture; but I desire that your conjectures should not reach beyond your creative will. Could you create a god? Then do not speak to me of any gods. But you could well create the overman. Perhaps not yourselves, my brothers. But into fathers and forefathers you could re-create yourselves: and let this be your best creation.18

The obvious implication of this statement is that the overman has not yet existed. Zarathustra reinforces this a little further on:

Never yet has there been an overman. Naked I saw both the greatest and the smallest man: they are still all too similar to each other. Verily, even the greatest I found all-too-human.19

Not only must the all-too-human man be overcome, but all that he creates, as well, including constraint, statute, necessity, consequence, purpose, will and good and evil. It is this suggestion that the overman is above the law that would, again, be seized upon in later years and used to justify various acts of anarchy, both actual and fictional. This idea is, of course, repeated in many forms throughout Nietzsche's works. Zarathustra tells the people:

Thus my great love of the farthest demands it: do not spare your neighbor! Man is something that must be overcome!
There are many ways of overcoming: see to that yourself.

Overcome yourself even in your neighbor.

What you do, nobody can do to you in return.

Behold there is no retribution. 20

The good and the just represent the greatest danger for the future of mankind. Thus, they must be destroyed, by one means or another.

"Break, break the good and the just!" 21

There is no retribution but there is a form of redemption which is found in redeeming what is past in man and recreating all that has been.

Zarathustra calls for a revaluation of all values, calling good and evil an "illusion" and saying,

Thou shalt not rob! Thou shalt not kill! Such words were once called holy. . . .

Is there not in all life itself robbing and killing? And that such words were called holy--was not truth itself killed thereby? . . . O my brothers, break, break the old tablets! 22

In the section entitled, "Of the 1001 Goals," Nietzsche announces the relativity of all values, saying that each different group of people held to a different system of values and morals. There have been one thousand and one goals, no single, universal one. To fill that need, Zarathustra proposes the overman.

Nietzsche/Zarathustra does not so much despise the past as pity it; he pities all that is past because it was abandoned to the whims of each generation which imposes its own interpretation upon history. To oppose this manipulation of the past, a new nobility is called for to redefine the concept of honor, to turn man's attention toward the future and thus redeem the past.
O my brothers, I dedicate and direct you to a new nobility: you shall become procreators and cultivators and sowers of the future.

Not whence you come shall henceforth constitute your honor, but whither you are going! Your will and your foot which has a will to go over and beyond yourselves—that shall constitute your new honor.

Your children's land shall you love: this love shall be your new nobility.

In your children you shall make up for being the children of your fathers: thus shall you redeem all that is past.

In the fourth book of Thus Spake Zarathustra, Zarathustra tries to find suitable companions in the higher men, "the best of the old order, the only men who provide a hint of the superman." These men tell Zarathustra the fact that they have come to him is a sign that the ones greater than they are on their way. Zarathustra tells his companions that they are steps over which the greater men will stride and warns them that they will suffer the opinion of the mob who will persist in the belief that all men are equal. Because God has died, the higher men can live and the "great noon" can come about. The great noon is:

When man stands in the middle of his way between beast and overman and celebrates his way to the evening as his highest: for it is the way to a new morning.

The morning, of course, will usher in the dawn of the new man, the overman.

The second part of Thus Spake Zarathustra introduces another critical element of Nietzsche's philosophy, the notion of the will-to-power. The will is that which makes all things thinkable:

A will to the thinkability of all beings: this I call your will. You want to make all being thinkable, for you doubt... that it is already thinkable. But it shall yield and bend
for you... That is your whole will, you who are wisest: a will to power...

And this is the second point: he who cannot obey himself is commanded...

This... is the third point...: that commanding is harder than obeying; and not only because he who commands must carry the burden of all who obey...

Where I found the living, there I found will to power; and even in the will of those who serve I found the will to be master.

That the weaker should serve the stronger, to that it is persuaded by its own will, which would be master over what is weaker still...

Zarathustra tells his followers, "To will liberates, for to will is to create" and "The greatest will is necessary for the overman's best."

The will is, of course, the tool of the overman. It is that by which he will establish his domination over the masses. The higher men, however, are not the overmen. They must, therefore, be cautioned concerning the use of the will.

Will nothing beyond your capacity: there is a wicked falseness among those who will beyond their capacity. Especially if they will great things! For they arouse mistrust against great things, these subtle counterfeiters and actors...

Those who attempt to will beyond their capacity are, by doing so, trying to be supermen. They are not, of course, thus he calls them "counterfeiters and actors."

Related Concepts in Other Works

Many of the concepts which appear in Thus Spake Zarathustra are also developed in Nietzsche's other works. In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche expands upon the need for a nobility which will oppose the "herd" which wages war upon the higher men and all they stand for.
In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche defines freedom as:

The will to assume responsibility for oneself . . . That one is prepared to sacrifice human beings for one's cause, not excluding oneself. . . . The human being who has become free . . . spits on the contemptible type of will being dreamed of by shop-keepers, Christians, cows, females, Englishmen and other democrats.30

Thus is freedom identified as the realm of the higher men and the idea reinforced that all is permitted to a man with a great cause.

The aspects of nobility and power are linked, of course, with the idea of the superman. All of Nietzsche's philosophy constituted a yearning, an urge toward a being which would transcend the pettiness of the common man. For if there is no God and nothing higher than humanity as we know it, what is there toward which we can aspire? Nietzsche's answer to that question was that there is no God, but there is an ideal toward which to aspire. There is, or will be, something beyond common humanity, a being or race of beings which will give meaning to our poor existence. If man can be nothing else, then at least he can gain dignity by being the ancestor of the superman. While Nietzsche's opinion of his fellow man is seemingly negative, he actually loved man and wanted him to become better and nobler. The mass of humanity is still necessary as contrast to the superman and as their tool.

Nietzsche believed his age to be a moral interregnum. It was not only a time of great danger, but a time of even greater potential. The old ideals had fallen into decay; he stepped forward to offer new alternatives. His true realm was the future. Life's motion forward and beyond was, in his opinion, the most beautiful of urges to the creative person.
Nietzsche's battle cry, "God is dead!" called for the beginning of a post-Christian era in which everything built upon the Christian faith would collapse, including contemporary morality. Out of the rubble of the collapse will emerge the few, the select, those who were born centuries before their time and who alone are capable of recognizing in this event the dawn of a new day. These new men must have the courage to live in a world without God, a world of lonely, aristocratic detachment from the mass of humanity.

Much of Nietzsche's early thought was influenced by his discovery, as a young man, of the philosophy of Schopenhauer. While primarily a metaphysician, Schopenhauer was also a great philosopher of leadership. Nietzsche was attracted to Schopenhauer's doctrines of will and his attitude toward men.

In his hierarchy of spirits, the artist and the philosopher are in the first rank; in the second rank is the savant; in the third the practical man, in the fourth the proletarian, in the fifth and last the savage. Nietzsche's endeavor was not so much to elevate the practical man to the first rank as to merge Schopenhauer's first three ranks into one superhuman being.31

Nietzsche later turned against Schopenhauer for his belief in a will-to-live rather than Nietzsche's own will-to-power. Nietzsche converted the Schopenhauerian will-to-live into a will-to-power by taking it beyond mere egoism to a cosmic, transcendent force striving toward a higher species. While the Schopenhauerian hero lives for himself, the Nietzschean hero lives for his children--the medium through which the higher beings may be generated.
The Nietzschean Superman

Now, we come to an important question. What, then, is the superman? In Thus Spake Zarathustra and the rest of Nietzsche's works, no concise, specific definition is ever furnished. As a goal toward which humans are to aspire and strive, it is singularly unspecific and indefinite. The superman personifies the future--the future which will exhibit the realization of humanity's greatest potential. Nietzsche tells us what the superman is by telling us what he is not--he is not "all-too-human." He tells us what the superman will have to destroy and what his attitudes will be, but his primary concern is not to define the superman but to set in motion the forces which will drive the master natures onward to the superman, "whose face is too bright to be visible." It is part and parcel of the superman's nature that he be mysterious. After all, he is, in effect, replacing God and God only commands respect as long as he remains incomprehensible. The superman cannot be cast from a mold of limited boundaries because he is the embodiment of the repudiation of the single norm of mediocrity. Nietzsche's formula for the superman calls for a guiltless, joyous being in command of his passions and intellect. The superman, as befits his position of ascendancy over the herd of common humanity, is a lonely man. He will not be immediately recognized by society; his will be a secret nobility without pattern. He is without predecessor and will probably be without followers. An attempt to reveal his superiority to the public would only result in dishonesty and a selfish, dangerous rule.

Nietzsche's own conception of the superman changed throughout his creative life. Two specific characterizations can be traced chronologi-
cally. The first type of superman acknowledges a debt to Schopenhauer. These are the free spirits who love adventure, danger and war. They await with a spirit of anticipation the arrival of a new order and a new slavery. They are "good Europeans" who oppose Christianity and exalt life and man. The second type of superman would arise after the wars of the twentieth century. Nietzsche predicted that the Europeans would be reduced to slavery, that they would be means to an end, used by the race of masters or "lords of the earth"--the supermen. These great men will extend their wills over all they see. They do not allow themselves the luxury of compassion; they wish to use men, not to help them. They are too intelligent to sink into bigotry; they are strong because of their lack of convictions.33

Whatever the tangible qualities of the superman, the ideal remains fixed:

the elevation of humanity itself to a new level of creativity: the raising of a generation which will not have to struggle ... against the tyranny of good and evil, but be free from the start to follow the dictates of its Will.34

From the loins of that newly created generation will spring a greater type of man than the world has ever seen; the highest of this type Nietzsche names superman. The superman has value within himself and is law unto himself. He is neither responsible for nor to society but is, in himself, the state of being for which society longs. As the only ultimate value, his development is not to be encroached upon by society's insistence upon conformity. It is within his realm to transgress any of society's moral and civil laws for the purpose of furthering his cause. He is the man to whose will "all is permitted."
As the creator of values, his is the highest rank among men. It is a common error to interpret the superman as nothing but a ruthless tyrant—the "blond beast"—while, actually, he is more likely to be a silent, sensitive aristocrat. The superman is Dionysian in his revelry in the pleasures of wine, sex, song and victory. This seeming contradiction to the previous statement is indicative of the ambiguity in the description of the superman.

One of Nietzsche's greatest debts is owed to Charles Darwin, without whom much of Nietzsche's thought could not have developed. Nietzsche took from Darwin the idea of heredity and imposed upon it a conclusion supportive of the notion of the superman. He firmly believed that acquired characteristics can be inherited genetically. This facet was vital to Nietzsche's philosophy because, without it, the superman could not come about. Nietzsche did not believe that the superman would be generated through the natural course of events, i.e., biological evolution. Therefore, the superman must come about through the passing along of the acquired characteristics which constitute his superiority. The new race of supermen must be bred, even as a new species of cattle would be. It is for the purpose of this breeding that the new nobility is required.

God being dead, man is responsible for his own destiny. The superman is a product of man's volition. Thus, the nobility shall will the breeding of the supermen.

Nietzsche's racial theory is based not on color but on acquired characteristics, a fact which has been conveniently overlooked by those groups wishing to use Nietzsche as an authority with which to support their causes. In fact, far from being a racial bigot, Nietzsche was
an advocate of race mixture. He believed that the various characteristics and cultural attainments acquired by diverse peoples throughout history would be a great boon to the superior race.

Nietzsche's desire to alter the course of history was not a mere extension of his will to power. He believed that society could not progress until the war against all present values was waged. The will to power battles itself, propelling us toward the superior man, the full realization of human potential. Nietzsche praised "master morality" because it grows out of a triumphant affirmation of the self. Out of the bitter struggle for survival and mastery emerge the few individuals who hold the full stature of the masters. Nietzsche's concern with master morality as opposed to slave morality does not emphasize the contrast between individuals but between groups--those who have power and those who do not. The valuable man is the powerful man; he will be supported by the lesser men, the weak. The values of the mass of mankind will be determined by their usefulness to the superior men; they are tools, means, not ends in themselves.

It is clear that Nietzsche did not identify his beliefs with those of the masters or the slaves. He had no illusion that he was a superman. He was a weak, lonely man disillusioned by the world around him. He found hope only in his vision of a brave new world peopled by a race of strong, vital new men.

This, then, is the gist of Nietzsche's thought upon the matter of the superman. Mankind at present has witnessed the death of God and deterioration of the old values. The time is ripe for the establishment of new values, based not on God, but on man. A new nobility must rise
out of the mass of mankind, a nobility which will dedicate its will to the breeding of a superior being which will represent the overcoming of the "all-too-human" man. The generation of the race of supermen will usher in a new dawn in human history.

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

Nietzsche's Discovery of Dostoevsky

In 1887, at age forty-three, Friedrich Nietzsche discovered the writings of Fyodor Dostoevsky. Nietzsche was overwhelmed by the Russian. He expressed his emotion in a letter to his friend Franz Overbeck:

... I did not even know the name of Dostoevski--just a few weeks ago--uneducated person that I am, not reading any journals. An accidental reach of the arm in a bookstore brought to my attention L'esprit Souterrain, a work just translated into French. ... The instinct of kinship ... spoke up immediately; my joy was extraordinary.35

Nietzsche apparently never read Dostoevsky's major works, but he did read The House of the Dead, Notes from the Underground and perhaps Raw Youth and The Insulted and Injured.36 Nietzsche admired Dostoevsky as a psychologist and seems to have been influenced by Dostoevsky's image of Jesus, one which vacillated between reverence and disdain.37 Both men share the dubious distinction of having inadvertently contributed to mass movements of which neither would have approved.
The Life of Dostoevsky

Dostoevsky's life, as is Nietzsche's, is an important factor in the understanding of his ideas. Dostoevsky's experiences gave rise to his convictions which, in turn, give rise to his works. To understand one is to understand the other.

Fyodor Dostoevsky was born in Moscow, October 30, 1821. The Dostoevsky family was a product of the new St. Petersburg empire and belonged to the intelligentsia. Fyodor's father, Mikhail, an ex-army surgeon, was employed in a hospital for the poor in Moscow. Fyodor spent his childhood on the premises of the hospital, in an atmosphere of poverty and misery. Mikhail, an alcoholic, was a suspicious, irritable man and strict disciplinarian. When his wife died in 1837, he resigned his post at the hospital and retired to his small estate near Tula. There, his alcoholism and bad temper worsened; he treated his serfs so badly that finally, in 1838, they murdered him.

When Fyodor was seventeen years of age, his father enrolled him, against his will, in the St. Petersburg college of military engineering. Fyodor was an intelligent, gifted student with a quick, vivid imagination. His great passion was literature, both poetry and novels. He delighted in the Gothic romances of Ann Radcliffe, "Monk" Lewis, Maturin and E. T. A. Hoffman. Fyodor's flair for the melodramatic was kindled by the lurid trappings and scenes of these novels.

The six years, from 1838 to 1844, that Fyodor spent at the engineering college were unhappy ones. In 1844, he obtained a military commission but devoted all his free time to reading and writing. He achieved sudden literary fame in 1846 with the appearance of his first novel, Poor Folk.
The work was hailed by critics, and twenty-five year old Fyodor was welcomed into the literary circles of St. Petersburg. Fyodor soon resigned his commission in order to devote himself fully to writing. This soon proved an impractical move, however, as he failed to follow up on his initial success. Dostoevsky's second novel, The Double, was attacked by critics and friends alike. Dostoevsky, in a state of poverty and frustration, continued to write without success. In 1849 occurred an event which would turn Dostoevsky's life upside down and profoundly influence his literature. On April 23, 1849, Dostoevsky was arrested and subsequently court-martialed on a charge of political conspiracy. The last years of the reign of Tsar Nicholas I (1825-1855) were marked by a particularly oppressive political reactionism. The government of St. Petersburg involved itself in suppression of thought. The young men of St. Petersburg and Moscow gathered in secret circles to discuss publications brought in from the West. Dostoevsky was involved in a group which held weekly gatherings at the home of Mikhail Petrashevsky to discuss the writings of French utopian Socialists such as Fourier, St. Simon and Proudhon, and the need for social reform in Russia. Within this group, Dostoevsky also became involved with a smaller group, the Durov Circle. The men in this group believed that reform could not be achieved peacefully. They advocated revolutionary action for the purpose of freeing the serfs. The government of the tsar infiltrated the group and finally arrested members of the Petrashevsky Circle. Twenty members of the group, including Fyodor Dostoevsky, were condemned to death. At dawn, December 22, 1849, they were taken to the place of execution. In a bizarre drama, the men were reprieved at
the very last moment. Dostoevsky's sentence was commuted to four years of hard labor in a Siberian prison camp at Omsk. These four years in Siberia gave another unique opportunity to the sensitive man Dostoevsky to study and experience mental and physical torment.

Dostoevsky served his sentence like any of the common murderers and thieves among whom he lived in chains, stench and hard labor. He endured profound spiritual agony during the ordeal, and he dates his first epileptic seizures from this time. Although initially shunned by the other prisoners as an intellectual, Dostoevsky eventually got to know well many of his fellow prisoners and came even to admire them. The experience fueled his imagination with themes and characters which he would use in his novels. He later told his brother,

"How many native types, characters did I take with me from prison! . . . How many tales of vagabonds, robbers and, in general, of the whole gloomy, wretched existence. . . . What a wonderful people! On the whole, I did not lose my time. If not Russia, then I have come to know the Russian people, as well as only few know them!"

In prison, Dostoevsky also made another great step in his artistic development. He was allowed only one book during his detention: the New Testament. He rediscovered his faith in Christ and found personal comfort in the Gospels. He was particularly affected by the knowledge that only Christ has the power to raise the sinner to new life. The remainder of Dostoevsky's life was a spiritual journey. He searched for the answer to humanity's greatest spiritual puzzle: how to reconcile faith in the God of love and mercy with the existence of suffering and misery.
Dostoevsky entered prison a young radical and unbeliever, and he left it with a heightened respect for the authority of the crown and a new faith in the teachings of Christ.43

In his creative development as an artist, the prison experience was a positive one for Dostoevsky. The experience sharpened his native powers of psychological insight and provided him with rich material for further exploration of the human psyche as it exists in a suffering individual.

Dostoevsky was released from prison in 1854 but stayed in Siberia to serve another five years as a private in a Siberian line battalion at Semipalatinsk. Dostoevsky worked hard as a soldier, winning favor with his superiors and gradually restoring his social position. He obtained a commission and, in 1857, married Marya Isaeva, the frail, sickly widow of another officer, a hopeless drunk. Dostoevsky used Marya and her first husband as the pattern for the characters of Marmeladov and his wife in Crime and Punishment.

Marriage increased Dostoevsky's already serious financial problems which, in turn, increased his need and desire to write again. In 1859, Dostoevsky was allowed to return to St. Petersburg a free man, ten years after he had set out in chains for Siberia.

Dostoevsky's life, post-exile, can be divided into three periods: the first from 1859-1865, the second from 1865-1872, and the third from 1872 until his death in 1881.44 The first period Dostoevsky spent rebuilding his reputation and becoming involved in journalism. In 1861, Fyodor and his brother Mikhail began publication of a liberal periodical called Vremia ("The Time"). As an ex-convict, Fyodor could not publicly control the magazine, so he held the position of editor to Mikhail's
ownership and business managership. The magazine was an immediate success but was suppressed in 1863 by the government because of a seemingly unpatriotic article on the Polish revolution. Meanwhile, Dostoevsky was also working in a literary vein. He required permission to publish as an ex-convict, but felt that it would be forthcoming since he had been promoted to the rank of junior officer. Various ideas which had come to him in prison filled his mind but he feared to spoil the major work he had in mind by beginning it too soon. He decided to let the work ferment and mature in his imagination for several years. He went ahead with the production of two works which, accordingly, have no connection with his prison experience. These two works were a long short story entitled "Uncle's Dream" and published in 1859. Also in 1859, he published a short novel, The Village of Stepan-chikovo and Its Inhabitants, better known by the title The Friend of the Family. These works received a disappointing reception; in fact, they went virtually unnoticed.

By 1863, Memoirs of the House of the Dead, Dostoevsky's account of his prison experience, was published. The book was well received and restored his reputation as a writer. In 1864, Mikhail and Fyodor revived their magazine under a new name, Epokha ("The Epoch"). Unlike its earlier incarnation, the magazine failed, bringing financial ruin upon the brothers. To make matters much worse, in the course of the next fifteen months, Dostoevsky was hit with a staggering load of misfortunes. His brother Mikhail suddenly died, leaving behind a large family and no money. Shortly thereafter, on April 16, 1864, Fyodor's wife died. Burdened with debts, Dostoevsky saw as the only way out
writing as much as possible as quickly as possible. He struck a bargain with a bookdealer of less than sterling reputation for a novel, with one strict condition. If the manuscript for the novel was not delivered to the dealer by November 1, 1866, Dostoevsky would give over all rights to his unpublished and future works to the man. To fulfill the agreement, Dostoevsky chose a subject which he had outlined several years earlier about "a rebel against society who abandons Russia for Europe to devote himself entirely to gambling." In the course of twenty-six days Dostoevsky dictated the short novel, entitled The Gambler and delivered to the dealer. In February of 1867, he married the stenographer, Anna Snitkina, to whom the book had been dictated.

The second period of Dostoevsky's creative life began in 1865, in the midst of his misfortunes. Unfortunately, his personal life continued to be fraught with problems. In July, 1865, Dostoevsky fled abroad to escape debtor's prison. In Europe, he became involved with gambling, which worsened his financial situation. This period of hardship resulted in a remarkable literary output which included some of his greatest novels. Crime and Punishment was published in 1866; The Idiot in 1868; The Possessed in 1870 and Raw Youth in 1871.

Dostoevsky's new wife proved to be a shrewd manager of business affairs and she soon had her husband's financial situation firmly in hand.

The third period of Dostoevsky's life was marked by peace, comfort and popularity. In January, 1873, he was appointed as editor of a conservative weekly, The Citizen, but he resigned the post after little more than a year.
The years between 1872 and 1881 saw the publication of Journal of an Author, a platform from which Dostoevsky expounded his political and philosophical ideas, and his last and greatest novel, The Brothers Karamazov. This last work was published in 1879-80 and was immediately recognized as a work of genius.

In 1880, when Dostoevsky delivered an oration at the unveiling of a statue of the great Russian poet Pushkin, he was at the height of his fame. The speech has been considered a brilliant prophecy of Russia's destiny.

After a short illness, Dostoevsky died January 28, 1881. He had never been of strong constitution, suffering from epilepsy and various other physical infirmities which were aggravated by his constant financial and personal worries. Writing was an agony to him but the desire to create triumphed over all obstacles and, in fact, turned those obstacles to positive use. Dostoevsky's funeral was the occasion of great popular grief. Contemporary critics either loved or hated him, but none could deny his genius.

The Literature of Dostoevsky

Dostoevsky's writings are a masterly analysis of the 19th Century man caught in the crisis of humanism. . . . This particular stage in the European civilization was used by him as an illustration of the great theological theme: the creature confronting its creator.46

Dostoevsky's characters are, without question, among the most fascinating in all of literature. Each of his novels is built around a central character which functions as a puzzle for the secondary
characters to attempt to solve. Each hero occupies his own unique world. Whatever the story's setting may be, the real action takes place on the stage of the character's soul.

... the oceanic ebb and flow of his characters arises out of that mysterious something called the human soul. It is more than the battlefield of ambition and desire; it is also the point of intersection where the divine and the human meet in conflict or in harmonious reconciliation.  

Dostoevsky's characters, even while caught up in an inward storm of chaotic emotions, manage to retain the ability for self-analysis which so effectively allows the reader insight into their souls.

Fyodor Dostoevsky's first novel, Poor Folk, was Russia's first social novel. The novel tells the story of a poor old copy clerk, struggling to earn respectability, who falls in love with an orphaned girl. The novel's hinted-at condemnation of society's indifference toward the underprivileged won enthusiastic response from readers, including the liberal reformer Belinsky. With this first novel, Dostoevsky established himself as champion of the city's downtrodden citizens. His writing introduced to Russia the humanitarian principles being expounded in the West by such authors as George Sand, Eugene Sue and Charles Dickens. Dostoevsky added his own twist in the form of psychological analysis by which the hero is examined not externally, by action, but internally, by reaction. This uniquely Dostoevskian focus characterizes the new Russian school of realistic fiction.

Dostoevsky's second novel, The Double, is an insightful study in abnormal psychology. The central character is a civil servant named Golyadkin who happens, by strange coincidence, to meet a man who is
physically Golyadkin's double. The man even bears the same name. Golyadkin befriends his double and goes as far as securing employment for the stranger in his own office. Golyadkin soon begins to regret his generosity, however, as the double outstrips him in the eyes of his fellow workers and superiors. Golyadkin, suffering from a persecution paranoia, believes the double to be the leader of a conspiracy against him. Golyadkin attempts to denounce the double but his efforts result only in his own humiliation. The novel ends with the double putting Golyadkin into a carriage bound for the insane asylum.

This novel represents Dostoevsky's first use of a theme which would subsequently appear in some form in almost all his later works. The theme is that of the double, or the dualism within human nature. Dostoevsky's heroes react to the realization of their own individuality in one of two ways. They either shut themselves off completely from humanity, as does the hero in Notes from the Underground, or project themselves as their own doubles. In either case, they will be caught up and swept along toward an action for the consequences of which they are totally unprepared. The dualism may manifest itself as something of a split personality characterized by a conflict between the two parts.

Whenever there is a conflict within a single individual, this conflict erupts as a crime, actual or projected. It is characteristic of Dostoevsky that every crime occurs in circumstances in which one half of the personality overrides the other.50

Dostoevsky's next novel, written in the first years after his return from exile, Memoirs of the House of the Dead, was the first working out of his prison experience. While outwardly the memoirs of
a man serving ten years in prison for killing his wife, the novel is actually a faithful account of the author's experiences and an in-depth psychological analysis of his fellow prisoners. The insight Dostoevsky gained through these characters would serve him well in the future development of the characters of Valkovsky, Raskolnikov, Stavrogin and Svidrigailov.

During the writing of Memoirs of the House of the Dead, Dostoevsky also began The Insulted and Injured, a work which would again win popular approval. The novel's theme is "a woman's right to offer her love to the man of her choice in defiance of convention and family control." The character of Natasha again is but a trial run for the more fully developed woman characters in later works.

Notes from the Underground, published in 1864, marks a turning point in Dostoevsky's creative line of development. The heroes of the previous novels lack a deep moral consciousness and the ability for real self-analysis. The hero of Notes, on the other hand, is characterized as a profound analyst, not only of himself, but of the people around him as well. Like the earlier heroes, the underground man is a study in dualism, but has an added dimension in his awareness of his own dualism.

He is the supreme alienated man for whom no truth is absolute and every good is relative. His dissection leads him to the conclusion that his ambivalence is based on one fundamental opposition—-a conflict between will and reason. For him, the whole meaning of human existence lies in self-assertion of the irrational will.

Dostoevsky leaves the conflict between reason and will unresolved at the end of the novel. The novel is the philosophical forerunner of the later great novels in its emphasis on the dislocated man's spiritual
existence in the real world. The novel is also the first in which a clear case can be made for the resemblance to the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. That resemblance lies, of course, in the stress upon "self-assertion of the irrational will." For Dostoevsky, that assertion is responsible for a great conflict within the soul of man; for Nietzsche it is the ultimate act of the noble nature.

Dostoevsky's next novel, in chronological order, is Crime and Punishment. Because it is one of this paper's focal points in the illustration of the connection between Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, however, I have chosen to delay its discussion somewhat.

In 1867, Dostoevsky began work on The Idiot, for which he drew inspiration from a newspaper article. The title refers to the novel's main character, Prince Myshkin, a good man in a bad world. Myshkin is a spiritual man who throws himself in opposition to the "dark forces" of the new generation given to sensuality, the accumulation of wealth, and even to crime. All characters are drawn into this crisis of moral decline and Myshkin alone stands opposed to the "dark forces," preaching his ineffectual doctrine of service, compassion, brotherly love, and man's salvation through the image of Christ. . . . Despite his faith he fails. . . . In the end the sinning people he comes into contact with or influences are rendered unhappy and he himself lapses into idiocy.54

This novel demonstrates Dostoevsky's own ambivalence toward good and evil. This "sinning people" end up unhappy but the good, Christian man suffers an even worse fate. Which is the stronger force in our world? Dostoevsky declined to answer.

Dostoevsky followed The Idiot with a short novel entitled The Eternal Husband. The novel is primarily one of analysis; the plot is constructed around the character of a husband who is a born cuckold.
Dostoevsky's next novel, *The Possessed*, was begun in 1869 and began to appear in the *Russian Messenger* in 1871. Again Dostoevsky drew his subject matter from a newspaper article. The story was about a Moscow student revolutionary group led by a man named S. G. Nechaev. The group had murdered a comrade whom they suspected of betrayal.

The protagonist of the novel, Stavrogin, represents Dostoevsky's attempt to integrate the story's two themes: the romantic element and the revolutionary plot. Stavrogin has an incredible personal charisma which draws people to him and allows him to dominate them. He has a powerful influence over the characters of Pyotr Verkhovensky, Shatov and Kirilov.

In his inner struggle he reaches a stage of psychological amoralism in which he is unable to distinguish between good and evil... He has lost faith in God and as a consequence the innate goodness of his nature has utterly atrophied. Only one way out remains—suicide.55

Stavrogin is worshipped by Pyotr Verkhovensky who, in turn, tries to control his own followers by compelling them to commit crimes. Verkhovensky simultaneously worships and hates his idol and longs inwardly to submit his will to that of Stavrogin. Stavrogin is Verkhovensky's superman, for whom he is ready to destroy anyone. Verkhovensky is a master of conspiracy and propaganda and suggests that,

in order to overcome the feeling of boredom inevitable in the collective society where individual freedom is radically suppressed, the rulers of the future will be obliged to encourage, from time to time, a massacre of one group by the citizens of the others.56
A Raw Youth, published in 1875, takes the form of the confession of an illegitimately born young man, Arkady Dolgoruky. Arkady searches the social world of St. Petersburg in an attempt to find his father, a man whom he hates for abandoning him but whose affection he also longs for. Dolgoruky finally discovers his father, Versilov, and the father supplants the son as the novel's focus of attention. The cynical Versilov serves the function of social critic, believing the masses to be the most idle of the classes and modern civilization to be based on the idea of virtue without Christ.

Crime and Punishment

Crime and Punishment began to be published serially in the periodical Russian Messenger in 1866, immediately arousing considerable popular interest. The novel is undeniably linked with Dostoevsky's own situation and that of Russia in general in the aspect of finances. Russia was undergoing a financial crisis in the 1860's; Dostoevsky was also undergoing a personal financial crisis. This situation is reflected in the fact that money is at the root of Raskolnikov's problems and his financial situation provides the background for his state of mind. Other characters also have money as a determinant factor in their development and actions. The Marmeladovs, Sonya, Luzhin, Lebezyatnikov and Svidrigailov all have money woes. Even Raskolnikov's antipathy toward the old pawnbroker has, as an at least superficial rationale, her greed and usury.

The novel's focus, however, is Raskolnikov's struggle between good and evil. An intelligent, sensitive young man, he has come to be obsessed by his nihilistic theories--theories which conflict with his
strong human instincts. He subjugates life to reason and compels himself to act upon his theories. The psychology of Raskolnikov's actions is the subject of numerous critical studies. Most portray him as a personality in conflict. One part of him feels compelled to act upon his theories, one part is repelled by the thought. The former wins out, however, and Raskolnikov convinces himself that he is one of the masters of the earth, one to whom "all is permitted."

The theory that all is permitted is given its most clear exposition in a conversation between Raskolnikov and Porfiry Petrovich, the police examiner, on the subject of Raskolnikov's article, "Concerning Crime."

Porfiry explains the theory to Razumikhin thus:

"The point is that in his article people are divided into two classes, the "ordinary" and the "extraordinary." The ordinary ones must live in submission and have no right to transgress the laws, because, you see, they are ordinary. And the extraordinary have the right to commit any crime and break every law because they are extraordinary." 58

Raskolnikov counters this interpretation, saying,

"The only difference is that I do not in the least insist that the extraordinary people are absolutely bound and obliged to commit offenses on any and every occasion, as you say I do. . . . I simply intimate that the "extraordinary" man has the right . . . I don't mean a formal, official right, but he has the right in himself, to permit his conscience to overstep . . . certain obstacles, but only in the event that his ideas . . . require it for their fulfillment. . . . In my opinion, if the discoveries of Kepler and Newton, by some combination of circumstances, could not have become known to the world in any other way than by sacrificing the lives of one, or ten, or a hundred or more people, who might have hampered or in some way been obstacles in the path of those discoveries, then Newton would have had the right, or might even have been under an obligation . . . to remove those ten or a hundred people, so that his discoveries might be revealed to all mankind." 59
Thus did Raskolnikov anticipate Nietzsche's superman, the man whose ends justify any means. Raskolnikov goes on to talk about what would be Nietzsche's master and slave morality.

"I do believe in the main principle of my idea. That consists in people being, by law of nature, divided in general into two categories: into a lower (of ordinary people), that is, into material serving only for the reproduction of its own kind, and into people properly speaking, that is, those who have the gift or talent of saying something new in their sphere. . . . The first group, that is the material, are, generally speaking, by nature staid and conservative, they live in obedience and like it. In my opinion, they ought to obey because that is their destiny, and there is nothing at all degrading to them in it. The second group are all lawbreakers and transgressors, or are inclined that way. . . . The aims of these people are, of course, relative and very diverse; for the most part they require, in widely different contexts, the destruction of what exists in the name of different things. But if it is necessary for one of them, for the fulfillment of his ideas, to march over corpses, or wade through blood, then in my opinion he may in all conscience authorize himself to wade through blood—in proportion, however, to his idea and the degree of its importance—mark that. It is in that sense only that I speak in my article of their right to commit crime. . . . There is, however, not much cause for alarm: the masses hardly ever recognize this right of theirs, and behead or hang them. . . . The first category are always the masters of the present, but the second are the lords of the future."

Raskolnikov's second category is obviously an amazingly accurate portrait of Nietzsche's "lords of the earth," or supermen. Raskolnikov's fatal error is that he is convinced that he belongs to that second category when, in reality, he is of the first. He suffers, therefore, the consequences of his self-delusion. He anticipates this punishment when he is asked by Porfiry what would happen "if there should be some sort of mix-up, and somebody from one category imagined that he belonged to the other and began 'to remove all obstacles.'" Raskolnikov replies,
"the mistake is possible only among the first group. . . .
In spite of their inborn inclination to obey, quite a
number of them . . . like to fancy that they are pro-
gressive, 'destroyers,' and propagators of the 'new
word'. . . . There is no need for anyone to carry out
the punishment; they will do it themselves, because
they are very well conducted: some of them do one
another this service, and others do it for themselves
with their own hands. . . . And they impose on them-
selves various public penances besides. . . ."61

That last line, of course, foreshadows Raskolnikov's scene in the
market place. Dostoevsky, through Raskolnikov, goes on to suggest what
Nietzsche would later put forward as his theory that the supermen must
be bred.

Raskolnikov: "One thing only is clear, that the ordering
of human births, all these categories and subdivisions,
must be very carefully and exactly regulated by some law
of nature. . . . The great mass of men, the common stuff
of humanity exist on earth only in order that at last, by
some endeavor, some process . . . some happy conjunction
of race and breeding, there should struggle into life a
being, one in a thousand, capable, in however small a
degree, of standing on his own two feet. Perhaps one in
ten thousand . . . is born with a slightly greater degree
of independence, and one in a hundred thousand with even
more. One genius may emerge among millions, and a really
great genius, perhaps, as the crowning point of many
thousands of millions of men."62

The significance of these passages cannot be overlooked in the light
of Nietzsche's later calling for the superman, saying that present gener-
ations may find dignity only in dedicating themselves to the role of
the ancestors of the supermen. With the character of Raskolnikov,
Dostoevsky effectively anticipated some of the more controversial aspects
of Nietzsche's philosophy and brought them to what we saw as their natural,
logical conclusion, a conclusion with which Nietzsche would not necessarily
agree. Raskolnikov turns against his action and his theories and toward
the Christian principle of resurrection, but not without a struggle.

Raskolnikov confesses his crime to Sonya, telling her,

This was it: I wanted to make myself a Napoleon, and that is why I killed her. . . . The point is this: on one occasion, I put this question to myself: what if, for example, Napoleon had found himself in my shoes, with no Toulon, no Egypt, no crossing of Mont Blanc, to give his career a start, but, instead of those monumental and glorious things, with simply one ridiculous old woman, who must be killed to get money from her trunk. . . . Would he have shrunk from it because it was so unmonumental and . . . so sinful? Well, I tell you I tormented myself over that 'problem' for a terribly long time, and I was terribly ashamed when at last I realized . . . that not only would he not shrink, but the idea would never even enter his head that it was not monumental. . . . And if there had been no other way open to him, he would have strangled her . . . without a moment's hesitation! . . . Well I also . . . stopped hesitating . . . strangled her . . . following the example of my authority. . . ."63

Sonya does not understand. Raskolnikov tries to tell her that he killed for the benefit of his family but finally, in a flash of true insight, admits the truth:

"I did not commit murder in order to use the profit and power I gained to make myself a benefactor of humanity. . . . I simply murdered; I murdered for myself, for myself alone. . . . I needed to experience something different, something else was pushing me along. What I needed to find out then, and find out as soon as possible, was whether I was a louse like everybody else or a man, whether I was capable of stepping over the barriers or not. Dared I stoop and take power or not? Was I a trembling creature or had I the right. . . ."64

Sonya instructs Raskolnikov to go to the marketplace, bow down, kiss the earth and then denounce himself to the authorities. Raskolnikov rallies some of his old conviction and resists at first.

Porfiry Petrovich, the police examiner, has, meanwhile, solved the crime. He confronts Raskolnikov with his theory.
"You invented a theory, and you were ashamed because it went wrong and because it turned out to be not even very original. It proved mean and base, it is true, but it does not make you hopelessly mean and base. You are not mean and base at all! At least, you did not deceive yourself for long, but in one leap reached the farthest extremity."65

Convinced that Raskolnikov will choose to confess and accept his punishment, Porfiry Petrovich allows him to remain free for a short while longer. As Porfiry knew he would, Raskolnikov undergoes agonies of indecision. He projects Sonya as the representative of confession and suffering and realizes that he must choose between her way and his. Meanwhile, Svidrigailov analyzes Raskolnikov's crime for his sister, Dunya:

"... there was this particular little theory of his--a theory of sorts--according to which people are divided... into the common mass and the special people, those... for whom, because of their elevated position, laws are not written, but who, on the contrary, frame laws for the others, the common mass, the rabble. ... Napoleon had a terrible fascination for him, or rather, what particularly attracted him was the fact that so many men of genius had not heeded the isolated misdeed but marched straight over it, without reflection. He seems to have persuaded himself that he too was a man of genius... He was convinced of it for a period. He suffered, and still suffers, greatly from the thought that, although he was capable of conceiving the theory, it was not in his nature to overstep the bounds of the law without pausing to reflect, and that it follows that he is not a man of genius."66

Raskolnikov himself admits his failure--not the failure of his theory but of his own ability to carry out his theory.

"By that stupidity I meant only to put myself in an independent position, to take the first step, to acquire means, and then everything would have been expiated by immeasurably greater good... But I, I failed even to accomplish the first step, because I am a miserable wretch!"67
Finally, though, in accordance with Dostoevsky's strong Christian principles, his hero must confess his guilt and accept his suffering. Raskolnikov goes to the Haymarket, bows down and kisses the earth, then goes to the police office and confesses.

The epilogue of *Crime and Punishment* finds Raskolnikov imprisoned in Siberia. Even now, however, Raskolnikov holds stubbornly to his theory.

... although he judged himself severely, his lively conscience could find no particularly terrible guilt in his past, except a simple blunder, that might have happened to anybody.  

Raskolnikov realizes that he is not an extraordinary man and tries to understand what led him to believe that he was. "Perhaps it was just because of the strength of his desires that he had considered himself a man to whom more was permitted than to others." He wishes for remorse, but receives instead only more questions.

"How," he thought, "how was my idea more stupid than any of the other ideas and theories that have sprung up and multiplied like weeds all over the world, ever since the world existed? ... What makes what I have done seem to them so monstrous?" he asked himself. "The fact that it was a ... crime? What does the word mean: My conscience is easy ... many benefactors of mankind who did not inherit power but seized it for themselves, should have been punished at their very first steps. But the first steps of those men were successfully carried out, and therefore they were right, while mine failed, which means I had no right to permit myself that step!" This was the sole sense in which he acknowledged his crime, that he had not succeeded and that he had confessed.

Even as he makes this declaration, however, Raskolnikov begins to feel in his heart that "there was something profoundly false in himself and his beliefs." The scene culminates in Raskolnikov throwing himself at Sonya's feet and accepting his guilt and suffering. Raskolnikov
and Sonya can now be saved; their salvation lay in their acceptance of suffering. Love "raised them from the dead."\(^{72}\)

Thus does Dostoevsky present the consequences of a philosophy such as Raskolnikov's. Ultimately, the theory is false and the true meaning of life can only be found in the Christian acceptance of suffering and the mystery of the resurrection.

**The Brothers Karamazov**

Dostoevsky's master work is, without question, *The Brothers Karamazov*. It is in this novel that Dostoevsky deals, on his most sophisticated level, with the themes which had appeared in less fully developed form in the earlier novels. In a sense, Dostoevsky's entire life had been a preparation for this novel. It began to appear in the Russian Messenger in January, 1879. The final chapter appeared in November, 1880, just two months before the author's death.

The primary story line, that of the conviction of an innocent man for parricide, is based on the story of a convict Dostoevsky had met during his own imprisonment. Several of the characters are final developments of character types which he had been using since he had first begun to write fiction.\(^{73}\)

The plot of the novel is exceedingly complex, woven from the threads of numerous sub-plots and themes, but, for the sake of future reference, I will attempt to sum it up very briefly. Like *Crime and Punishment*, this novel is about the crime of murder; this one, however, is a parricide. The father, Fyodor Karamazov, and his son, Dmitri, are rivals for the love of one woman, Grushenka. Prompted by the second son, Ivan,
an illegitimate son named Smerdyakov murders the father. Dmitri is accused and convicted on circumstantial evidence; Smerdyakov commits suicide. It testifies to the complexity of the novel that, in thus summarizing the plot, one of the novel's major characters, the third son, Alexey, is not even mentioned.

Throughout the work, the theme of the search for faith runs. The action is a struggle between love and hate, spirituality and sensuality. Each of old Fyodor's sons inherits a measure of his dominant trait, his sensualism. Each of the brothers also, however, has a strong inner urge toward God. Dmitri comments that all of the Karamazovs are philosophers and that their animal instincts forever struggle with the moral and spiritual sides of their natures. 74

The brothers can be defined by their conception of the meaning of life. Alyosha, the novice monk, loves life more than the meaning of life; he represents the Christian ideal. Dmitri is a lover of life but its meaning is a puzzle to him. His nature is marked by simplicity and deep feeling. Because he had, at one point, wished for the death of his father, Dmitri feels a sense of moral guilt and allows himself to be convicted of the murder. Ivan, the most complex and fascinating character in the novel, is the counterpoint to Alyosha. He is more deeply concerned with the meaning of life than life itself. Ivan is the last of Dostoevsky's remarkable series of Doubles and his ambivalence is centered in a cosmic struggle of man with God. Ivan begins with an act of rebellion and ends in utter insurrection against God's world. The Karamazov taint in him takes the form of intellectual pride. In his pride he dreams of becoming a man-god, but when the submissive side of his nature dominates, he accepts the world-god, for he cannot understand the
higher harmony between man and the world of God. In this inner struggle Ivan is concerned really with those factors which were at the bottom of Dostoevsky's own search for faith--the problem of sin and suffering and their relation to the existence of God.  

The character of Ivan is the vehicle for the bulk of the philosophical ideas in the novel. An atheist and intellectual, Ivan is very early established as the voice of dissension. He, like Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment, is a writer of radical articles. At the meeting in the cell of the elder, Father Zossima, one of Ivan's articles is discussed which has overtones very much like the theories of Raskolnikov.

... he wound up with the assertion that for every individual, like myself, for instance, who does not believe in God or in his own immortality, the moral laws of nature must at once be changed into the exact opposite of the former religious laws, and that self-interest, even if it were to lead to crime, must not only be permitted but even recognized as the necessary, the most honourable motive for a man in his position.

This passage echoes Raskolnikov's theory that "all is permitted" and, of course, Nietzsche's philosophy of the superman. The difference is that Ivan does not go so far as to explicitly state that those men to whom so much is permitted are of another breed, distinct from the common man. Ivan's theory is somewhat modified and hinges upon his atheism. Because there is no immortality of the soul, there is no virtue, therefore all is permitted, presumably to everyone. Ivan does, however, also hold to an idea which is much like Nietzsche's overcoming of man. Ivan, speaking to his father about the servant Smerdyakov, says that he is, "A boor and a lackey," but "First class material... when the time comes... I suppose there will be others and better ones,
but there'll be fellows like him, too. At first there will be fellows like him. The better ones will come after.\textsuperscript{77}

Ivan shies away from saying that any man has the right to determine who lives and dies. Alyosha asks him if any man has that right. Ivan says only,

"Why try to decide who deserves to live and who doesn't? This question is more often decided in men's hearts not on the basis of whether a man deserves to live or not, but on quite different grounds."\textsuperscript{78}

Ivan's philosophical struggle is developed in the section of the novel entitled "Pro and Contra." In the chapter "The Brothers Get Acquainted," Ivan and Alyosha meet at an inn and converse. Ivan confesses to Alyosha his refusal to accept the world of God. By way of explanation, Ivan tells his brother stories of tortured children. Ivan is unable to fathom the justice and mercy of a God who allows innocent children to suffer. Ivan offers Alyosha a scenario to contemplate:

"... imagine that it is you yourself who is erecting the edifice of human destiny with the aim of making men happy in the end, of giving them peace and contentment at last, but that to do that it is absolutely necessary, and indeed quite inevitable, to torture to death only one tiny creature, the little girl who beat her breast with her little fist, and to found the edifice on her unavenged tears--would you consent to be the architect on those conditions?"\textsuperscript{79}

When Alyosha replies that he couldn't torture the child and that only Christ has the right to forgive the suffering of the innocent, Ivan responds with the legend of the "Grand Inquisitor."

This "poem," as Ivan calls it, takes place in Seville, Spain during the Inquisition, in the sixteenth century. Christ comes to earth to
visit the suffering people. The people flock to Christ and draw the
attention of the old Cardinal, the Grand Inquisitor. His power over
the people is so great that he has merely to gesture and Christ is
seized and imprisoned. The Grand Inquisitor visits Christ in prison
and berates and lectures Him for coming to "meddle with us." The
Cardinal condemning Christ for preaching man's freedom of choice and tells
Him that they (the inquisitors) have finally succeeded in eliminating
man's freedom, thus allowing him happiness. The Grand Inquisitor sets
himself and others of his station as the leaders of the great "flock of
humanity." They will have complete control over the people, permitting
them to sin and punishing them, making decisions for them and, in general,
giving them the means to be happy.

"And they will all be happy, all the millions of creatures, except the hundred thousand who rule over them.
For we alone, we who guard the mystery, we alone shall be unhappy. There will be thousands millions of happy
infants and one hundred thousand sufferers who have taken upon themselves the curse of knowledge of good
and evil."81

What the Grand Inquisitor is proposing is what Nietzsche would also
propose: an elite, limited force of superior men who will rule over the
masses and who, because of their higher awareness, can never be happy.

The legend of the Grand Inquisitor presents the confrontation of
two universal principles: freedom and compulsion, belief or disbelief
in life's meaning, or Christ and the Antichrist. The Grand Inquisitor
does not believe in God, nor does he find any meaning in life which
could justify man's suffering in the name of God. As he does not believe
in God, he also does not believe in man. The idea of the god-man, how-
ever, is not acceptable to him either, for that concept, rather than
freeing man, burdens him with an even greater spiritual responsibility. The Grand Inquisitor opposes God for the sake of man. Man can either choose freedom and the suffering which goes along with it or can choose the peace and security which result from the placing of one's life under the will of another, greater man. For the Grand Inquisitor, the only choice is the second.

In the next section of the novel, Dostoevsky attempts to counter this argument through the character of Zossima. The elder says that suffering fulfills the harmony of life rather than destroying it and brings about God's justice by correcting transgressions for the sake of the whole. Universal harmony can be achieved only through the heart, by feeling and faith, not by the mind and will.

Chapter six of the "Pro and Contra" section sets up the relationship between Ivan Karamazov and Smerdyakov. Ivan feels repulsion toward his half brother because Smerdyakov had begun to treat Ivan as though the two were in some sort of league together.

He always spoke in a tone of voice that suggested that the two of them had some secret understanding about something, something that had at some time been said on both sides and that was only known to the two of them and was quite beyond the comprehension of the other mortals who were crawling round them.82

This understanding between the two is more than a feeling, it is an actuality. Ivan knows what Smerdyakov will do and that he is waiting for Ivan's permission. Smerdyakov has absorbed Ivan's radical philosophy and wishes to prove himself in the same class as Ivan. He pressures Ivan to go to Chermashnya instead of Moscow. Ivan realizes, whether consciously or not, that by doing so, he is giving Smerdyakov his implied
permission. Ironically, Ivan is also fulfilling his father's wishes by going to Chermashnya instead of Moscow. At the last moment, Ivan decides to go to Moscow but Smerdyakov, unaware, goes ahead with his plan, beginning by shamming an epileptic fit.

After the murder, Ivan visits Smerdyakov and confronts him with the murder. Smerdyakov denies his crime twice, but on the third visit, confesses. He places the blame on Ivan, however.

"You murdered him. You are the chief murderer. I was only your accomplice, your loyal page, and I done it because you told me to."83

By way of rationale, Smerdyakov throws Ivan's own philosophy back at him. "Everything, you said, is permitted. . . ."84

This interview so disturbs Ivan that it is immediately followed by the dream in which he encounters and speaks with the "devil," his own alter ego. The devil mocks Ivan with his own philosophy, quoting this passage from one of Ivan's writings:

"Once humanity to a man renounces God . . . the whole of the old outlook on life will collapse by itself . . . and . . . the old morality, too, and a new era will dawn. . . . Man will be exalted with a spirit of divine, titanic pride, and the man-god will make his appearance."85

This rings much like Zarathustra's call for the "breaking of the old tablets" and the new dawn of the superman. The devil goes on to add an idea which has even greater correlation to Nietzsche's superman. Questioning whether this new age and morality will ever come about, or at least come about before the passing of several thousand years, he offers this thought for the meantime:
"... everyone who is already aware of the truth has a right to carry on as he pleases in accordance with the new principles. In that sense 'everything is permitted' to him. What's more, even if that period never comes to pass, and since there is neither God nor immortality, anyway, the new man has a right to become a man-god, though he may be the only one in the whole world, and having attained that new rank, he may light-heartedly jump over every barrier of the old moral code of the former man-slave if he deems it necessary."

After this incident, Ivan falls into an illness of a physical and emotional nature. He testifies at Dmitri's trial, throwing the courtroom into chaos by announcing himself as the murderer, but his testimony is discounted due to his obvious ill health.

The novel ends without further appearance of Ivan. Dmitri, as did Raskolnikov, accepts his suffering and turns to Christ as his salvation.

The Dostoevskian Superman

Both Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov present characters obsessed with a philosophy very much like Nietzsche's, a philosophy which calls for a race of higher men to surpass humankind and to whom all is permitted. Raskolnikov kills for his theory, only to find that he is not one of the extraordinary men. He cannot be a man-god, so he turns back to the God-man, Jesus Christ. Ivan Karamazov does not directly act upon his beliefs, but a murder is committed in their name. Dostoevsky gives us no clear answer as to the outcome of the conflict within Ivan's soul. Alyosha, visiting Ivan immediately after the dream of the devil, analyzes his brother's conflict thus:

"The agony of a proud decision--a deep-seated conscience! God, in whom he did not believe, and truth had gained a hold over his heart, which still refused to give in. ... God will conquer!" he thought. "Ivan will either rise up in the light of truth or--perish in hate, revenging on himself and on everyone else the fact that he has served something he does not believe in."
In the cases of both Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov, Dostoevsky examines an intelligent, sensitive young man carried away by an extreme, nihilistic philosophy and the manifestations and consequences of that philosophy. He takes those ideas to what he sees as the inevitable conclusion, a conclusion which is, in both cases, whether clearly stated or suggested, a repudiation of those ideas and a turning back toward the world of God.

For Dostoevsky, the key to man's conflicts was freedom. He saw freedom and the revolt against it as one of the driving forces in human history and the essence of man's soul. Freedom is, as the Grand Inquisitor knew, a burden to man. The Grand Inquisitor proposed to lighten man's load by eliminating his freedom; Dostoevsky insisted on freedom. He emancipates his characters from the bonds of law, human and universal. Having freed man, Dostoevsky allows him to choose and follow his own destiny; Dostoevsky follows to see whither man will go once his sole arbiter in the realm of morality is his own will. For Dostoevsky, the free, self-willed man may take one of two directions: either toward the deification of man or the acceptance of God. The two directions are not, however, mutually exclusive. Witness Raskolnikov who, with his doctrine of the superior man, began by deifying man yet, in the end, rejected his earlier creed and turned back to God.

Dostoevsky's examination of freedom began with the underground man, for whom, it seemed, freedom was without limit. If a man is free to so great an extent, are not all things permitted? Is he to be allowed to commit any action, even the crime of murder, in the name of a "higher purpose"? Even further, may he not aspire to become God? Dostoevsky
saw in these questions the seeds of man's destruction. Man is on the road to disaster the instant he rejects God in favor of himself. He who has become obsessed is no longer free. He must sacrifice his primacy of spirit to the forces of necessity and compulsion.

Freedom which has deteriorated into an arbitrary self-will results in tragedy for Dostoevsky's heroes. The freedom of Raskolnikov and Pyotr Verkhovensky leads them to commit crimes; for Svidrigailov and Fyodor Karamazov, it is a personality destroying force; for Stavrogin and Versilov, it is meaningless. It was Dostoevsky's belief that world harmony could be achieved through an experience of freedom, a freedom which is a confirmation of man in the choosing of Christ.

THE NIETZSCHE-DOSTOEVSKY CONNECTION

The notion of the self-will is, of course, what calls forth the superman and links Dostoevsky with Nietzsche. For Dostoevsky, the superman is defined in terms of the war within man's soul between good and evil. The superman or, rather, the man who thinks he is one, is the man in whom the power of evil has gained control of his will. The superman is the manifestation of a will which wants to be almighty, a will to power which opposes the world of God, which is a world unified by the power of love. From Raw Youth to The Brothers Karamazov, Dostoevsky's universe centers around a dynamic struggle between the forces which unify and those which destroy unity. The unifying force in the world is love; against love, Dostoevsky pits power, a power which is demonic by its very nature. In the end, the power of love and the
love of God are the only forces capable of bringing harmony to the universe. The will to power serves only to destroy the universe.

Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, a few years and many miles apart, each arrived at the idea of a superman. Dostoevsky imbued several of his most memorable characters with the belief that they were higher beings to whom all should be permitted. Through those characters, Dostoevsky presented a conclusion concerning that philosophy.

Nietzsche also theorized a superior being. Therein lies the connection between the two men. The conclusions which they arrived at, however, finally and irrevocably separate them. Dostoevsky rejected the will to power as destructive. He saw belief in God and the resurrection of Christ as that which would bring man to new life and redeem his suffering. Nietzsche, on the other hand, believed in the will to power as a creative act capable of bringing about the dawn of a new day. Man's redemption lay not in his resurrection to another, transcendent existence, but in his allowing himself to be a stepping stone, that which must be overcome in order for the new man to come about. Whereas Dostoevsky ultimately chose Jesus Christ, the God-man, Nietzsche chose to await the arrival of the man-god, the superman. For Nietzsche, God is dead. For Dostoevsky, God is alive and well and all is right with the world.

2. Ibid., p. 67.

3. Ibid., p. 69.


6. Ibid., p. 43.


8. Ibid., p. 195.


11. Ibid., p. 124.


13. Ibid., p. 124.


15. Ibid., p. 129.

16. Ibid., p. 135.

17. Ibid., p. 381.

18. Ibid., p. 197-98.

19. Ibid., p. 205.

20. Ibid., p. 311.

21. Ibid., p. 325.
22 Ibid., p. 314.
23 Ibid., p. 315-16.
24 Bentley, *Cult of Superman*, p. 106.
26 Ibid., p. 225-27.
27 Ibid., p. 318.
28 Ibid., p. 400.
29 Ibid., p. 401.
30 Ibid., p. 542.
31 Bentley, *Cult of Superman*, p. 72-73.
32 Ibid., p. 118.
33 Ibid., p. 132-33.
39 Ibid., p. 12.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
Simmons, Dostoevsky, p. 29.


Hubben, Four Prophets, p. 54.

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Ibid., p. 23.

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