DOSTOEVSKY AND THE IRRESISTIBLE IDEA

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DOSTOEVSKY AND THE IRRESISTIBLE IDEA

THESIS

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The psychoanalytic aspects of Fyodor Dostoevsky's fiction were noted by such founders of modern psychology as Sigmund Freud,¹ Alfred Adler,² and S. C. Burchell.³ Freud noted psychological motivations for actions in The Brothers Karamazov; Burchell found deep-seated psychological problems within the characters in Crime and Punishment; and Adler struggled with the psychological implications of all of Dostoevsky's works.

Among early Russian critics, Belinski missed the psychological implications of Poor Folk,⁴ those implications with which Dostoevsky was to concern himself for the remainder of his life; other critics

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of the period did not. In an article published in the 1847 edition of National Notes, translated by Vladimir Seduro, literary critic Maikov indicates that Dostoevsky is a psychological writer and is interested in society only "... as it influences the personality of the individual."\(^5\) Maikov casually states that many readers do not enjoy the analytic nature of the novels.\(^6\)

Among many later critics, Janko Lavrin devotes an entire chapter of fifteen pages of his Dostoevsky to the psychoanalytic basis of Dostoevsky's technique.\(^7\) Entitled "Dostoevsky as Psychologist," the chapter attempts to encompass all of the psychological insights accompanying Dostoevsky's creation of his characters. Lavrin also holds that Dostoevsky was the first European novelist to explore the unconscious.\(^8\) Temira Pachmuss relates that Dostoevsky's "... unique emphasis on the internal world of man..."\(^9\) distinguishes him from all other Russian novelists. Pachmuss is thus in agreement with

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 11.
\(^6\)Ibid., p. 12.
\(^7\)Janko Lavrin, Dostoevsky (New York, 1947), pp. 39-54.
\(^8\)Ibid., pp. 30-43.
E. J. Simmons, who states that Dostoevsky's work was infused with psychological analysis, however inarticularly in *Poor Folk*, from the very beginning. Simmons, in commenting on the analytic approach to his characters, indicates that Dostoevsky "... peers into their souls and tries to discover what they think. ..." 

There can hardly be an acceptable doubt as to the consensus concerning the psychoanalytical basis of Dostoevsky's technique. The purpose of this paper is not, therefore, to investigate the myriad complexities which led Dostoevsky to write his novels, as proposed by Freud, nor is the purpose to discover the sexually oriented problems of the characters within the great novels, as determined by Burchell. The primary goal of this paper is to investigate the phenomenon of a dream, a desire, or an idea transpiring in the thoughts of an individual, growing in importance to the individual, and finally becoming an idée fixe, or irresistible idea, which cannot be suppressed by the individual. The investigation will be concerned with the two of Dostoevsky's heroes who best exemplify

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11 Ibid., p. 91.

12 Freud, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

13 Burchell, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-204.
the phenomenon. That other approaches to the psychological make-up of Dostoevsky's characters are important is acknowledged. The concept of a fixation of an idea as a major factor in characterization, however, has been little more than casually examined by critics. While noting the existence of an "irresistible idea" in the fiction of Dostoevsky, they have not carefully inquired into this phenomenon but have concerned themselves rather with the problem of linking Dostoevsky's psyche to that of his characters. Yet, mention has often been made casually of an insidious concept or idea taking root in the personality of many of the characters.

One of the first critics in Russia to take particular notice of the "irresistible idea" was Dmitri Ivanovitch Pisarev, who, in 1867, wrote a review of Crime and Punishment called "Struggle for Life."\textsuperscript{14} This essay touched only briefly on the concept and then assumed that the ideas were less of a controlling factor in producing action than an intermediate step in the influence of environment.\textsuperscript{15} Mikhailavsk, a narodnik\textsuperscript{16} who condemned Dostoevsky as a reactionary while noting that he had exceptional talent and that he had a propensity for suffering,

\textsuperscript{14} Seduro, op. cit., p. 21.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 23.

\textsuperscript{16} Narodniki were radicals who looked to the peasants as the source of power in the socialist revolution.
found himself faced with a dilemma. He concluded that Dostoevsky's characters were either in a supremely excited state or they were monomaniacs who proposed grandiose theories. He felt, however, that these characters were merely puppets who expounded Dostoevsky's own ideas. Yuli Isayevich Arkhenval'd, in 1912, shared the impression with Mikhailavsk that the ideas embodied in Dostoevsky's characters were projections of the author's own theories. In 1890, Vasili Vasil'yevich Rozanov shows a more comprehensive awareness of the idée fixe in connection with Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment. Rozanov, a religious mystic, concludes that Dostoevsky portrays the irrational and irreligious tendencies which can tenaciously overpower a man's mind. He judges these tendencies to be transitory distortions of man's natural religious disposition.

A critic with Marxist leanings, Yevgeni Andreyevich Solov'yov, published a book, F. Dostoevsky: His Life and Literary Activity, in 1891. He indicates that action among Dostoevsky's characters is

17 Seduro, pp. 30-35.
18 Ibid., p. 55.
19 Ibid., p. 47.
20 Ibid., p. 49.
21 Ibid., p. 64.
motivated by the suppression of the proletariat by the noble and the powerful and "... sometimes by something preterhuman which takes on the dimensions of fate." He states that it is often the determination of the lower classes in Dostoevsky's writing to assert their freedom that motivates action. In this, Solov'yov is hinting at the "irresistible idea." Although Solov'yov tended to agree with the Marxists, he was not committed to their entire regimen of literary criticism which denounced the writings of Dostoevsky as superfluous trash.

It was not until 1910 that a Russian critic broke the conspiracy of silence instigated by the followers of Marx. Vikenti Vikent'yevich Smidovich did so in a thorough condemnation of Dostoevsky called "Man Under a Curse." In his censure, however, Smidovich states that Dostoevsky's characters are "... consumed by an idea. . . ." General condemnation of or lack of interest in Dostoevsky's political views dominated Soviet criticism until 1928 when Leonid Petrovich Grossman declared that Dostoevsky "... was examining ideas, which were realized in action, movement, and struggle,"

22 Ibid., p. 66.
23 Ibid., p. 72.
24 Ibid., p. 73.
25 Ibid., p. 183.
in his novels. Grossman perceptively saw the importance of the idée fixe in Dostoevsky's writings, and his opinion was echoed by B. M. Engel'gardt, who stated that the characters were defenseless against ideas which obsessed them. Engel'gardt states that "the idea leads an independent life in the man, completely dominating his will and desires."26 Engel'gardt, however, also insists that the ideas which overpower Dostoevsky's characters are not necessarily the author's own. That is, Dostoevsky was not writing purely slanted or propagandistic novels.27 M. M. Bakhtin concurred with Engel'gardt when he wrote that the ideas are not guiding principles or conclusions, but "... the very thing being portrayed."28 In 1929, Bakhtin praised Dostoevsky's ability to represent the idea dominating his characters without making his own presence observable. In fact, Bakhtin states emphatically that the concepts which became fixations for the characters were not compatible with Dostoevsky's own theories and that Dostoevsky scrupulously avoided injecting his own thoughts into the minds of the characters.29

26 Ibid., p. 209.
28 Ibid., p. 211.
29 Ibid., p. 219.
American critics have enlarged on Bakhtin's praise by stating that the ideas which Dostoevsky assigns to his characters are not mere collages of his own theories, but stem from the psychological make-up of the characters themselves. The ideas are "... an organic part of their inner make-up..." and do not necessarily agree with his own thoughts. The novelty of approaching the writing of a novel in which the characters become the embodiment of their own ideas is pointed out by Simmons. He further reveals that the idea becomes irresistible by virtue of its representation of a solution to an existing problem within the character. As a possible solution to an existing problem, the idea grows until it becomes an obsession and causes the harried individual to commit impulsive acts which he might not have considered before the fixation became pronounced. These ideas are not mere outgrowths of the personality of the individual, however; they are "... archetypes of the passions." By gaining

30 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 30.
31 Simmons, op. cit., p. 97.
32 Ibid., p. 135.
34 Ibid., p. 72.
control of the thoughts and actions of the characters, the "irresistible idea" victimizes and subjects them to the power of the idea. They become the slaves of their fixations.\(^{35}\) The "irresistible idea" is capable of becoming a strong motivating force.\(^{36}\) It becomes integrated throughout the individual's personality and becomes a dynamic force with which the character is unable to cope.\(^{37}\)

It would be expected that the idée fixe is directly related to certain physical or environmental motivations as well as to psychological causes; however, this is not always the case. According to Bakhtin, the fixation is seldom a result of the pressures of daily life. Because Dostoevsky does not depict the past experiences of his characters, Bakhtin argues there can be no acceptable notion of environmental conditions serving to produce the irresistible idea.\(^{38}\) Lavrin agrees that the actions are internally and not externally motivated.\(^{39}\) The most common basis for the idée fixe will be revealed below.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., p. 91.


\(^{37}\) Lavrin, op. cit., p. 30.


\(^{39}\) Lavrin, op. cit., p. 55.
Self-will is the most irresistible of the "irresistible ideas." Man has a basic urge to assert his will, and this urge can manifest itself as a fixation of ego-affirmation resulting in the desire for power of one kind or another. Wasiolek declares that "every act of reason for Dostoevsky is a covert act of will." Rationality is incapable of controlling the "irresistible idea" when it assumes the form of self-will.

Obsession in Dostoevsky's characters does not have to be singular in nature. That is, more than one idea can struggle for dominance of the consciousness. When this is the case, the ideas may be conflicting and even polar. These forces become so powerful that they assume identities of their own in that they "... arise ... develop, diminish, find their rival ideas, and even die defeated." Lavrin acknowledges that each fixation, upon gaining ascendancy, may waver or even divide into conflicting ideas or antitheses which he says reveal new dramatic possibilities in the character's mind.

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40 Ibid., p. 35.
41 Edward Wasiolek, Dostoevsky, the Major Fiction (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964), p. 55.
42 Ibid., p. 56.
43 Fueloep-Miller, op. cit., p. 73.
indicates that Dostoevsky's characters reveal the division of mankind into separate nations. This division in man is observable in the conflict of urges and desires.  

That the "irresistible ideas" could be viewed as Hegelian thesis and its polar counterpart, antithesis, is of course implied. Such an hypothesis in encouraged when Dostoevsky's familiarity with and even love of Hegelian philosophy are considered. Dostoevsky planned to translate Hegel's History of Philosophy in 1854 and had asked his brother specifically to send Hegel's History of Philosophy, insisting upon its importance to him.  

Most of Hegel's philosophy must be set aside as irrelevant to this paper; yet, the familiar concept of thesis-antithesis-synthesis does have a bearing on the idée fixe in Dostoevsky's novels, as noted above. This doctrine consists of three divisions or triadic groups: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The thesis and antithesis, as the terminology implies, must be antipodes. The thesis or affirmative must be confronted by the antithesis or negative category of thought

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in order for a union and/or synthesis to be worked out. 49 This union is of a higher order than either the thesis or the antithesis. It is derived, however, from the existence of both rather than either alone, and may result in another triad with the synthesis of the first becoming the thesis of the second and so on. 50 The correlation between Hegel's formulation and the concepts of Dostoevsky's characters will be shown.

M. M. Bakhtin doubts that dialectical logic is applicable to Dostoevskian ideas, 51 and this assertion is upheld by Miriam Šajković. 52 Šajković states that rather than a positive or good consideration gaining dominance first, the opposite is true in Dostoevsky's characters. That is, the thesis, rather than being a positive element, is negative, and the antithesis, rather than being a negative element, is positive. Furthermore, she asserts that a synthesis is never evoked as the outcome of this revised thesis-antithesis union. 53 The struggle between polar, irresistible ideas is either won by the positive element or never reconciled, according to Strakhov. 54 This argument will be examined

50 Ibid.
51 Seduro, op. cit., p. 227.
52 Šajković, op. cit., pp. 150-151.
53 Ibid., p. 51.
more fully in succeeding chapters. What is essential at this point is that two ideas can be coexistent within an individual. Lavrin affirms this conclusion by stating, "He [Dostoevsky] was a supreme connoisseur of that region of the soul where nothing is fixed and firm; where all contradictions exist side by side." 55

Thus ideas can be polar and yet be coexisting, dominating factors within the personality of one individual. Important factors, as seen by Simmons, are the polar concepts of will and reason, which manifest themselves in a conflict between intellectuality and spirituality. 56 It is man's choice, and the choice of Dostoevsky's characters, to decide between will and reason or evil and good. 57

The conflict of irresistible ideas, the battle between will and reason, is powerfully conveyed by Dostoevsky in the dreams of his characters. Joseph Warren Beach reveals that Dostoevsky's characters are so caught up in what they are doing and in the ideas which rule their actions that they scarcely have time to sleep. They drink tea or champagne, arrange private meetings or philosophize, but seldom

55 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 43.
56 Simmons, op. cit., pp. 123-143.
57 Sajković, op. cit., p. 123.
do they sleep. When Dostoevsky allows them to slumber, they are haunted by the very fixations which preoccupy them while awake.\(^{58}\) Rather than make an intelligent appraisal of the fixations, however, the dreams irrationally assume the vast properties of one idea or the other or both, and the dreamer may find it impossible to determine the boundary between the real and the dream world as fantasies and hallucinations become integral components of his being.\(^{59}\) Dostoevsky thus obliterates the line between dream and reality.\(^{60}\)

Ruth Mortimer indicates that the occurrence of dreams is the result of intense pressures upon the character and may result in a catharsis for the dreamer. The dream reveals the unconscious motivations of the character in a manner which is more a dramatization than a statement.\(^{61}\) Dostoevsky utilizes the technique of the dream to reveal the subject's growing dependence on the irresistible idea as he allows the dream to foreshadow the future. Thus the dominance of the idea is shown in its concluding state.


\(^{59}\) Fueloep-Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

\(^{60}\) Seduro, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

An investigation of the genesis, growth, and eventual dominance of the "irresistible idea" in two of Dostoevsky's characters is initiated in the following chapters. As the fixations grow, the changes and alterations of dominance will be noted along with the resulting actions which they motivate. It will become evident that the Hegelian concept of thesis-antithesis-synthesis does not completely apply in that there is not always a synthesis in the full sense of the term. Also, the conceptual qualities of the dreams will be indicated.

For these purposes, only two of Dostoevsky's characters have been chosen as illustrative of growth of the "irresistible idea" and its dominance over them. These characters, Raskolnikov from Crime and Punishment and Ivan Karamazov from The Brothers Karamazov, were picked because of the similarity of their psychological make-up, and because they, more than any other characters in Dostoevsky's novels, exemplify the maturity of the idée fixe. Both are intellectuals who have been led by their intelligence to attempt to order their worlds on a purely rational plane; both have written articles declaring their quarrel with the existing world, or have offered hypotheses for the structuring of it; both come to the conclusion that everything is permissible for those who dare; and both are led to nightmares and hallucinations as outgrowths of these ideas.
CHAPTER II

RASKOLNIKOV AND THE IRRESISTIBLE IDEA

The idée fixe which dominates many of Dostoevsky's characters is clearly observable in the character of Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment. This concentrated study of the criminal mind, a study which interested Dostoevsky profoundly after his incarceration at Omsk, provides ample evidence of the fixation of an "irresistible idea" as motivation for action. At the same time, the character of Raskolnikov reveals psychological duality, posing a need for clarification of the tangle of fixations which reveal the man's ideas and the man.

Seeking clarification of this apparent paradox, Fanger has noted that the fixation or monomania in an individual is just what interested Dostoevsky in his major works and that his primary character is usually a person who rejects "... the obscure promptings of his real nature to follow a theory, to act on an idea." Simmons reveals


essentially the same opinion when he states that Dostoevsky's characters are concerned with a struggle for faith and a way out of the dilemma of life. This struggle manifests itself in action evolving from a principle or idea as a means to spiritual salvation. Simmons indicates that because Dostoevsky injected an all-absorbing idea as a major facet of characterization, his novels transcend the ordinary novel and come to involve characters acting in accordance with the very concepts which possess them. The characters are driven by the liberation of suppressed ideas from the subconscious to the conscious mind.

Raskolnikov is possessed by such fixations. A contemporary of Dostoevsky's, N. Strakhov, was convinced of Raskolnikov's monomania when he related that Rodya's theories, because of his native intelligence and youth, more strongly dominate him and run "... more deeply and more definitely counter to life." That Dostoevsky intended Raskolnikov to be a monomaniac is demonstrated by the accusations of Zossimov when he describes Raskolnikov's illness with exactly that term.

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4 Simmons, op. cit., p. 135.


In a letter to his publisher, Katkov, Dostoevsky describes Raskolnikov as "... having submitted to certain strange 'incomplete' ideas which float on the wind. ...").

Not only is Raskolnikov a monomaniac, but he is also schizoid in his alternations between polar fixations. Janko Lavrin indicates that Raskolnikov is one of Dostoevsky's borderline cases of the double or split personality. He states that Raskolnikov "... suffers from self-division and is therefore in the grip of continuous inner antinomies. ..." Simmons concurs that Raskolnikov has a dual personality. One early Russian critic indicated that Raskolnikov's duality is most evident in the rapid reversal of mood exhibited when the Raskolnikov who scoffed at his own idea, because of the insistence of the idea, suddenly becomes the Raskolnikov who is possessed. However. He contends unconvincingly that he is tripartite and that a

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10 Simmons, op. cit., p. 258.

struggle exists among spiritual, intellectual, and sensual aspects of his nature.\(^{12}\)

Dostoevsky himself clearly indicates the dual nature of his primary character in the novel. When Razumihin describes his impression of Raskolnikov to Pulcheria Alexandrovna and Dounia, he reveals his recognition of Rodya's duality when he states that "... it's as though he were alternating between two characters."\(^{13}\) This duality is a contributing factor to the irresistible nature of the ideas which possess Raskolnikov, as will be shown.

Raskolnikov, an intellectual, has attempted to govern his life intellectually.\(^{14}\) He has sought to lead a life in which his actions are motivated by rational thought, but has succumbed to the irresistible idea and deems it necessary to remove himself from his position by actions which are not based on responsible contemplation but are rather outgrowths of his monomaniacal condition, as will be shown below.

In a letter to a mother desiring to set a good example for her small child, Dostoevsky wrote that every human being is born with

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\(^{14}\)Simmons, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
tendencies to evil action. This tendency in Raskolnikov is enhanced by the idea of committing a perfect murder. Fueloep-Miller notes that “the crime was consummated in his mind before the act itself; the actual murder was merely the pragmatic result of his criminal thoughts.” Raskolnikov attempts to rule his life by rational thought, but the “irresistible idea” conquers reason.

The genesis of the primary fixation, the decision to murder Alyona Ivanovna, is revealed in a flashback wherein the proposed act is described as “a strange idea . . . pecking at his brain like a chicken in the egg . . . .” The day before the actual crime, Raskolnikov admits that the idea of murder has been dominating his mind for a month. He is incapable of pushing it from his thoughts for any prolonged length of time even though he frequently attempts to renounce the idea and to suppress it. The idea has become too strong for

17 Simmons, op. cit., p. 155.
18 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 57.
19 Ibid., p. 47.
20 Ibid., p. 54.
him to ignore and persists in overpowering his resolution to avoid it. Even his renunciations do not dispel the idea, and as it gains control over him, it becomes a driving force. Mochulsky says that “the hero no longer exercises control over life; he is drawn forward.”

The insidious nature of the idée fixe becomes apparent when Raskolnikov begins to expect the thought to intrude on his reveries. So, when he accidentally hears that his intended victim is to be alone at a specified time, the obsession overpowers him again and all freedom of action vanishes. The inevitable recurrence of the idea precludes any hope that it is merely an idle notion. Indeed, the idea can no longer be viewed casually, as it “... had taken a new menacing and quite unfamiliar shape, and he [Raskolnikov] suddenly became aware of this himself. ...”

The idea ceases to be a mental exercise; it has grown, instead, into a definite plan of action, even though Raskolnikov fights to keep from recognizing the fact. He only realizes that the idea has become an irresistible fixation when he cries,

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22 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 78.

23 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 41.
Good God! . . . can it be, can it be, that I shall really take an axe, that I shall strike her on the head, split her skull open . . . with an axe. . . .[sic] Good God, can it be?

The enormity of the idea horrifies Raskolnikov because the resulting action is completed practically without consciousness and certainly without rational thought. His movements are not those of a rational man as he mechanically accomplishes the horrible crime. He has lost the ability to act logically in the grip of the irresistible idea.  

His extreme individualism has left him susceptible to acting on an idea alone.  

Raskolnikov has been a rational, thinking student, but his preoccupation with his idea has blunted his capacity to think clearly. Even in the act of murdering Alyona Ivanovna, he moves mechanically, without thought. The reason for his semi-conscious state certainly lies in the degree of dominance of the primary idea.

Although the projected murder is the most heinous idée fixe in "Part One" of Crime and Punishment, there are two subordinate fixations which gain in importance as they alternate one with the other.

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24 Ibid., p. 53.

25 Fanger, op. cit., p. 204.


27 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 69.
in Raskolnikov's mind throughout the remainder of the novel. The two secondary ideas inevitably gain even greater importance than the crime itself. The inconsistency of motives further points to the duality of Raskolnikov's character. Lavrin states that Raskolnikov is "... the first of Dostoevsky's characters in whom the problem of crime and the problem of value intertwine." The confusion between these two mutually exclusive concepts culminates in Raskolnikov's vacillation or duality.

The oscillation within Raskolnikov's mind is between power and humble submissiveness. Wasiolek holds that the first half of Crime and Punishment is a documentation of Raskolnikov's desire to order his life upon principles of will and reason and the second half attests to his alternate desire to seek salvation through faith and renunciation of will. Wasiolek also reveals that he is "... both rational and irrational, proud and humble throughout. ... In both halves of the novel the less dominant set twists erratically through the dominating set." That is, the alternation of fixations, as an alternation of evil

29 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 75.
and humility, is present throughout the novel, with the evil tendencies being predominant in the first half and the submissive elements prevailing in the second. Such tendencies are mutually contradictory. Lavrin noted that Raskolnikov's attention is split between contradictory impulses and actions, and these impulses are moral antipodes involving God and the ego. That which is subservient to God is considered good, and that which serves the ego is evil. Beebe agrees that intelligence, the self, or the ego is presented as an evil power.

Raskolnikov's search for a motive to satisfy his primary objective is contingent upon the ego, while his desire for salvation is a manifestation of his hope of finding God. Therefore, the duality and alternation of irresistible ideas arises not in a conflict of motives but in a conflict of ego and faith. Raskolnikov denies God because he wishes to become a man-God, but he is unable to deify himself.

The motivation for the crime is difficult for even Raskolnikov to analyze. The motivation is two-fold, and Simmons describes the

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31 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 76.


33 Beebe, op. cit., p. 152.

34 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 80.

35 Carr, op. cit., p. 190.
first motive as being altruistic in that Raskolnikov is led to his
criminal action in a vain attempt to extract his family and himself
from the desperate financial plight which oppresses them. Fanger
goes further to state that Raskolnikov is "... spurred on by the
knowledge of his sister's imminent self-sacrifice on his behalf." Raskolnikov feels deeply that his sister is prostituting herself for his
benefit and the benefit of his mother. He intuits the pomposity of
Luzhin from his mother's letter and assures himself that Dounia would
never marry such a man from personal inclination. Raskolnikov is
perceptive enough to realize that the financial strain placed on the
family is resulting in Dounia's decision and that he is a major source
of that strain. The idea to murder the old pawnbroker becomes even
more irresistible with the thought of the money to be gained, and he
decides that such a deed must be done to prevent his sister's shame.
Resolved to murder for money, Raskolnikov resolves to foil Dounia's
marriage to Luzhin.

The motive of alleviating his family's poverty is cited by Dmitri
Pisarev as being a valid motive. He states that the motive for such a

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36 Simmons, op. cit., p. 144.
37 Fanger, op. cit., pp. 204-205.
crime is the same for the intellectual as for the uneducated and that the motive revolves around poverty. 39

Raskolnikov further believes that he can expiate his sin by giving assistance to others in similar situations. 40 This conviction is enhanced by remembering the conversation of the officer and the student in the tavern after his first visit to Alyona Ivanovna. The conversation served not only as midwife at the birth of the idea to murder the pawnbroker, but it also enabled him to attach an ennobling motive to his crime. The conversation consisted of a one-sided debate concerning the moral advantages of killing and robbing the woman and using her money to benefit society. The student explains that the woman is "... not simply useless but doing actual mischief. ... A hundred thousand good deeds could be done and helped on that old woman's money. ..." 41

The coincidence of overhearing this innocent debate has particular significance for Raskolnikov, who has been thinking identical thoughts! 42


40 Simmons, op. cit., p. 144.

41 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 58.

42 Ibid., p. 59.
Raskolnikov, considerably shaken, leaves the tavern, but the idea of murder and the idea of motive begin to grow and take form. The concept of exterminating a worthless creature for the benefit of others is a conscience-salving device.\textsuperscript{43}

Raskolnikov’s ambitions are not to be realized, however, for in panic and feverish desperation, he neither steals anything of real value from the dead pawnbroker nor exhibits any interest in the articles he does steal other than how to hide or dispose of them. Rather than convert the pledges into money to lessen the financial burden in his family and help the poverty-stricken masses, he seeks to rid himself of the incriminating articles by burying them under a stone.\textsuperscript{44} Thereafter, his insistence that Dounia break her engagement to Luzhin has an empty sound, for Raskolnikov can offer no plan to ameliorate the family position.

If Raskolnikov had been motivated by beneficent feelings of helping mankind, he would appear to be less self-willed than he is. However, he is never completely confident that he committed murder for his own benefit or for the benefit of humanity. It is because he is

\textsuperscript{43}Vladimir Yermilov, \textit{Fyodor Dostoevsky}, translated by J. Katzer (Moscow, 1956), p. 173.

\textsuperscript{44}Dostoevsky, \textit{Crime and Punishment}, p. 97.
an egoist that the argument of beneficial aims is inaccurate.\textsuperscript{45} When confessing to Sonya, Raskolnikov states,

\ldots I did the murder for myself, for myself alone, and whether I became a benefactor to others, or spent my life like a spider catching men in my web \ldots I couldn't have cared at the moment. \ldots \textsuperscript{[sic]} And it was not the money I wanted. \ldots \textsuperscript{46}

Beebe insists that Raskolnikov's early-expressed desire to help humanity is neither noble nor rational. He states that this motive is merely a manifestation of Raskolnikov's dominant characteristic: the egoistic desire to play God.\textsuperscript{47} Mochulsky agrees that Raskolnikov was a victim of self-deception and that he was not interested in his mother or sister's welfare in the least.\textsuperscript{48} He feels that Raskolnikov would have sacrificed his family without thought just to satisfy a caprice. Raskolnikov was not merely acting on caprice, however, for if his actions were mere whimsy, he would not have expressed violent agitation after reading his mother's letter.\textsuperscript{49} This is not to say that Rodya's motive is less than egoistic, for such is certainly not the case;

\textsuperscript{45}Carr, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 194-195.

\textsuperscript{46}Dostoevsky, \textit{Crime and Punishment}, p. 360.

\textsuperscript{47}Beebe, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 153.

\textsuperscript{48}Mochulsky, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 557.

\textsuperscript{49}Dostoevsky, \textit{Crime and Punishment}, p. 36.
however, regard for his family simply is not a consideration in his desire to play God.

Following the actual murder, a more dramatic motive, having further egoistic implications, arises. The emergence of this motive is derived from the article written by Raskolnikov and discussed by Porfiry. This article contains the essence of the more dominant of the two-fold motives for murder and may be referred to as the Superman or Napoleonic theory. This theory is shown as a concept in which certain extraordinary people are entitled to act beyond the law simply because they are extraordinary. For Raskolnikov, it is the privilege of the strong individuals to rise up in revolt against society. The power of the elite is the only means of obtaining happiness, and he bases his theory of the superman on that power. The right to rule others is obviously connected to the desire to play God; they are both concerned with asserting the ego. The concept of the superman is of a being who is above the ordinary determinations of good and evil.

In explaining his article to Porfiry, Raskolnikov states that the great leaders of history broke ancient laws in the act of forming new

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50. Ibid., p. 225.
52. Yermilov, op. cit., p. 172.
ones and that even when militant defense of the ancient laws made bloodshed necessary, these leaders had the moral right to kill because they were benefactors of mankind. If these leaders found it necessary to "... step over a corpse or wade through blood, he can... find himself, in his conscience, a sanction for wading through blood—that depends on the idea and its dimensions..." Raskolnikov is in the grip of another irresistible idea, the idea of the Napoleonic figure, the man who is truly extraordinary, and Raskolnikov feels that he belongs to that class. Being unsure of his position, however, he must prove himself worthy of the superman classification, and this is his justification for the murder of Alyona Ivanovna. He decides that the reason for the murder is to prove that he is able to transgress bourgeois laws and prove himself to be extraordinary. To Raskolnikov, "... power is only vouchsafed to the man who dares to stoop and pick it up. There is only one thing... needful; one has only to dare!" To prove himself a superman, Raskolnikov killed. The irony lies

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54 Ibid., p. 423.
55 Simmons, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
56 Lavrin, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
in just this fact. Raskolnikov killed to prove he was capable of killing for a principle, but the superman kills for the principle itself. His crime is committed as proof of his superiority, because the crime is the only crime possible in which one individual can exert a maximum degree of will over another individual.  

Rather than a crime committed for an ideology, Raskolnikov’s crime is committed to prove potential rather than an actuality.  

That is, Raskolnikov kills in order to determine whether he can be a superman and not because he is. Lavrin suggests that it was lack of strength or self-doubt rather than strength or confident self-will which drove Raskolnikov to murder the pawnbroker.

Raskolnikov, because he cannot decide whether he is of the Napoleonic class, cannot decide whether there was actually a crime according to his theory. He reflects, however, that the murder is not a crime at all, but merely a means of proving his superiority to ordinary people. He contends that if it is the right, and indeed the duty, of the Napoleons in the world to surpass all legal boundaries in order to accomplish their goals, then that duty must be his responsibility as

59 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 27.
60 Beebe, op. cit., p. 156.
61 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 77.
well as theirs. Raskolnikov is groping for a rational explanation for an irrational act. He finds it impossible, however, to reconcile his actions completely with even this complex, though artificial and inaccurate, motive. His idée fixe becomes confusing to him, and he finds that all questions resulting from the fixation are not answered.

Wasiolek holds that Crime and Punishment is based on the change of Raskolnikov's belief in one set of values to a set completely opposite in nature. Critical support for accepting this alternation is Carr's question as to whether Raskolnikov fails because he is weak or because there is an intrinsic spirituality in him which makes the position of the extraordinary being ultimately unsatisfying to him. Whether or not Raskolnikov is spiritually able to commit the act, or whether or not he can emotionally rationalize that the act is not a crime, his intellect sanctions the overstepping of established bounds and therefore his crime, but he also discovers that his intellect is inadequate and cannot prevent moral suffering. Simmons states that Raskolnikov becomes convinced of the fantastic nature of the irresistible idea and

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63 Carr, op. cit., p. 193.
64 Fanger, op. cit., p. 208.
turns to the idea of seeking salvation. Yermilov declares that the falsity and perniciousness of the idea became obvious to Raskolnikov as it grew in his own mind.

It is a combination of his ambition to be a Napoleonic superman and the conflicting desire to seek redemption that obsesses Raskolnikov for the remainder and greater portion of the novel. He, though vacillating between the two poles, goes "... from pride to humility, hate to love, [and] reason to faith. . . ." He is caught between two mutually exclusive but irresistible ideas. If he is to be a Napoleon, he cannot concern himself with hopes of salvation, and if he seeks divine expiation, he must not continue to desire to be a superman. Simmons erroneously indicates that Raskolnikov meekly realizes that his theory of ordinary and extraordinary people is faulty. If this were true, he would have abashedly consented to confess and accept his punishment. However, there begins instead the supreme war of conflicting fixations in which only after excruciating struggle does Raskolnikov relent and renounce his claim to superiority.

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65 Simmons, op. cit., p. 137.
66 Yermilov, op. cit., p. 92.
68 Simmons, op. cit., p. 146.
69 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 472.
The dialectic struggle is between will and some indefinable spiritual quality. Raskolnikov is unable to understand rationally that the error exists in his theory of the superman, but his nature "... saps his faith in his concept...." He is influenced by another irresistible idea which is not derived from his intellect alone. Beebe labels this non-intellectual quality the "will-to-suffering." The genesis of the "will-to-suffering" idea cannot have been merely the only alternative for a trapped man, however; it must have been inherent in Raskolnikov from the beginning. A strong hint that this quality was indeed a part of Raskolnikov's psychological make-up lies in his desire to marry the invalid daughter of his landlady.

Wasiolek states that this "will-to-suffering" is what makes the murder itself the first step toward Raskolnikov's salvation. Therefore, the basic motive, unrecognized by Raskolnikov himself, is the "will-to-suffering." It is this motive which lies behind both the murder of Alyona Ivanovna and the regeneration of Raskolnikov. The duality of

70 Yermilov, op. cit., p. 180.


ideas, therefore, lies in a contest of the “will-to-power” and the “will-to-suffer.”

If the murder of the pawnbroker is a manifestation of a desire to suffer and eventually to find faith, Raskolnikov was not aware of it until confronted by the submissive example of Sonya Marmeladov. Her meek acceptance of her degradation acts as a catalyst to his hidden desire to find spiritual relief from the agonizing torture of his soul. Raskolnikov “... could not help fleeing away from himself and from that void which was his most terrible punishment.”

Raskolnikov’s spiritual relief is not to come easily, however, for it must contend with the notion of power. He is obsessed by an attraction to resist and at the same time to welcome confession. In the beginning, before the idea to confess and end it all becomes irresistible, Raskolnikov fears that he will inadvertently confess. He remains under the influence of his egoistic notion, but the “will-to-suffer” fixation is present still. When he is called to the police station concerning the money owed to his landlady, Raskolnikov muses, “If

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75 Simmons, op. cit., p. 149.
76 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 84.
77 Fanger, op. cit., p. 206.
they question me, perhaps I'll simply tell . . . I'll go in, fall on my knees, and confess everything . . . .”  

He says nothing, but when he signs the statement made out by the police clerk, he again feels the urge to tell the superintendent everything. “The impulse was so strong that he got up from his seat to carry it out.”

Again, however, he is unable to pursue his intention, for the superintendent and his assistant begin talking about the murder. This coincidental conversation interests Raskolnikov, and he remains silent to listen. On several occasions his attempts to confess are aborted by apparent chance circumstances. When he is walking along the canal bank, the idea to divulge his part in the crime again occurs to him, and he walks toward the police station. This time his ambition is stifled by an equally strong urge to revisit the scene of the murder. His further determination to confess prompted by his experience in the redecorated apartment is stopped by Marmeladov's fatal accident. The idée fixe of the extraordinary man and Raskolnikov's pride prevent his confessing. The "will-to-suffer" has not gained ascendancy over the ego yet.

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78 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 84.
79 Ibid., p. 92.
80 Ibid., pp. 150-153.
In his frequent debates with Porfiry, Raskolnikov is so moved to egotistical anger by the detective's cruel attempts to trap him that he holds his tongue out of spite. However, the "idea" is struggling for mastery, for the determination to remain silent is tempered by the realization that he does want to confess, but only at a time chosen by him. The intensity of this struggle is visible in Raskolnikov's angry accusation that Porfiry is trying to make him betray himself. Raskolnikov is caught between two equally strong ideas, but the desire for salvation is growing stronger. R. P. Blackmur says that Porfiry is the epitome of the artificial intellect which has appealed to Raskolnikov in his superman fixation and that Porfiry is therefore the most appropriate person to drive Raskolnikov to confess. Raskolnikov knows that Porfiry must eventually win, and in an attempt to forestall the inevitable victory, he realizes he must confess to someone. The person he chooses to tell is Sonya.

Even when the desire to confess to Sonya is at its peak, Raskolnikov finds it impossible to reveal anything directly. At the very

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81 Ibid., p. 295.  
82 Ibid., p. 303.  
84 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 349.
instant when he is going to confess, he finds that "he could not utter a word. This was not at all . . . the way he had intended to tell. . . ."\textsuperscript{85} He is capable only of making Sonya guess the truth. The idea of the superman is still too strong to be completely overcome by the idea of submission.

Even when he tells Dounia that he is definitely going to confess to the police, the concept of the extraordinary man rises to the surface. When asked if he wasn't redeeming himself for the crime by confessing, Raskolnikov answers,

'Crime? What crime? . . . 'That I killed a vile noxious insect, an old pawnbroker woman. . . . killing her was atonement for forty sins. She was sucking the life out of poor people. Was that a crime?'\textsuperscript{86}

He also reverts to the egoistic, self-willed idea of benefiting humanity by lamenting that he had planned to accomplish hundreds of honorable deeds to atone for his stupidity (not his sin), but now he is unable to do so.\textsuperscript{87} The self-willed component of Raskolnikov's personality is slow to die, but the submissive, "will-to-suffering"

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\textsuperscript{85}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 352.
\textsuperscript{86}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 446.
\textsuperscript{87}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 447.
\end{flushright}
concept is gaining dominance as he thinks to himself, "I am wicked, I see that." 88

Eventually the desire to confess overwhelms the ego, and Raskolnikov seeks Zametov to confess. The sudden dominance of the "will-to-suffer" idea is the direct result of Raskolnikov's dreams and will be discussed later in Chapter IV.

It is not until he has been seven years in Siberia that he is able to rid himself completely of his formerly irresistible idea of the Napoleonic superman. This problem continues to alternate, although less frequently, with periods of submissiveness, and it is only under Sonya's care that he renounces his Napoleonic ideas altogether. 89 Raskolnikov "... could not resolve the contradictory forces of his nature that pulled him now to unlimited power, now to unlimited submissiveness." 90 He was one of Dostoevsky's unfortunate characters who was motivated by conflicting, though irresistible, ideas.

The Hegelian concept of thesis-antithesis-synthesis may then be a contributing factor in Dostoevsky's philosophy of motivation as

88 Ibid., p. 448.
89 Ibid., p. 472.
90 Simmons, op. cit., p. 149.
Raskolnikov is drawn to two polar concepts of self-will and the "will-to-suffer." Beebe indicates that the duality is concerned with "... passiveness and aggressiveness, self-sacrifice and self-assertion, God-man and Man-god, or ... 'good' and 'bad.'"\(^91\) Raskolnikov, however, is not left with an insoluble dilemma. When Dostoevsky concluded *Crime and Punishment* with the hope of regeneration, he hinted at an eventual synthesis. Sonia's role in Siberia is to make this synthesis possible, as is indicated in the epilogue.

But that is the beginning of a new story—the story of the gradual renewal of a man, the story of his gradual regeneration, of his passing from one world into another, of his initiation into a new unknown life.\(^92\)

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\(^91\) Beebe, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-152.

CHAPTER III

IVAN KARAMAZOV AND THE IRRESISTIBLE IDEA

Dostoevsky’s two principal intellectuals in his major fiction are Rodion Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov; both characters are also victims of the idée fixe, and both exhibit split personalities, although Raskolnikov was created thirteen years before Ivan. The primary difference between the outcome of Ivan and Raskolnikov’s irresistible ideas is that while Raskolnikov experiences expiation through a synthesis, Ivan does not, as will be shown. According to Simmons, all the characters of The Brothers Karamazov are created as embodiments of ideas, and Ivan, whom Dostoevsky considered the hero and whom one critic thought to be the “tragic figure” of the novel, is the embodiment of one of Dostoevsky’s perplexing ideas. This is

2 Ibid., p. 329.
3 Ernest J. Simmons, Introduction to Russian Realism (Bloomington, Indiana, 1965), p. 130.
not to say that Ivan is merely a puppet; he is allowed full range in his exploration of the perplexing fixation which dominates him.\(^5\)

The idea which dominates Ivan is closely connected with what Simmons calls "the Karamazov taint." Simmons indicates that each of the three sons of Fyodor Karamazov carried an intrinsic characteristic reminiscent of their father—carnal sensuality. The taint is not particularly evident in Ivan, but it is always a motivating force immediately beneath the surface of his calm, intellectual demeanor.\(^6\)

To Ivan there is no greater disgrace than to be the son of the sensual reprobate, Fyodor Karamazov,\(^7\) but the Karamazov taint is unmistakable. Ralph Tymms indicates, however, that while sensuality is readily evident in Dmitri, and Alyosha demonstrates primarily meek qualities (although Dostoevsky promises outbursts of the Karamazov taint), Ivan is the only Karamazov who exhibits both qualities.\(^8\) In Ivan, too, the Karamazov taint does not manifest itself in pure sensuality. It is rather a form of intellectual evil. The taint is intellectual pride; this, according to Simmons, coexists with and in

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\(^6\) Ibid., p. 330.

\(^7\) Meier-Graefe, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

fact lends itself to the fixation upon a denial of God. The scepticism of Ivan is a proud and intense assertion of his intellectual integrity.\(^9\)

In this, fixations arising from intellectual prowess, Ivan and Raskolnikov are alike.\(^10\) They both exhibit what Dostoevsky considered to be the most heinous evil in that they believe in the "... self-sufficiency of the intellect."\(^11\) They become tragic figures because they fail to realize the necessity of accepting life as it is. They place the highest value on rational rather than intuitive acceptance.\(^12\) Ivan is a tragic figure because of his intellect. He feels a superiority over others and considers himself almost godlike.\(^13\) Dmitri Chizhevsky states it more simply. He indicates that Ivan is merely conceited and shows his conceit in his actions with other people.\(^14\)

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\(^9\) Simmons, *Making of a Novelist*, p. 337.


The rarefied air of pure intellectuality is the realm of Ivan, and pure intellectuality is fraught with uncertainty. Dostoevsky reveals that the uncertainty of autonomous intellectuality is the source of evil and finally despair in Ivan Karamazov. The reason for Ivan's eventual despair is firmly linked to his desire to find the meaning of life. Simmons writes that Ivan "... puts life on the operating table, dissects it, and comes away disillusioned, without ever seeming to realize that life is to be lived."

Dostoevsky was deeply concerned with the despair born of the intellect and created Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov in an effort to explore the factors which lead the intellectual to despair. Dostoevsky's investigation begins with the psyche and progresses to what he considered to be one of the primary contributory factors to despair—duality.

The double, as Chizhevsky indicates, is one of Dostoevsky's favorite themes, and is revealed in detail in Ivan Karamazov. Ivan

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17 Simmons, Making of a Novelist, p. 337.
18 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 105.
20 Chizhevsky, op. cit., p. 113. 21 Ibid., p. 112.
is the last, as Raskolnikov was the first, of Dostoevsky’s doubles in the major novels. In Ivan, Dostoevsky provides the fullest account of the “... philosophical development of the split personality.”

The alternating fixations of pride or intellectual will and humility or submissiveness constitute the polar aspects of Ivan’s dual personality. When under the influence of pride, Ivan actually dreams of becoming god-like, but this fascination is countered by his submissive fixation. The suffering which Ivan is to endure because of his duality is recognized by Father Zossima during the meeting at the monastery after Ivan has indicated his perplexity of ideas in an article he has written, by Zossima’s saying “‘You are blessed in believing that, or else most unhappy.’” The Elder recognizes the choice Ivan must make between two equal but irreconcilable ideas. Ivan’s road, as Father Zossima understands, to this choice is to be the wavering path of the divided personality. Janko Lavrin insists that the dual

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22 Simmons, Making of a Novelist, p. 338.


26 Chizhevsky, op. cit., p. 121.
fixations are Ivan's intellectual agnosticism and his longing for spiritual truth. That is, Ivan, through intellectual rationality, does not believe in immortality, and thus embraces a philosophy akin to that of Rodion Raskolnikov and resulting in the principle that everything is lawful and permitted, yet he wants to believe that only the noble and good will be allowed.

The two fixations, because of the unalterable conflict between them, provide grounds for an exhaustive struggle in Ivan. Ralph Tymms, as mentioned above, indicates that the intensity of the battle is due to the combination of traits inherited from Fyodor Karamazov and Ivan's mother.

Attempting to equate the "law of self-interest" with the "law of disinterestedness," Ivan finds himself in the midst of the life and death struggle of man with God. Ivan simply cannot understand what Simmons terms, "... the higher harmony between man and the world of God."

28 Ibid., p. 77.
30 Tymms, op. cit., p. 100.
Ivan's complaint against the "world of God" is closely linked to the question of suffering. In a discussion with Alyosha, Ivan tells several grotesque stories concerning the wanton brutality of adults toward innocent and defenseless children. In hideous detail he tells Alyosha of a child beaten and locked in a privy all night with her face smeared and mouth filled with excrement. With disgusting clarity, he relates a tale of a general who had a young boy of eight torn to shreds by hounds because he had chanced to injure the paw of the general's best dog. Ivan imparts this information to his brother to explain his attitude toward the senseless and needless suffering endured by the innocent. He is not concerned with the suffering of adults, as they "... have eaten the apple..." Ivan bemoans the fate of the unfortunate children. He wants the suffering avenged.

"... I must have justice. ... And not justice in some remote infinite time and space, but here on earth, and that I could see myself."

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33 Simmons, The Making of a Novelist, p. 338.
34 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 287.
36 Ibid., p. 287.
38 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 289.
Thus, Ivan finds fault with the system of the world, and the injustice he sees in God's creation causes him intense anguish. He cannot accept the suffering of children as part of some unknowable plan, because even if the plan were to be revealed to him, he would reject it as insufficient justification for the horrible suffering. Such is the substance of Ivan Karamazov's idée fixe. He cries out that it is senseless for children to suffer even as a necessary preliminary for a higher harmony. Ivan proclaims, "...I renounce the higher harmony altogether. It's not worth the tears of that one tortured child..." His attempts to find a rational solution for the problem of suffering children is fruitless, however. Rather than a solution, a dilemma is presented in which God either becomes a cosmic monster who allows the suffering and injustice in the world, or He does not exist. The evil Ivan sees in the world is sufficient reason to disbelieve. The suffering of children calls for him to

39 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 9.
40 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 122.
41 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 290.
43 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 123.
44 Vivas, op. cit., p. 84.
disbelieve. Ivan wants justice. He is not interested in eternal justice, or justice of a high order; he demands earthly justice, and this is the condition which he considers necessary for accepting God and his world. 45 To Ivan, God is as responsible to man as man is to God, and the only alternative is the non-existence of God, in which case all is permitted and no one is responsible. 46

Ivan, however, does not deny God. He is in rebellion against God’s creation, 47 but he does not deny the existence of God. 48 In fact, Ivan would like to believe in God or at least in Something. 49 The need to find God or something in which to believe is the most important idea in The Brothers Karamazov. 50 Ivan bases his rebellion against God on “... the rights of children against the fathers who mistreat them, and by analogy the rights of men against the God who has mistreated them...” 51

45 Wasiolek, The Major Fiction, p. 163.

46 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 123.

47 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 291.


49 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 125.

50 Simmons, Introduction, p. 129.

51 Wasiolek, The Major Fiction, p. 150.
In order to understand Ivan's rebellion against God, it is necessary to understand his concept of God. Wasiolek asserts that, to Ivan, God is metaphysical in nature, and Ivan refuses to consider any concept not founded on pragmatic grounds. Ivan's pragmatic view is clearly revealed when Ivan states that he has a "Euclidian earthly mind." Therefore, only facts can be accepted, and the concept of God lies somewhere beyond fact. Ivan can accept God, but only as he would an unprovable hypothesis. The concept of a divinity is beyond reality, in the realm of the ethereal, and Ivan cannot deny what he cannot prove on purely rational grounds. He is not so foolish as to reject anything which he cannot prove or disprove, and therefore dismisses the concept of a divinity as irrelevant.

This idée fixe, an unorthodox atheism, is a source of anguish to Ivan. He succeeds in dismissing the concept of God, but still fears the unknown, and these fears agonize him. If Ivan does not

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52 Ibid., p. 162.
53 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 279.
54 Wasiolek, The Major Fiction, p. 162.
55 Mueller, op. cit., p. 199.
57 Vivas, op. cit., p. 76.
believe in God, he does believe in evil, but he is frightened that he is unable to distinguish its source.  

Julius Meier-Graefe indicates that Ivan considers morality to be an outgrowth of immortality, but Ivan, not believing in immortality, concludes that all is permissible. However, Meier-Graefe explains, Ivan feels that to practice the theory of "all is permissible," is beneath him. He wants to believe that even though there is no immortality, only things noble and good should be permitted. Ivan's unbelief is tempered with a naive pity. He wants to believe, but cannot because of the irresistible nature of his conviction that there is no excuse for the needless suffering of children.

On a pure rational level, the existence or non-existence of God is practically immaterial to Ivan's Euclidean mind. That he tells Alyosha, "It's not God that I don't accept. . . ." is of no consequence, for it really doesn't matter whether or not God exists. The easy pronouncement of acceptance indicates the irrevelancy of

59. Vivas, op. cit., pp. 77-78.
60. Meier-Graefe, op. cit., p. 300.
63. Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 291.
a concept of God to Ivan's thinking. Ivan accepts God in order to dismiss the concept entirely. If there is or is not a God is of no consequence to Ivan beyond the fact that if there is no God, then the law of self-interest is the only rational alternative. Wasiolek indicates the extreme to which Ivan's philosophy logically runs: "if there is no immortality, all is permitted and not only permitted, but enjoined." 

Thus, the dichotomy of Ivan's irresistible ideas is established. He is in rebellion against God and essentially against life, yet he is in love with life. Vivas indicates that men who reject God eventually consider themselves to be omnipotent. Such is the inevitable outcome of the irresistible idea which leads Ivan into a situation wherein his ideals are compromised, as will be shown. Vivas claims, however, that Ivan forgets that he is a creature of God and has no right to rebel or challenge Him. Ivan reveals the essence of his rebellion in a manner reminiscent of Raskolnikov. He, like his intellectual counterpart, has composed a theory, but Ivan's theory is allegorical in nature.


65 Ibid., p. 151.


67 Vivas, op. cit., p. 83.

68 Ibid., p. 85.
In his "Legend of The Grand Inquisitor" Ivan makes a definitive statement of his beliefs, or rather of his reasons for disbelieving. This tale is Ivan's attempt to transform God "... who is other worldly and unknown into one who is this worldly and known. ..."\(^69\)

The legend is an attempt by Ivan to tell Alyosha why he cannot believe in the infallibility of a divinity. Ivan's dilemma arises out of this disbelief, as he can neither reconcile himself to an existence in which "all is permissible" nor can he accept a divinity which allows suffering.

The essence of his rebellion is in "The Grand Inquisitor," but Ivan is not satisfied with this theory himself.

Ivan begins his tale with the return of Christ to this world in the city of Seville during the time of the Holy Inquisition. His appearance, though not spectacular or awe-inspiring, is noted by the population as they recognize Him and bow at His feet. Just as Christ raises a girl from the dead, He is observed by a cardinal, the Grand Inquisitor, who immediately has Him arrested and put into a dungeon.\(^70\) Even though the cardinal knows Whom he has imprisoned, he also knows why he orders it. The Grand Inquisitor views man's existence as

\(^69\) Edward Thurneysen, Dostoevsky (Richmond, Virginia, 1964), p. 51.

\(^70\) Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, pp. 294-296.
something without logical meaning, and therefore believes in the infallibility of neither God nor Christ.\textsuperscript{71} He is, in fact, irritated at Christ's return and goes to the dungeon cell to accuse Him and justify himself before Him.\textsuperscript{72} 

The Grand Inquisitor reproaches Christ and God three times and says that God created an inferior being in man by endowing him with a dual nature: a nature which demands faith and proof. He states that man must either obey his lesser, animal instincts and revolt against God, or obey God and ignore his instincts.\textsuperscript{73} Neither of these alternatives allows man the dignity of a creature made in His image.

The first reproach is that man was made with earthly needs and an impulse to satisfy them. Such needs hinder man's spiritual freedom, and he worries about daily sustenance. Therefore, man desires spiritual slavery in exchange for the satisfaction of physical needs. The Grand Inquisitor charges that when Christ-in-the-wilderness was told by the devil that the offering of freedom is less essential than the offering of bread, Christ was foolish when he replied that "man does not live by bread alone." He should have known that the very

\textsuperscript{71} Lavrin, op. cit., p. 132.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 98.
ambivalence as to whom to worship, the Christ who denies bread or the Devil who grants it, is a source of suffering which man is ill-prepared to endure. Man, free from this anxiety, would wholeheartedly embrace God rather than deny Him. Man, as a spiritual being, requires worship in order to believe in immortality, but man feels no unity with God or with mankind because of his anxiety about existence and his struggles against his fellowman for the necessary requirements for this existence. “This craving for community of worship is the chief misery of everyman individually and of all humanity from the beginning of time.” Thus man is miserable in his isolated state as he tries to reconcile his animalistic actions with his spiritual aspirations. If Christ had accepted the Devil’s proposition, if He had freed man from daily anxiety over necessities, He would have liberated man from the animalistic tendencies and thus his misery. Instead, as the Grand Inquisitor charges, Christ rejected the Devil’s temptation in order for man to have freedom of choice—a freedom man does not

74 Ibid., p. 301.
75 Ibid., p. 301.
76 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 99.
wish to have.  

The Grand Inquisitor accuses Christ of considering man not as he is, but as he should be.

The second reproach of the Grand Inquisitor is that Christ denied humanity the three forces necessary to hold His Kingdom safe on earth by not casting himself from the pinnacle of the temple or descending from the cross. These forces are "... miracle, mystery, and authority." Christ did not want to "... enslave man by a miracle..." and allowed His body to be ruled by natural laws, but Ivan and the Grand Inquisitor feel that this created the condition whereby man, who tries to rebel both against the natural laws and against his failure to achieve success in his rebellion, is led to intense spiritual agony.

The Grand Inquisitor indicates that Christ hoped that man would place infinite trust and faith in God and not demand a miracle, but man, inevitably failing in his aspirations to follow God, needs the hope of miracle and, without it, cannot be reconciled with Him.

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77 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 301.
78 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 99.
79 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 303.
80 Ibid., p. 304.  
81 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 99.
82 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 304.
The Grand Inquisitor considers the causal laws of nature as an antithesis to the spiritual nature of God's creation. 83 While these causal laws prevail, man feels his faith and divine aspirations to be futile. 84 The possibility of miracle can give man hope and belief in God and immortality without the presence of doubt. The doubts inherent in God's creation of man make him a slave of nature and a toy in the hands of some all-powerful force. 85 The Grand Inquisitor indicates that Christ should have come down from the cross in order to assume man's faith, as man does not seek God so much as he seeks the miraculous. 86

The final complaint of the Grand Inquisitor is that Christ rejected the sword of Caesar, and thus gave man freedom of his thoughts and actions. This freedom, according to the Grand Inquisitor, will lead to the decay of mankind. 87 Christ's love has become a burden rather than a blessing, for man is too weak to accept the freedom which is a manifestation of His love. 88 If Christ had "... accepted that last

83 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 100.
84 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 133.
86 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 303.
87 Ibid., p. 305.
88 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 103.
counsel... He would have accomplished all that man seeks on earth—that is, some one [sic] to worship, some one to keep his conscience, and some means of uniting all in one unanimous and harmonious ant-heap...”

Man seeks to avoid the responsibility for his evil actions and longs to be ruled by someone who will absolve him of these responsibilities. In this manner, the Grand Inquisitor states that he serves man by relieving him of the anxiety of making these decisions. He feels that man is torn between his animalistic and spiritual inclinations and that this is a source of needless suffering which he can ameliorate.

The Grand Inquisitor seeks to ease the spiritual pain of the weak, for he believes Christ's freedom can only be endured by the strong. He asks, “'And how are the other weak ones to blame because they could not endure what the strong have endured?... can't Thou have simply come to the elect and for the elect.'” The weak are tormented by their failures, and it is primarily for this reason that the Grand Inquisitor condemns Christ's work on earth. The three

80 Ibid., pp. 305-308.
81 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 104.
82 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 305.
reproaches against Christ reveal man's spiritual suffering to be rooted in the freedom of conscience which He granted mankind. 93

The personality of the Grand Inquisitor is identical to the personality of Ivan. 94 Therefore the sentiments of the Grand Inquisitor are naturally also those of Ivan Karamazov. For this reason, the choice for the Grand Inquisitor is the same as for Ivan and that choice is "... happiness without freedom, or freedom and hell." 95 They both pursue the concept of happiness without freedom. 96

Ivan believes that if there is a God, He has placed man on an unrealistically high pedestal, 97 and if God is subject to such misconceptions, He must either be powerless or non-existent. The freedom which Ivan professes to be God's error is intellectual freedom of choice, 98 which is the same as self-will. 99 The emergence of self-

93 Pachmuss, op. cit., pp. 104-106.
94 Chizhevsky, op. cit., p. 123. 95 Vivas, op. cit., p. 85.
96 Mueller, op. cit., p. 198.
99 Nicholas Berdyaev, Dostoevsky, translated by Donald Attwater (Cleveland, 1964), p. 82.
will, a manifestation of Ivan's idée fixe which concerns the denial of God in the light of the suffering of children, leads to moral anarchy and an inability to understand truth. 100

Ivan's spiritual abortion manifests itself in a hideous form in the bastard half-brother, Smerdyakov. It is through the actions of Smerdyakov that Ivan realizes the significance and scope of his idée fixe. 101 Only through him is Ivan able to see the consequences of his thinking. 102 Smerdyakov is Ivan's intellectual plaything 103 as he is receptive to Ivan's vocalization of his fixation and thus becomes a projection of Ivan himself. 104, 105 Mueller even credits Smerdyakov with having a calculating Euclidian mind, but without the direction found in Ivan's intellect. 106

Ivan could not consciously consider thoughts of parricide, but he does wish for his father's demise. 107 It is the base side of his

100 Ibid., pp. 82-83. 101 Vivas, op. cit., p. 75.
102 Ibid.
103 Simmons, Making of a Novelist, p. 339.
106 Mueller, op. cit., p. 199.
107 Westbrook, op. cit., p. 60.
nature which causes him to desire Fyodor's death, according to Tymms, and Ivan, in accordance with his fixation, deems it anyone's right to wish for whatever he desires; as "all things are permitted." Ivan realizes, however, during his visit to Smerdyakov, that he, himself, is as much to blame for the murder as the bastard half-brother. He admits that if Smerdyakov murdered the old Karamazov, then he is doubly guilty, for he left the city at Smerdyakov's suggestion and thus became an accomplice. Therefore the greatest responsibility for the crime rests with Ivan. Legally he is not guilty of any crime, but morally Ivan considers himself to be the instigator of the concept which led to his father's death, and thus he feels that he is morally guilty.

It is just this moral guilt to which Ivan cannot reconcile himself. He feels that he has gone beyond acceptable limits and that therefore his theory of all being permissible must be incorrect, but he is also

108 Tymms, op. cit., p. 100.
110 Vivas, op. cit., p. 75.
111 Tymms, op. cit., p. 102.
112 Vivas, op. cit., p. 83.
113 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 128.
unable to release himself from the irresistible nature of his theory, and he succumbs to brain fever. \footnote{114}{Carr, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 286.}

Ivan is torn by contradictory forces. He feels that the existence of God is irrelevant because God either ignores, encourages, or cannot prohibit needless suffering. Without God, then spiritual anarchy exists in which nothing is prohibited, yet Ivan desires that only the "noble and good" be permitted. He attempts to reconcile what is irreconcilable, \footnote{115}{Wasiolek, \textit{The Major Fiction}, p. 161.} and his endeavors lead to insanity. He has fixed upon an insoluble dilemma.

There is no such synthesis in Ivan as is exhibited by Raskolnikov. Rodion Romanovitch does experience a spiritual awakening in Siberia, but Ivan cannot accept a solution. Instead he is left hopelessly insane.
CHAPTER IV

DREAMS AND THE IRRESISTIBLE IDEA

The unveiling of complex personality traits through the use of the idée fixe presents certain problems in technique.¹ The necessity to reveal the intensity of the fixations as they alternate requires that the author utilize every talent at his command to avoid being didactic. The technique used by Dostoevsky in revealing the nature of the fixation in Raskolnikov and Ivan is what Pachmuss terms dream-logic.² Used in conjunction with the irresistible idea, dream-logic is used by Dostoevsky to explore the ramifications of effect of the fixation on the individual and is an integral component of his method of revealing the depths of the human soul.³ Pachmuss supports the thesis that the dream-logic technique became a favorite mode of expressing allegorically the motivations of Dostoevsky's characters.⁴

³Ibid., p. 23.
⁴Ibid., p. 38.
In The Idiot, Dostoevsky writes that there are occasions when one dreams fantastic and strange dreams which on awakening one remembers with amazement at their perceptiveness and clarity.

... on waking up and fully returning to reality do you feel ... with extraordinary intensity, that you have left something unexplained behind with the dream? You laugh at the absurdities of your dream, and at the same time you feel that interwoven with those absurdities some thought lies hidden, and a thought that is real, something belonging to your actual life, something that exists and has always existed in your heart.5

The importance of the dream as an indication of the force of the idée fixe is emphasized as Dostoevsky relates the prophetic nature of dreams.

It's as though something new, prophetic, that you were awaiting, has been told you in your dream. Your impression is vivid, it may be joyful or agonising, but what it is, and what was said to you, you cannot understand or recall.6

As a preface to Raskolnikov's first dream, Dostoevsky indicates the magnitude of the impressions dreams make.

In a morbid condition of the brain, dreams often have a singular actuality, vividness and extraordinary semblance of reality. At times monstrous images are created, but the setting and the whole picture are to [sic] truthlike and filled with details. ... that the dreamer ... could never

6 Ibid.
have invented them in the waking state. Such sick dreams always remain long in the memory and make a powerful impression on the overwrought and deranged nervous system.\footnote{Fyodor Dostoevsky, \textit{Crime and Punishment}, translated by Constance Garnett (New York, 1962), p. 48.}

These impressions are directly related to the irresistible idea in that the impressions resulting from dreams reveal the direction and intensity of the \textit{idée fixe}. Being aware of this relationship, Dostoevsky utilizes the technique of dream-logic in four specific instances with Raskolnikov in \textit{Crime and Punishment}\footnote{Ruth Mortimer, “Dostoevsky and The Dream,” \textit{Modern Philology}, LIV (November, 1956), p. 108.} and on one occasion with Ivan in \textit{The Brothers Karamazov}.\footnote{Fyodor Dostoevsky, \textit{The Brothers Karamazov}, translated by Constance Garnett (New York, 1950), pp. 772-790.}

In Dostoevsky’s opinion, dreams and hallucinations can be exploited as a means of liberating an author from the conventional techniques of style and material.\footnote{Mortimer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 107.} The dream-logic method allows the author to delve into the background surrounding characters as well as the “irresistible idea” without the necessity of detailed characterizations or explanations. Dostoevsky believed that dreams “... hint
at mysteries of cosmic proportions, which would be unveiled to man if he were but able to understand the symbolism of the message.\textsuperscript{11}

The symbolic nature of dream-logic is emphasized by Ruth Mortimer when she states that the dream symbols are actually the individual's own interpretation of the real world. Each symbol is related (though the relation may be distorted by the dreamer) to objects, experiences, or ideas within the realm of the narrative.\textsuperscript{12} Therefore, the function of the dream is to reveal hidden truths within Dostoevsky's characters by means of symbols.\textsuperscript{13} These symbols are a result of the dreamer's unconscious evaluation of events which precede the present\textsuperscript{14} and are revealing factors in his exploration of the conflict of ideas in his characters. Through symbols and dreams, Dostoevsky is able to depict the range and elements of the \textit{idée fixe} within his characters.\textsuperscript{15}

The \emph{idée fixe}, as shown before, may be rooted in reality, but the obsession may be complicated or resolved by dream-logic. In

\textsuperscript{11}Pachmuss, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 194.

\textsuperscript{12}Mortimer, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 107-108.

\textsuperscript{13}Pachmuss, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{14}Mortimer, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 107.

\textsuperscript{15}Pachmuss, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 41-42.
Crime and Punishment, Raskolnikov's obsessions offer him no escape in either fantasy or reality. Ivan Karamazov suffers a similar fate in The Brothers Karamazov when his inner turmoil concerning his fixation manifests itself in a diabolic hallucination. The complication of the fixation is enmeshed in gossamer strands of fantasy. Such fantastic conceptions entwine with reality until neither Raskolnikov nor Ivan Karamazov can escape the idea in either the realm of the conscious or the unconscious. Such is the fate of the dreamer.

Escaping reality, running toward unrealistic goals, the dreamer evades clear, rational thought and only latently, if at all, comes to recognize that he is motivated by irrational fixations. Dostoevsky's description of the appearance of a dreamer is noteworthy in that Raskolnikov's, if not Ivan's, actions correspond unwaveringly to that description. Dostoevsky describes the dreamer as "... distracted, with a vague, lackluster look ... who seems always to be occupied

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18 Fyodor Dostoevsky, Polnoye sobranie knuzhestvennykh sochinenii, pp. 29-31, translated and cited by Donald Fanger, Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1965), pp. 146-147.
with something terribly distressing. . . ."\(^{19}\) This characteristic of the
dreamer is observable in Raskolnikov in the beginning chapter of
Crime and Punishment. In the opening scene Raskolnikov is depicted
as withdrawn and "... so completely absorbed in himself, and
isolated from his fellows that he dreaded meeting . . . any one at all."\(^{20}\)
That his self-absorption gives the appearance of preoccupation is
evident as he ponders the "... ideas \([\text{which}]\) were sometimes in a
tangle. . . ."\(^{21}\)

Ivan is not nearly so withdrawn as Raskolnikov, as he readily
embarks on long and learned debates with Father Iosif and Father
Paissy;\(^{22}\) however, he is described as being reserved and morose as
a boy\(^{23}\) and absorbed in some projects as a man.\(^{24}\) Ivan appears to
be in complete control of himself and thus does not allow himself to
be taciturn to an extreme, although his mature actions are considered
to be mere pretense by one critic.\(^{25}\)

\(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 146.


\(^{21}\)Ibid., p. 2.

\(^{22}\)Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 68.

\(^{23}\)Ibid., p. 13.

\(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 31.

\(^{25}\)Meier-Graefe, op. cit., p. 300.
The general description of the dreamer indicates further that such individuals are "... always difficult because ... [they are] uneven to an extreme. ...". The moods of the dreamer change swiftly and radically. Raskolnikov exhibits a wide range of radically different moods throughout the novel. On meeting Luzhin, who had come to introduce himself, Raskolnikov first coldly ignores him and then, after Luzhin's discourse on social questions, insults him by accusing him of attempting to seduce him by regurgitating memorized opinions. Thus his attitude ranges from boorish contempt to passionate hatred.

The dreamer's characteristic rapid change of mood is further exhibited in Raskolnikov in his noble action of donating money he could ill afford to spend on the Marmeladov family on the occasion of their first meeting and on the death of Marmeladov himself. For his own family, Raskolnikov exhibits a duality of feeling as he thinks, "'Mother--sister--how I loved them! Why do I hate them now? Yes,

26 Dostoevsky, Polnoye sobranie, p. 146.
27 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 23.
30 Ibid., p. 163.
On other occasions he regards his mother with sincere devotion, as when he receives her letter. Such diversity of mood, as indicated by Dostoevsky's portrayal mentioned above, is characteristic of the dreamer.

This characteristic is not as evident in Ivan as it is in Raskolnikov. Dostoevsky does hint at the diversity of mood in the relationship between Ivan and Fyodor. The fact that Ivan appeared to be on good terms with his father is incomprehensible to the narrator. Ivan's relationship with Alyosha is, on the other hand, marked by strain or indifference. Later, however, Ivan greets his brother with genuine warmth and states, "... I want to get to know you once for all, and I want you to know me." Thus Raskolnikov's diverse moods are more dramatically polar than Ivan's, as Raskolnikov alternates between affection and hate, while Ivan alternates between mere indifference and love.

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31 Ibid., p. 239.
33 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 15.
34 Ibid., p. 31.
The dreamer, by Dostoevsky's definition, settles “... for the most part in profound isolation, in inaccessible corners, as if hiding in them from people and from the world...” 36 Raskolnikov's garret room serves as his refuge from the world. Dostoevsky writes that Raskolnikov's apartment was “... a tiny cupboard of a room... with its dusty yellow paper peeling off the walls...” 37 In this dirty cell, however, Raskolnikov is able to withdraw into himself. “He had got completely away from everyone, like a tortoise in its shell and even the sight of a servant girl... made him writhe with nervous irritation.” 38

Ivan does not completely conform to the definition in this instance either, for rather than being in a dingy garret, Ivan lodges with his father. 39 Even though he does not shut himself away, as Raskolnikov does, Ivan takes refuge behind a solemn front. Dmitri describes Ivan as a sphinx and says that he is always silent. 40

36 Dostoevsky, Polnoye sobranie, p. 146.
38 Ibid., p. 25.
40 Ibid., p. 721.
Raskolnikov then is the perfect model for the description of a dreamer as he exhibits the characteristics noted by Dostoevsky. When such symptoms occur in intellectuals, they become introspective in an effort to escape the reality or their fixations and withdraw into a world of thoughts and dreams. The attempt to escape is futile, however, for their dreams are projections of the ideas which obsess them. The dreamer becomes incapable of pursuing rational thought to its logical conclusion and comes to rely on his perception of the world as viewed myopically, as it were, through some irresistible idea. Therefore both Ivan and Raskolnikov endure hallucinations or dreams which serve to reveal and augment the force of the idée fixe.

As an augmenting and revealing instrument, dream-logic, as used by Dostoevsky, is characterized by the three functions suggested by Mortimer. The technique may well be used to draw attention to the confusion involved in the duality of ideas by erasing the line between illusion and reality or irrationality and rationality; it may be used as a cathartic agent whereby the character is released from his fixation; or it may be used as a means of foreshadowing.

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41 Donald Fanger, Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1965), p. 204.

42 Mortimer, op. cit., p. 107.

The first function, the drawing of attention to the confusion due to the blurring of the boundary between fact and fiction, is described by Yermilov. He states that Dostoevsky's use of dream-logic makes the dream closely related to reality, but yet in the realm of fantasy, and that attempts to separate hallucination and reality are difficult if not impossible. 44

The dream-logic implies an intrinsic quality of dreams which appears illogical in the conscious state and is characterized by the disintegration of the boundary between logical reality and the imaginative world. 45 This boundary between reality and fantasy is blurred to the point that they may merge in the character's mind, resulting in an inability to determine the difference between his imagination and fact. 46 The effect of this merger is due to the alternation of subjective accounts of delusion with objective descriptions of reality. 47 Pachmuss asserts that the technique allows Dostoevsky to subtly emphasize the confusion of his characters by noting their inability

44 Vladimir Yermilov, Fyodor Dostoevsky, translated by J. Katzer (Moscow, 1956), p. 185.
45 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 23.
46 Ibid., p. 34.
to determine the difference between reality and hallucination. In fact, the characters are rarely able to make a positive distinction between the two.

The second function of the dream-logic technique is to provide a catharsis for the character. Mortimer reveals that the theme of violence is prevalent in each of the four dreams in Crime and Punishment, and that each dream acts as a psychologic catharsis for Raskolnikov. The tension which builds up to the dream is at least momentarily relieved as the dream pursues the same motivating idea.

The third role of dream-logic is to foreshadow and reveal impulses which have given rise to the irresistible ideas. Mortimer indicates that the dream is both a device for foreshadowing and prophetic inspiration and that it serves to enlighten both the reader and the character himself. Rahv states that although the dreams may be of action or experiences in the past, the meaning of the dreams

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48 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 22.
49 Tymms, op. cit., p. 99.
50 Rahv, op. cit., p. 18.
51 Mortimer, op. cit., p. 114.
52 Ibid., p. 107.
53 Ibid., p. 110.
is in the present. This indicates the realization in the present of what will eventually transpire. Pachmuss agrees that the foreshadowing quality of dreams is a factor in dream-logic, but she also feels that this function is subservient to the function of revealing the character’s true nature. Thus the dream-logic technique is not merely a summary of past action, but a device the psychological and dramatic effects of which are mirrored in the entire work.

The three functions are revealed in the four dreams of Raskolnikov. with each dream emphasizing the idee fixe. Each dream either foreshadows, acts as a catharsis, or points out the duality in Raskolnikov’s nature. The dreams are integrally linked to his fixations as Raskolnikov excludes from his mind everything which does not directly pertain to his idee fixe.

The first of Raskolnikov’s dreams occurs on the eve of the murder when Rodya, exhausted by his thoughts, falls asleep in a park. He dreams of a time when he was seven and going with his father to place flowers on his grandmother’s grave. Before reaching the churchyard, the young Raskolnikov witnesses a grotesque scene

54 Rahv, op. cit., p. 18.  
55 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 194.  
56 Mortimer, op. cit., p. 115.  
57 Rahv, op. cit., p. 18.
in which a drunken peasant, Mikolka, beats his horse because it will not pull a cart filled with other peasants. The boy cringes as the peasant lashes the mare across the eyes and then, in utter fury, beats the nag across the spine with an iron crowbar and kills her. Dostoevsky explains that the dream is the result of Raskolnikov's obsessions and "...a morbid condition of the brain." Mortimer elaborates, however, to say that the dream is the result of memories conjured up by Raskolnikov's selling of the watch which had belonged to his father and by remembrances of home stemming from his mother's recent letter.

Whatever the stimuli, the dream is unveiled in a symbolic representation of Raskolnikov's fixation. The participants within the dream are actually symbols of Raskolnikov himself. Mortimer reveals that the peasant, Mikolka, is, in reality, Raskolnikov himself, as he takes the life of a helpless animal. The mare, according to this critic, is symbolic of Raskolnikov's intended victim, Alyona Ivanovna.

59 Ibid., p. 48.
60 Mortimer, op. cit., p. 108.
62 Mortimer, op. cit., p. 110.
Rahv does not wholly concur. Although he agrees that Mikolka is representative of Raskolnikov, he asserts that the mare is also a symbol for him. To Rahv, Raskolnikov "... is present in the dream not only as the little boy witnessing an act of intolerable brutality but at once its perpetrator and victim too." This is to imply that by killing the pawnbroker, Raskolnikov is destroying himself as well. When confessing to Sonia, he cries, "'Did I murder the old woman? I murdered myself, not her! I crushed myself once for all...'." On this same line, Yarmolinsky indicates that the murder cuts Raskolnikov off from humanity and therefore the death of the mare is symbolic not only of the pawnbroker but also of Raskolnikov, or his spirit, as well.

The mare also takes on a third symbolic meaning in the form of all of life's victims of cruelty. Dostoevsky specifically alludes to the beating of the horse about the eyes three times. Raskolnikov notes, just prior to his second dream, the gentle quality of Sonia

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63 Rahv, op. cit., p. 18.
64 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 361.
66 Rahv, op. cit., p. 18.
and Lizaveta's eyes. "'They give up everything . . . their eyes are soft and gentle. . . .'

68 The connection is readily observed that the mare, with eyes which are being lashed, symbolizes Lizaveta and Sonia, who have gentle eyes and who are abused by life.

The prophetic nature of dreams, discussed above, is evident in Raskolnikov's first dream. Rahv insists that the dream provides clues to the past, and more important, to the future. 69 The fore-shadowing, according to another critic, involves the act of murder itself. Wasiolek indicates that the shout of one peasant—"'Fetch an axe to her!'" 70 when Mikolka is beating the horse, is directly related to the killing of the old pawnbroker. He states that Raskolnikov " . . . reacts with furious aversion to the image of the victim-to-be." 71

The dream provides more than prophecy, for it also reveals much about the obsession which is possessing Raskolnikov. According to Pachmuss, the dream shows Raskolnikov the selfishness involved in those who think only of themselves. 72 Such a revelation strikes

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68 Ibid., p. 240.  
69 Rahv, op. cit., p. 17.  
70 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 52.  
72 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 73.
at the heart of Raskolnikov's idea of the extraordinary man, but constitutes the beginning of the "will-to-suffering" concept. The horror which Raskolnikov, as a child, felt concerning the brutal beating undermines and contradicts his high estimation of himself and his belief that he is capable of transcending common considerations. Mortimer reinforces the theory that the dream reflects Raskolnikov's doubts by calling attention to the cry, "'No mistake about it, you are not a Christian'. . . ." which was emitted by one of the crowd to Mikolka. She states that Raskolnikov tortured himself with this same accusation. Such doubts are short in duration, however, and Raskolnikov soon returns to his former lust to satisfy his ego. The dream acts as a catharsis, according to Rahv, for upon awaking, Raskolnikov realizes the absurdity of his idea, but "... the catharsis is momentary, and . . . he is again gripped by his obsession." The major importance of the dream in relation to the idée fixe is that it reveals to Raskolnikov that he is the victim of self-deception. His desire to satisfy his will is the same desire which motivates

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73 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 53.
74 Mortimer, op. cit., p. 110.
75 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 74.
76 Rahv, op. cit., p. 18.
Mikolka in his torture of the horse. Upon awakening, Raskolnikov immediately thinks of his plan to murder the pawnbroker, and renounces it, but the fixation is not to be denied.

The second dream occurs just after Raskolnikov's first visit to Razumihin. Again Raskolnikov is exhausted, because he had been wandering about the streets for six hours. He returns home and goes immediately to sleep. In his dream, Raskolnikov believes that he is awakened by screams and the sounds of a fierce beating. Though asleep, he imagines he hears voices, and he recognizes one as belonging to his landlady. The second voice is familiar, and Raskolnikov is startled to realize that it belongs to Ilya Petrovitch, the assistant superintendent at the police station. To his amazement, Raskolnikov realizes that Ilya Petrovitch is kicking and beating the landlady. Suddenly the noise of the beating stops, and Raskolnikov hears the shouts of the other inhabitants of the building as they discover the crime.

This dream is unlike the first in that Raskolnikov is unable to distinguish between his dream and reality. Dostoevsky has completely

77 Pachmuss, op. cit., pp. 73-74.
78 Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 54.
79 Ibid., pp. 102-103.
obliterated the boundary between fantasy and fiction for Raskolnikov. When Nastasya appears with a meal for him, Raskolnikov asks why Ilya Petrovitch had been beating the landlady and hardly believes her when she tells him that no one has been beaten at all. 80

While the first dream had been a prophecy of the murder yet to be committed, the second dream is an adaptation of the murder which has already transpired. 81 It is an adaptation in that the dream is more in the nature of what Raskolnikov expected to happen at the scene of the murder. 82 Although the landlady is not killed, there is a considerable turmoil generated by the other occupants of the rooming house; something which is what Raskolnikov would have expected in Alyona's apartment house.

The second dream, like the first, does not deal with the murder directly, but is a repression of it. 83 Ilya Petrovitch is representative of Raskolnikov himself, and, of course, the landlady represents the pawnbroker. Mortimer indicates that the refusal of Raskolnikov's psyche to view himself as the assailant is an unconscious denial of the murder as a crime. This implies that the superman fixation is,

80 Ibid., pp. 103-104.
81 Mortimer, op. cit., p. 111.
82 Ibid., p. 112.
83 Ibid., p. 113.
at this point, a dominating factor, as an extraordinary being would not consider the murder of an insignificant moneylender in either a conscious or unconscious state. However, the mere fact that the dream occurred is evidence of Raskolnikov's duality. Even though in his dream he rejects moral responsibility for the act, his dream is a re-creation of the crime.  

The third dream, also a result of nervous fatigue, occurs after Raskolnikov's emotionally draining encounter with the stranger who calls him a murderer. Falling asleep on his sofa, Raskolnikov dreams that he is again in the street and that the accusing stranger is beckoning him to follow. The man leads him to a strangely familiar building and to a flat which Raskolnikov recognizes as that of the pawnbroker. Although losing sight of the stranger, Raskolnikov proceeds into the apartment and discovers Alyona Ivanovna sitting on a chair in the corner. Taking the axe from the noose under his coat, he strikes her on the skull, but she does not die. Instead she begins to laugh; softly at first, and then louder. Raskolnikov begins to strike her again and again with the axe, but the laughing only

84 Ibid.
increases with each blow. Running out of the apartment in fear, Raskolnikov discovers the passageways crowded with witnesses. Then he awakens.  

As on the occasion of the previous dream, Raskolnikov is unsure as to whether he is actually awake or not. Before, he confused his dreams with reality, but now he confuses reality with his dream. He is unsure if the figure of Svidrigailov, who is standing in his doorway when he awakens, is real or merely a continuation of his dream.

For the first time Raskolnikov is able to visualize himself as the murderer in his dream, but for the first time, no crime was committed. His inability to perform the crime is an indication of his subconscious realization that his theory of the superman is a deception. The realization is growing that he is psychologically unable to contend with the effects of his crime. The "will-to-suffering" fixation begins to dominate his personality at this point as the "self-will" obsession diminishes. Wasiolek indicates that "Raskolnikov

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89 Mortimer, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
is unable to act in his dream as he had in his conscious state. . . ."  
Therefore the superman theory is waning. Pachmuss declares that the appearance of the stranger in the dream is indicative of Raskolnikov's guilt-laden conscience. She states that "... Raskolnikov cannot efface from his memory this apparition [the stranger] with its smile ... which personifies his own guilty conscience." Mortimer agrees that the stimulus for the dream is the accusing stranger.

If the irresistible ideas are alternating in dominance, that is the "will-to-suffer" is gaining strength over the "self-will," then it is not inconceivable that the action within the dream is symbolic of this change. The refusal of Alyona to die is not unlike Lazarus' rising from the dead, for she had been dead, but she is resurrected in Raskolnikov's dream. The living Alyona is symbolic then of the "will-to-suffer" as this idée fixe gains dominance and rises from the depths of Raskolnikov's soul.

The fourth dream of Raskolnikov is not related in full. Occurring during his incarceration in a Siberian hospital, the dreams are presented as remembrances of his delirious state. There is no doubt in his mind

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90 Wasiolek, The Major Fiction, p. 82.
91 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 32.
92 Mortimer, op. cit., p. 112.
as to the distinction between fantasy and reality concerning his fourth dream as it is the least realistic of all the dreams.

Raskolnikov's last recorded dream concerns a plague sweeping over Europe from the interior of Asia. The plague, caused by an intelligent form of microbe, attacks all but a few men and renders them insane. The contaminated men consider themselves to be endowed with infallible wisdom and resort to murdering one another because of differences of opinions. Only a few are immune to the infection, and these are destined to begin life again. 93

Beebe relates that the intelligent microbes of Raskolnikov's dream are symbols of "... intelligence without feeling ..." 94 Such, of course, was the origin of Raskolnikov's theory of the superman. Therefore the infection attacking humanity is equivalent to intelligence coupled with "self-will." It is, in effect, an allegory of the last stages of Raskolnikov's superman fixation, but the inclusion of immune men destined to begin life anew is tantamount to a promise of a new life for Raskolnikov. 95

95 Mortimer, op. cit., pp. 113-114.
Therefore the four dreams serve several functions in connection with the idée fixe. The dreams illuminate past history which provides a background for the genesis and growth of the fixation as well as for telling its final outcome. The dreams act as a catharsis, although momentary, and indicate the power of the fixations by showing the inability of Raskolnikov to separate the fantasy of the dream from the reality of his irresistible idea. The final dream also indicates a synthesis of Raskolnikov's "self-will" and his "will-to-suffering," as it promises a new and different life for the hero of Crime and Punishment.

While Raskolnikov endures four nightmarish dreams, Ivan is involved in only one hellish hallucination. However, the underlying principles of dream-logic are essentially valid for both.\footnote{Yarmolinsky, op. cit., p. 381.} Ivan's delusion, following the psychologically trying conversation with Smerdyakov in which Ivan comes to realize fully his role in the murder of the old Karamazov, involves a discussion with a gentleman whom Ivan identifies as the devil.\footnote{Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 776.} The delusion, as a manifestation
of Ivan's hypochondria, is closely connected to reality and, in its realism, points out the psychological make-up of Ivan.

Lavrin states that the account of the hallucination, with "its nervous agitated prose, blends philosophic depth with rare psychological intuition." That is, the scene provides dramatic evidence of Ivan's dual nature and philosophically divided beliefs. One critic describes the duality leading to the hallucination as "the oscillating between hypocritical piety and cynically presumptuous self-deification. . . ." It is through the satanical dialogue that the extent to which Ivan's soul is torn by contradiction is noted. The extremity to which the dualism has progressed is evident by the very emergence of the devil as Ivan's hallucination.

Ivan, like Raskolnikov, is unable to escape his dilemma, as even his semi-conscious state is haunted by remembrances of his mutually

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100 Lavrin, op. cit., p. 128.
101 Yarmolinsky, op. cit., p. 381.
103 Vivas, op. cit., p. 77.
104 Tymms, op. cit., p. 49.
contradictory irresistible ideas. In his delusion, Ivan is faced with an irreconcilable duality closely imitating his division of ideas in the conscious state.  

As Thurneysen points out, the devil is nothing more than an out-growth of the spirit of one who knows about God but refuses to accept Him. Therefore, Ivan's hallucination is merely a projection of his idée fixe.

The devil which appears to Ivan is in reality a phantom, but Ivan experiences some difficulty in distinguishing between his hallucination and reality. Unlike Raskolnikov, however, Ivan realizes that the difficulty exists and fights to gain mastery over his delusion. To this aim Ivan states, "Scolding you, I scold myself, . . . you are myself, myself, only with a different face." Even though he realizes that he is delirious, Ivan cannot escape his hideous delusion and continues conversing with it.

The hallucination emerges from the depths of Ivan's subconscious, as he interprets his beliefs in a projected image outside

106 Thurneysen, op. cit., p. 62.
107 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 53.
108 Tymms, op. cit., p. 102.
109 Dostoevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 776.
110 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 53.
of himself.\textsuperscript{111} His experience, although delusion, takes the form of an objective existence and is the symbol or embodiment of the base side of Ivan’s nature.\textsuperscript{112} Herman Hesse indicates that Dostoevsky intentionally construed the devil to be an out-growth of Ivan’s unconscious, “for that which is within us is distorted by our tamed, cultivated, moral vision into something hateful and Satanic.”\textsuperscript{113}

It is in the devil that Ivan recognizes his loathsome nature.\textsuperscript{114} His realization is that the demon is an outward manifestation of his own beliefs.\textsuperscript{115} Ivan eventually comprehends that the devil is “... no other than the shaken-up content, long submerged and apparently forgotten, of his own soul.”\textsuperscript{116} Everything which Ivan detests in himself—his inability to resolve his duality, his cowardly actions, even his denial of God—is characterized in the hallucinatory devil.\textsuperscript{117} It is only when confronted by the dandyish pseudo-intellectual demon

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{111} Hermann Hesse, \textit{In Sight of Chaos}, translated by Stephen Hudson (Zurich, 1923), p. 45.
\item \textsuperscript{112} Yarmolinsky, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 380.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Hesse, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 35-36.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Pachmuss, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 95.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Hesse, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 35.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Pachmuss, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 95.
\end{itemize}
that Ivan begins to understand that the natural end to his fixation, that all is permissible, is hellish in nature. In this manner, Ivan begins the first, though futile, attempts to reach a synthesis to resolve his duality. Each verbal encounter appears to urge a satisfactory compromise as Ivan begins to regard his devil as the epitome of triviality and stupidity.

Ivan's Satan espouses self-justification as his necessary role in life. He insists that evil is the necessary backdrop for good and that, without evil, man would have no criteria on which to base the ultimate good in non-evil acts. But this is perhaps the only argument which attracts Ivan.

Ivan is unable to resolve his duality in reality and soon realizes that his encounter with his insipid creation will offer nothing toward resolution either. His battle against his hallucination, and himself, for hallucination and Ivan are one and the same, exhausts him, and he suffers a mental breakdown and brain fever. His duality of fixations, unresolved, is the final factor leading to his illness.

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120 Yarmolinsky, op. cit., p. 280.

121 Pachmuss, op. cit., p. 41.

122 Ibid., p. 51.
Ivan's hallucination differs in at least three points from Raskolnikov's dreams. Ivan, unlike Raskolnikov, knows that his devil is a phantom, but like Raskolnikov, he cannot always distinguish between the real and the imaginary worlds in connection with his delusion. There is no foreshadowing effect in Ivan's dream other than a decision to confess his moral part in the murder. The most important difference is that there is no catharsis in Ivan's hallucination. While Raskolnikov's dreams lead him ultimately to a synthesis whereby he comes to a stage in which he is able to accept God, Ivan never does. Ivan is totally unable to reconcile his duality, and even the discussion of his \textit{idéé fixe} in his hallucination does not enable him to reach a synthesis. Instead, Ivan perishes.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Zenta Maurina writes that "man and his destiny stand in the center of Dostoievsky's cosmos."¹ That is to say that Dostoevsky was not so interested in the detailed description of physical surroundings, as indeed there are few such descriptions present in all of his work, as in the psychological struggles of his characters. Even the physiognomy of the masses of agents who populate his stage is relatively unimportant to Dostoevsky. For example, Raskolnikov is described in one swift sentence² while there is no description of Ivan at all. Rather than external considerations, Dostoevsky was primarily interested in the internal affairs of his characters. He was concerned with their reactions to ideas.³

These ideas are presented as fixations, which germinate, grow, mature, and become irresistible obsessions within the characters.

³Maurina, op. cit., p. 118.
In Raskolnikov the *idée fixe* is observable as an alternation of two mutually exclusive concepts which gain maturity at different times, but which alternate in importance within the mind. Eventually, these concepts are rejected or altered to the point that a synthesis is possible. Such a synthesis is indicated in Dostoevsky’s epilogue to *Crime and Punishment*.

The *idée fixe* in Raskolnikov takes the form of a concise objective; that is, Raskolnikov either seeks to model his life on a concept of “all is permissible” and the deification of his own ego or on a belief in the supremacy of a higher being and the proper subjugation of man’s individual will. Confusion exists within the sphere of Raskolnikov’s antipodal concepts, but the confusion does not obscure the necessity of a decision to follow one way of life or the other.

Ivan Karamazov is also haunted by polar concepts, but neither is so clear cut as the theories of Raskolnikov. Ivan finds that “all is permissible” by a logical process greatly similar to Raskolnikov’s, but rather than desiring an acceptance of either the “will-to-power” or the “will-to-suffer,” Ivan seeks a synthesis wherein the “will-to-suffer” remains dominant, but he cannot reconcile himself to any stable choice.

Ivan cannot accept the existence of God on faith, for Ivan has a Euclidian mind. For him, the concept of God is irrelevant because
the mystical concept of a divinity precludes unnecessary evil, and Ivan has gathered evidence of this evil. "All is permissible" is as unacceptable as a devout submission to a divine being is, and therefore he is unable to reach a satisfactory synthesis of theories. As Pachmuss indicates, the "... tragedy of Dostoevsky's intellectual heroes originates in their failure to acknowledge the value of intuitive affirmation and acceptance. ..." With such a pronouncement as a guide, Raskolnikov does not appear to be a tragic figure, because he finally comes to accept the world on its terms, a cosmos based on other than his own desires. Such is not the case with Ivan Karamazov, since he is incapable of resolving the dualism of his fixations and ultimately succumbs to them in an attack of brain fever. The duality of obsessions results in a synthesis for Raskolnikov, but only in mental breakdown for Ivan.

The importance of dream logic is quite evident in a study of the idée fixe. In Crime and Punishment the dreams experienced by Raskolnikov serve as gauges which indicate the height and scope of the fixations. Each dream clearly reveals which obsession is in control of Raskolnikov's though processes and indicates the oscillation between

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the dual fixations until the last dream occurs, revealing the promise of a synthesis.

Ivan's hallucination has much the same function except that there is no indication of a synthesis. The hallucination, then, reveals more of a building up of pressure as a manifestation of the fixation that is in control. In Ivan both irresistible ideas are revealed at maturity, and Ivan is caught in a feeble attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable. Thus his dream offers no resolution but merely shows the ferocity of the battle.

The importance of the idée fixe lies in the revelation of the psychological constituents of the characters. Raskolnikov and Ivan are caught between polar fixations which reveal their duality. They are the embodiments of mutually exclusive ideas. The nature of the "irresistible idea" is a principal subject of the novels, but the alternation between the concepts is the great source of their dramatic quality.
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