DOSTOYEVSKY'S VIEW OF THE ROLE OF
SUFFERING IN HUMAN EXISTENCE

THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In order to establish the views on suffering held by the nineteenth-century (1821-1881) Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky, it is first necessary to determine the viewpoint of his age. In general, it was an age of humanitarianism—the age of "compassion for the suffering of human beings," "the age of optimism, of faith in a morality established by science and reason." Humanitarianism itself was an outgrowth of the Age of Enlightenment, the eighteenth-century intellectual movement which emphasized reason. This age of reason reflected the progress in science, which had weakened the hold of the Church and of faith on men's minds. The Enlightenment helped feed the French Revolution, and

... it also animated a group of oddly assorted idealists, by turns idyllic and radical, pacific and militant, democratic and tyrannical, who became known as the utopian Socialists. From the

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1 Throughout this thesis, titles of novels and transliterations of Russian proper names have been regularized to their most frequently used form.


3 Edward Hallett Carr, Dostoyevsky, A New Biography, preface by D. S. Mirsky (New York, 1931), p. 120.

4 Fueter, p. 19.
middle of the eighteenth century to the middle of
the nineteenth, they drew up their schemes to
tame the industrial revolution, until Karl Marx,
sneering at their "unscientific" and vaporous
dreams, began the movement that was to sweep them
from the scene.5

It was these utopian Socialists who attracted the young
Dostoyevsky, drawn to the movement with all the idealistic
fervor of his twenty-five years. As Maurina states,
Dostoyevsky "was attracted by Fourier's and Saint Simon's
faith in the possibility of transforming life and preparing
our earth for a happier future by means of philosophy."6

Before one evaluates the impact of socialism on
Dostoyevsky, it is necessary to see how socialism came to be
a political force in Russia. Since humanitarianism originated
as a Western European movement, its impact was delayed in
reaching Russia; in fact, "... one of the reasons why
Russia was felt to be a barbarous country was the fact that
she had done so much less than other countries in the matter
of humanitarian reform,"7 even though it was during the late
seventeenth-early eighteenth centuries that Peter the Great
began to modernize and Europeanize Russia and built Petersburg
as the window into Europe.8 Peter's immediate successors

5 Henry Anatole Grunwald, "From Eden to the Nightmare," Horizon, V, No. 4 (March, 1963), 76.
7 Fueter, p. 20.
failed to continue his positive reforms; instead they repeated his mistakes. The ascension to the throne of Catherine II in 1762 seemed to mark the reinstatement of Peter's relative liberalism. The next year, Catherine issued a statement inviting foreigners to Russia, a pronouncement which attracted large numbers of them. For a while, Catherine was influenced by the French Encyclopaedists: Voltaire, Diderot, and Montesquieu. This attraction, however, did not prove to be of practical value, since Catherine extended serfdom while discussing lofty issues with the French philosophers. Catherine finally forgot her liberal-reform schemes, and by the end of her reign in 1796, Russia was once again under the same seigneurial regime as before.

Reforms were once again enacted under Alexander I, Catherine's second successor; this time, the reforms were influenced by England. It was during the reign of Alexander I that the War of 1812 occurred, an event which proved to have far-reaching results in Russia. Contemporaries of the war state that it had the effect of awakening the Russian people to the need for the abolition of serfdom and for both political and popular independence in general, and that it caused an upheaval among the officers, the intellectual elite of the day.

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The Russian soldiers returned home, awed by the freedom possessed in Europe, with new aspirations of freedom for themselves and their country. These schemes, however, were blocked by the oppressively reactionary government in power. A clash between the liberal and reactionary forces occurred ten years later on December 14, 1825. The Decembrist revolt, led by the officers, was promptly stifled, and Nicholas I made every attempt to separate Russia from the influences of European civilization. It was not until the Crimean War thirty years later that any more reforms were enacted.12

The defeat of Russia at Sebastopol, so insignificant from a military point of view, had an enormous political and moral effect, because it opened the eyes of all more or less discerning and conscientious Russians to all the evils from which their country was suffering. The immediate result of this defeat was the "period of the great reforms," followed by the movement known by the name of Nihilism.13

These "great reforms," the most important of which was the abolition of serfdom, were enacted in 1860-70 during the reign of Alexander II and were a phase of Europeanization.14 Nihilism, which was a conflict of European ideas against the principles of Russian life, had three main exponents: Dobrolubov, Pisarev, and Chernyshevsky, the most influential of whom was the latter.15 "Chernyshevsky . . . wrote a novel (What's to be Done?) which acquired enormous popularity. . . .

This novel is full of 'Fourierist' ideas, and it did more to diffuse them throughout Russia than all the theoretical works taken together."16

This development of socialism may be explained by the atmosphere of the times. After the Decembrist revolt of 1825, . . . a period of abstract and nebulous speculations set in. This was the period of the Russian hege-lianstvo, that is, of the cult of Hegel and the idealistic German philosophy in general. In the place of the late secret political societies which discussed the French, British, American, and Spanish constitutions, philosophic "clubs" were formed, whose members passed their times in discussing the most complex problems of metaphysics.17

The German idealistic philosophy played an important part in Russian thought by developing a love of abstractions and logical arguments.

This habit of "dialectic" and argument liberated the Russian youth of the time from many prejudices, and from docile submission to the naive beliefs of their fathers. Reserving for man a supreme position in the system of the world ("man is the completion of nature"), German idealism fortified their sense of human dignity.18

But by the 1840's, the Russian intellectuals had abandoned their German philosophies and now looked to France for models of literature and politics in the utopian Socialists.19

Alexinsky traces Russian socialism to the French Revolution and preceding events:

16Ibid., p. 331.  
17Ibid., p. 256.  
18Ibid., p. 267.  
19Carr, p. 51.
One might certainly attribute this socialism to remote origins. Peter Kropotkin believes that European socialism in general may be referred to the French Revolution, which, he says "repeated, in its turn, the work of the English Revolution," and "was the source of all the anarchist, communist, and socialist conceptions of our times."\(^{20}\)

Alexinsky accepts Kropotkin's statement, but adds that "it is possible to go farther and to find the source of communistic ideas in Christianity; not the Christianity of the Orthodox Church, but that of the first Christian communities."\(^{21}\) Both Alexinsky\(^{22}\) and Dostoyevsky\(^{23}\) see socialism as always joined with atheism. To Dostoyevsky, true Russian socialism "is not modern communism with its mechanical forms and materialistic way of life, but national universal unity in the name of Christ."\(^{24}\)

It was in such an age and atmosphere of "abstract and nebulous speculation" and "philosophic 'clubs' . . . whose members passed their times in discussing the most complex problems of metaphysics" that the youthful Dostoyevsky found himself.

In 1846, twenty-five-year-old Dostoyevsky began attending once-a-week meetings at the home of Mikhail Vasilievich Petrashevsky, a petty official in the Ministry of Foreign

\(^{20}\)Ibid., p. 324. \(^{21}\)Ibid. \(^{22}\)Ibid., p. 327. 


Affairs and a follower of Fourier and Saint-Simon. Petrashevsky was attempting to overthrow the Czar, and beginning in 1844, he began inviting friends to his home for debates, most of which dealt with Fourier's socialism. Talk was of revolution on the intellectual and abstract level. Later, the more fractious members of the ineffectual Petrashevsky circle allied themselves with the coterie of the poet Durov. The leader of this new group was a Nikolay Speshnev. Dostoyevsky made the mistake of borrowing five hundred rubles from this Speshnev, which he could never repay, thereby binding himself to the revolutionaries. In the meantime, the suspicious police had infiltrated the group with a spy. In the middle of April, 1849, Dostoyevsky took an unusually active role in the weekly meetings: he read two letters from the correspondence between the novelist Gogol and Vissarion Belinsky, a literary critic and revolutionary. Belinsky's letter was a bitter invective against the Czarist government.

A week later, Dostoyevsky, along with thirty-four other revolutionaries, was arrested. Judgment was passed eight months later:

Dostoyevsky was condemned for "taking part in criminal designs, for circulating the letter of the journalist Belinsky full of insolent expressions against the Orthodox Church and the Supreme Power, and for having attempted in

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collusion with others to circulate certain writings against the government on a lithographic press.\textsuperscript{26}

After the "trial," the prisoners were driven to Semyonov Square to be executed. At the last possible moment before the execution, an officer arrived with a reprieve from the Czar, Nicholas I. It had all been a macabre joke on his part, an attempt to make an example of these prisoners. Now they were sentenced in earnest, with Dostoyevsky receiving four years of hard labor in Siberia.\textsuperscript{27}

It would be interesting to know the exact extent of Dostoyevsky's involvement in the Petrashevsky and Durov circles. Critics are divided on this point. Carr sees Dostoyevsky's participation as a passive mirror of the idealistic restlessness of the age: Dostoyevsky was merely an impressionable young man, who, with unreflecting and undiscriminating enthusiasm, joined a radical movement because it was the thing for youthful Russians with intellectual pretensions to do.\textsuperscript{28} Payne states that Dostoyevsky "came as an observer, took little part in the discussions, and was always borrowing books from the library of Petrashevsky, who as an official in the Foreign Ministry had access to banned books and loaned them out regularly."\textsuperscript{29} Both Payne and Mackiewicz\textsuperscript{30} point to Dostoyevsky's testimony as a witness as proof that he was not

\begin{flushright}
26\textit{Ibid.}, p. 85. \\
27\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 87-92. \\
28Carr, p. 31. \\
29Payne, p. 60. \\
30Mackiewicz, p. 46.
\end{flushright}
a revolutionary dedicated to the overthrow of the government.

Payne says that Dostoyevsky admitted to the police that

. . . he had been in possession of Belinsky's letter, but he denied that he had ever believed in it. He had read it to his friends "inadvertently," without realizing its implications, as one might read some interesting article in a newspaper. "We would all be guilty," he told the commissioners, "if our intimate thoughts were investigated, if we were held accountable for every word we said to our intimate friends." He insisted that he had never acted with malice against the Tzar or the government, and had never been a socialist, but he reserved the right to read and study every kind of book and document concerned with social problems.31

Troyat says that Dostoyevsky was interested in legal evolution rather than in destructive revolution.32 Carr explains that Dostoyevsky's actions would only seem criminal and anarchistic to the Russian government.

It is perhaps easier for us than it was for the Russian police to understand the state of mind of these young men, in whom youthful enthusiasm, youthful naivete and youthful affectation were about equally blended. They were no doubt desperately in earnest in their studies of utopias made in France. . . . But they were not political revolutionaries; their primary and fundamental impulse was merely the desire to escape from the intellectual and moral oppression of life in Petersburg under Nicholas I into an ideal world of their own invention. Still less were they practical reformers. . . . and they were certainly not of the stuff of which tyrant-killers are made.33

31Payne, p. 84.


33Carr, p. 51.
However, to Simmons, Dostoyevsky's was an active role in a movement destined to come in active conflict with the Czarist government except for the arrest of its members. The commonly accepted view that his association with the Petrashevsky and Durov groups was a flight of youthful skin-deep radicalism must be somewhat modified. Dostoyevsky was engaged in a real political conspiracy, and its main endeavour was to agitate for the freeing of the serfs. If the police had not arrested the group, it is very probable that the members would have become involved in active revolutionary work. At this time in his life, the young Dostoyevsky felt deeply the necessity for social change in Russia. . . . He observed real abuses and deliberately joined a secret society with the definite intention of remedying them by illegal tactics.  

Simmons sees Dostoyevsky’s uncomplaining acceptance of his punishment as indicative of his guilt. Perhaps Dostoyevsky himself explains this point by the action of Dmitri Karamazov in The Brothers Karamazov, written twenty years later. Dmitri, though technically innocent of his father’s murder, accepts his punishment because he had wanted to kill him.  

Probably, Dostoyevsky was technically innocent of revolutionary conspiracy, but like Dmitri, he would have liked to be more active. Perhaps the key to the extent of Dostoyevsky’s political activity lies in other factors. It must be remembered that Dostoyevsky was only in his idealistic twenties when he joined the group. Also, he had led a relatively sheltered existence until this time, first at home in Moscow.

34Simmons, p. 58.

35Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 618.
with his family, then at the Imperial Engineering College in Petersburg. Not only was he really free from outside restraint for the first time in his life, but there was also the romantic, forbidden nature of the activities in which he was engaged. Since his youth, he had been an avid reader of the romantic writers, especially Schiller. "It was, of course, an age of rebellion, of formal protest against orthodoxy concealed in the massive colors of romanticism." What could be more romantic than weekly meetings devoted to lofty discussions of ways to improve the Czarist government? And what could be more romantic than Dostoyevsky's conversation with his friend Dr. Stepan Yanovsky, who records in his Memoirs that Dostoyevsky, in speaking of his debt to Speshnev, said: "I have borrowed money from him. I am with him, and belong to him. I can never return his money, and he will never let me return it. That is the kind of man he is. So you see, I have my own Mephistopheles now!" Probably there was no thought of open rebellion against the government in Dostoyevsky's mind, but whether this was true or not recedes in importance in comparison with Payne's statement that members of the circles "were visionaries wrapped in green cigarette smoke, but they were the precursors of the Nihilists of the seventies, and therefore of the Bolsheviks." 

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36 Payne, p. 13.  
37 Ibid., p. 64.  
38 Ibid., p. 60.
When Dostoyevsky returned from Siberia to free society in 1859, after four years in prison at Omsk and six years of forced army duty at Semipalatinsk, he carried with him a new conception of socialism. No longer did he passively acquiesce in the socialist doctrines; now he actively propounded his anti-socialism in his fictional and journalistic works.

Mackiewicz explains this change in terms of Dostoyevsky's renewed acquaintance with the New Testament while imprisoned. During his four years in prison, the only book that Dostoyevsky had to read was the New Testament, given to him by the wife of one of the exiled Decembrists.

He had known the Gospel well from his childhood days, but in penal exile he meditated the meaning of every letter of it. Dostoyevsky was the direct disciple of the Apostles. . . . All the problems which tortured him and which he tried to solve are problems originally propounded by the Gospels. Before his term of penal exile, Dostoyevsky was a second-rate writer, a disciple of Gogol, while afterwards he was a disciple of the Evangelists and became a writer of genius. His desire was to be a Russian writer, but through his ties with the Gospels he became a universal writer.

Dostoyevsky's familiarity with the Bible contributed to his conception of Christianity versus socialism. In the parable of Satan tempting Christ with the promise of turning stones into bread and Christ's reply that "Man does not live by bread alone,"

39Ibid., p. xiv.  
40Mackiewicz, p. 59.
Dostoyevsky saw a condemnation of the materialistic doctrine of Marx, and the doctrine of class war for material goods. But on the other hand, Dostoyevsky, in his constant warfare on the Catholic Church, endeavoured to point out that Catholicism had become reconciled to the division of the world into the well-fed and the hungry, into the exploiters and the exploited. In Dostoyevsky's view the Christian's creed was: I share with my neighbour everything which it is in my power to share, while the Socialist's creed was: give me, you must give me, I shall take from you everything of which you have more than I. Christianity was based on love of one's neighbour, which must be a voluntary feeling, while socialism derived from class hatred.

Simmons says that if Dostoyevsky did undergo any spiritual experience while imprisoned, its nature and effects are impossible to evaluate. Religion was his one solace in his new, hostile world.

In truth, the experiences of these four years as a convict played an important part, perhaps the most important part, in Dostoyevsky's entire development. He entered the prison a young radical, and he left it with a heightened respect for the authority of things. He entered it something of an agnostic and left prison with a firmer faith in the teachings of Christ and a stronger belief in the saving grace of the Orthodox Church in the troubled existence of Russia.

Carr states that Dostoyevsky "returned to Petersburg at the end of 1859 with the same religious convictions with which he had left it ten years before: acceptance of the ethical ideal of Christianity and rejection of its dogmatic content," meaning the dogma of the Russian Orthodox Church, the only

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41 Ibid., p. 169.  
42 Simmons, pp. 59, 61.  
43 Ibid., p. 64.  
44 Carr, p. 282.
Christianity that Dostoyevsky knew. Carr bases his view on the absence of any material pointing to a "religious conversion" in Dostoyevsky's letters to his brother Mikhail during this period; the autobiographical House of the Dead, a fictionalized account of his Siberian experiences; and the reminiscences of his friend Baron Wrangel. If Dostoyevsky ever did experience a religious conversion, it was not complete until his final return from Europe in 1871, ten years after Siberia.45

After his long-desired but disappointing first venture into Western Europe in 1862, Dostoyevsky returned home with renewed faith in his denunciation of socialism. In fact, Simmons dates Dostoyevsky's anti-socialist views, not from Siberia, but from this first trip to Europe, which showed him "the hypocritical bourgeois morality, political corruption, and the suffering of oppressed people"46 that turned him into a bitter foe of Western capitalism.

In his Winter Notes on Summer Impressions, published in 1863, Dostoyevsky vents his contempt on the socialists, who think that the feeling of brotherhood can be created. Dostoyevsky says that this is impossible, especially in the European nature, which is dominated by "a principle of individualism, a principle of isolationism, of intense self-preservation, of personal gain, of self-determination of

46 Simmons, p. 224.
To Dostoyevsky, the highest indication of brotherhood is voluntary self-sacrifice of oneself for others—without any calculations of self-interest. This is true utopia—"everything is based on feelings, on nature, not on reason." Dostoyevsky admits that the basic idea of socialism—happiness for all in the common good—has appeal. But there is one problem:

... it seems that the man is completely secure; they promise to give him food and drink and find work for him and all they ask in return is a drop of his personal freedom for the common weal, just one little drop. But, a man will not live even on this basis, for the little drop is hard to surrender. It seems to him, stupid man that he is, that the community is a prison and that he will be better off all by himself, because that way he is free. And in freedom he is beaten, he can find no work, he dies of hunger, and he has no freedom at all; but no, the eccentric fellow imagines that he is happier when free. Naturally, there remains for the Socialist nothing but to throw up his hands and tell him that he is immature, a fool and a baby, and that he does not understand what is good for him; that an ant ... is more intelligent than he because in the anthill everything runs so smoothly, everything is so well regulated, everyone is well fed and happy, and each one knows his task; in short, man is still a long way from the anthill.

The anti-socialist views of Winter Notes on Summer Impressions are expressed next in fictional form in Notes from Underground, published in 1864. The underground man constantly thinks, reflects, but never acts. He feels that

48 Ibid., p. 114.
49 Ibid., p. 115.
he is utterly useless and loathsome, and he derives much pleasure in contemplating his repulsiveness. "He is forty years old and was, or thought he was, or could have been, something else before . . . ."

He has retreated into his own safe, dark, dank corner, or "underground," and is content to spend his time buffeting his consciousness with his continual thoughts concerning the nature of man--man as the underground man sees him, not as the socialists do. Part one of the novel contains several rhetorical tirades against the socialists, who think that they can train man to act in accordance with his best, i.e., rational, interests. The socialists claim that if man only knew his true advantage, he would immediately stop doing bad, because man's highest advantage is in acting from his good and noble impulses only. The underground man argues that perhaps man's real advantage lies in being able to do something that is to his disadvantage, merely because he wants to do it. "You see, you gentlemen have, to the best of my knowledge, taken your whole register of human advantages from the averages of statistical figures and politico-economical formulas." But these mechanistic principles forget the unreasoning human factor--the simple

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desire for independent choice. On another occasion, the underground man discusses the negative aspect of reason, that main foundation of socialism:

You see, gentlemen, reason is an excellent thing, there's no disputing that, but reason is nothing but reason and satisfies only the rational side of man's nature, while will is a manifestation of the whole life, that is, of the whole human life including reason and all the impulses. And although our life, in this manifestation of it, is often worthless, yet it is life and not simply extracting square roots.\(^{52}\)

In another tirade, the underground man states that "the whole work of man really seems to consist in nothing but proving to himself every minute that he is a man and not a piano-key!\(^{53}\) But man is not a piano-key, a rational mechanism to be regulated and manipulated to fit man-made utopias, even if it is for "his own good." To Dostoyevsky, there was, there had to be, more to life than passive security bought at the price of personal freedom.

Man must have something else to fall back on. This had already become Dostoyevsky's own position. The substitute for reason is not mentioned in Notes from the Underground, although there is evidence to indicate that it had been included but was deleted by the censor. The answer, however, had been emphatically stated in Winter Notes on Summer Impressions. Man must have religion, faith, and Christ to fall back on.\(^{54}\)

\(^{52}\)Ibid., p. 147.

\(^{53}\)Ibid., p. 149.

\(^{54}\)Simmons, p. 110.
As previously mentioned, one of the most important influences in the development of socialism in Russia was the novel *What is to be Done?* by Chernyshevsky, which appeared in 1863.

It is the picture of a Utopian state of society in which perfect happiness is attained by everyone pursuing untrammelled the satisfaction of his own rational desires. In the eyes of Chernyshevsky, a pupil of J. S. Mill, reason and self-interest are the sole sanctions of morality; man commits evil actions only through misapprehension of the true nature of his interests; and intellectual enlightenment is the infallible road to right conduct. The *Notes from Underground* are an answer to the philosophy of Chernyshevsky. It had by this time become one of Dostoyevsky's strongest convictions that human nature is not, as optimistic utilitarians of Chernyshevsky's kidney believed, fundamentally and essentially good; and that man, in virtue of one side of his nature, may desire and choose evil, knowing it to be evil. This conviction finds its first expression in these *Notes* . . . .

Simmons agrees with Carr's interpretation of the conception of *Notes from Underground*, adding that "it is very likely that the work is a deliberate and cruel parody on the social and political ideas Dostoyevsky had held previous to the change which becomes noticeable after his first trip abroad." Therefore, *Notes from Underground* marks the division between Dostoyevsky's liberal and conservative periods. Payne disagrees. He rather unconvincingly states that "when Dostoyevsky was writing *Notes from Underground*, Chernyshevsky was a prisoner in the Peter and Paul Fortress, and the last

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55Carr, p. 119.  
56Simmons, p. 110.  
57Ibid., p. 106.
man to deserve attack in Dostoyevsky's mind." Instead, Payne claims that the work was intended as a general attack on the accepted doctrines of the age. Whatever the inspiration for it was, Notes from Underground remains a provocative denunciation of socialism.

Notes from Underground is the beginning of Dostoyevsky's anti-socialist polemics in fictional form. This pattern is continued in Crime and Punishment; The Idiot; The Possessed; "The Dream of a Strange Man" in The Diary of a Writer, as well as non-fictional attacks in his journal; and his last novel, The Brothers Karamazov.

In Crime and Punishment, published in 1866, Dostoyevsky reveals his anti-socialist slant in such forms as the character and theories of Raskolnikov, the protagonist; the plague dream of Raskolnikov; the character of Luzhin; the indictment against socialism by Razumihin; and finally, the general equation of the intellect with evil and self-interest.

Raskolnikov is a victim of his own rationalistic theories, which eventually lead him to commit two murders. Carr states that Dostoyevsky uses Raskolnikov "as an exponent of the fashionable rationalist ethics of Chernyshevsky which he had attacked two years before in Notes from Underground." Simmons states that Dostoyevsky obviously intended Raskolnikov

58Payne, p. 182.  
60Carr, p. 195.
to represent the nihilistic ideas of the younger-generation radicals. More and more, Dostoyevsky believed that socialism was in error in believing that life could be lived on a rational plan of mechanical rules, or that reason should dominate men's lives. Raskolnikov's crime is a crime of the intellect. He is a child of nihilism who tries to order his life on a self-willed plan of reason. Raskolnikov's plague dream occurs in the Epilogue, just before his acceptance of Sonia's redemptive love.

A fearful plague spreads over the earth, caused by microbes endowed with intelligence and will. The infected people consider themselves ever so intelligent, and each believes that he alone possesses the truth. Chaos reigns when these sick intellectuals try to thrust their infallible plans for new social organizations on the community, and only a few uncontaminated souls are destined to survive and found a new race.

The symbolic intent of the dream is obvious. Dostoyevsky is ridiculing the socialists and nihilists (he confused the two) for believing that by reason alone they can secure the salvation of the world. Raskolnikov likewise had been infected by this same intellectual virus. For him dialectics had taken the place of life. Instead of living life, he had substituted reason for life.

Gibian elaborates on the symbolism of the dream, while stressing the connection between it and Raskolnikov's subsequent "regeneration":

His dream of the plague condemns Raskolnikov's own rationalism. It shows people obsessed by reason and will losing contact with the soil: "They gave

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61 Simmons, p. 132.  
62 Ibid., p. 133.  
63 Ibid.
up tilling the ground" (Epilogue:2). The plague-infected men become frenzied and kill each other. In contrast to Raskolnikov's earlier bow to the earth, the men in his dream have abandoned the earth. The dream is an expression of a new way of looking at reason and will—a way diametrically opposed to Raskolnikov's previous exaltation of those two faculties and rejection of all else.64

Dostoyevsky states that "Raskolnikov was worried that this senseless dream haunted his memory so miserably, the impression of this feverish delirium persisted so long."65 Of course, the dream seems "senseless" to Raskolnikov; it is a refutation of all on which he has based his existence. It will continue to seem "senseless" to him until he is resurrected from his stultifying dependence on rationalistic theories.

The character of the repulsive Luzhin, Raskolnikov's potential brother-in-law, is described by Simmons as "hypocritical humanitarianism."66 This description is best exemplified in Luzhin's attempt to impress Raskolnikov and his friend Razumihin with his defense of "progress in the name of science and economic truth."67

"Hitherto, for instance, if I were told, 'love thy neighbour,' what came of it?" . . . "It came to my tearing my coat in half to share with my neighbour and we both were left half naked. . . . Science now


66Simmons, p. 142.

67Dostoyevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 147.
tells us, love yourself before all men, for everything in the world rests on self-interest. You love yourself and manage your own affairs properly and your coat remains whole. Economic truth adds that the better private affairs are organised in society—the more whole coats, so to say—the firmer are its foundations and the better is the common welfare organised too. Therefore, in acquiring wealth solely and exclusively for myself, I am acquiring so to speak, for all, and helping to bring to pass my neighbour's getting a little more than a torn coat; and that not from private, personal liberality, but as a consequence of the general advance. The idea is simple, but unhappily it has been a long time reaching us, being hindered by idealism and sentimentality.  

To Dostoyevsky, holding such humanitarian concepts based on self-interest was bad enough, but to deliberately espouse such ideas in order to profit financially was the epitome of repulsive pettiness. That is why Luzhin is portrayed as having the traits Dostoyevsky despised in real life: "the cautious, reasoned, calculating, middle-of-the-road bourgeois attitude, bourgeois hypocritical respectability, and a petty sense of self-importance."  

It is to Razumihin, Raskolnikov's friend, that Dostoyevsky gives his anti-socialist tirade. The simple, lovable, and loving Razumihin is a contrast to the rational, coldly logical person Raskolnikov would like to be. Razumihin knows that human nature cannot be controlled to conform to the socialists' notions of a perfect society; the socialists forget that man's soul will not respond to non-human forces of restraint.

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68 Ibid. 69 Simmons, p. 142.
"Human nature is not taken into account, it is excluded, it's not supposed to exist! They don't recognise that humanity, developing by a historical living process, will become at last a normal society, but they believe that a social system that has come out of some mathematical brain is going to organise all humanity at once and make it just and sinless in an instant, quicker than living process! . . . That's why they so dislike the living process of life; they don't want a living soul! The living soul demands life, the soul won't obey the rules of mechanics. . . . But what they want though it smells of death and can be made of india-rubber, at least is not alive, has no will, is servile and won't revolt!" 

Finally, there is Dostoyevsky's general treatment of the intellect in *Crime and Punishment*. " . . . throughout the book the intelligence is presented as essentially an evil power." When Raskolnikov confesses his crime to Sonia, he states: "I went into it like a wise man, and that was just my destruction." Dostoyevsky, by combining intelligence with pride, without any ethical feeling, shows that misused intellect leads to self-interest. " . . . as long as man is not alone, self-interest begins in the passive refusal to help others and leads almost inevitably to the aggressive use of others." Dostoyevsky associates intelligence with the "western" and "progressive" doctrines of expediency and utilitarianism. Because self-interest

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73Beebe, p. 153. 74Ibid.
cannot be disinterested, it is not even particularly intelligent in an objective sense, but it is the only kind of intelligence presented as intelligence in Crime and Punishment. 75

In 1867, while Dostoyevsky and his second wife, Anna, were in Geneva, they attended a meeting of an international congress of the League of Peace and Freedom. 76

These fiery orators, proposing Utopian schemes for the regeneration of society and the salvation of the oppressed workers of the world, recalled the pale ghost of radicalism of his youth. Their clarion calls to bloody revolution and their vehement diatribes against Christianity horrified him. This was a flaming whirlpool of destruction compared to the tepid movement of the 1840's. To achieve the brotherhood of man by decree and to legislate universal equality now seemed to him a monstrous fallacy. 77

Later, Dostoyevsky wrote to his niece Sofia, concerning the socialist meeting:

They began by saying that in order to obtain peace on earth it was necessary to exterminate the Christian religion. Abolish big states and make small ones, down with capital so that everything may be made common by order, etc. . . . First and foremost, fire and sword; and when everything has been annihilated then they think we shall have peace. 78

This meeting was of twofold importance to Dostoyevsky: it afforded him literary material for his novels The Idiot and


77 Simmons, p. 156.

78 Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Letters of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, translated by Ethel Colburn Mayne, XXXV (September 29 /October 17, 1867), 130.
The Possessed, and it proved conclusively to him why he could never alter his denunciations of the socialists.

This condemnation is continued in *The Idiot* (1869), along with Dostoyevsky's avowed purpose of portraying "a truly perfect and noble man" in the character of Prince Myshkin. Myshkin is the "ideal of pure self-sacrifice" opposed by the forces of self-interest. Dostoyevsky began his fight against "the apostles of 'enlightened self-interest'" in *Crime and Punishment*. "The Idiot thus provides the positive complement to the negative argument of *Crime and Punishment*, and is in a spiritual sense the sequel promised in the concluding pages of the earlier novel." The forces of "enlightened self-interest" are the nihilists and liberals of all types who Dostoyevsky felt were destroying Russia.

The satiric references to nihilism and its adherents throughout the book culminate in that noisy scene where Terentyev, Lebedev's son, Keller, and others gather on the porch to plead the cause of the young man who claimed to be the illegitimate son of Myshkin's benefactor. (Part II, Chapters VIII-IX) Here Dostoyevsky pays his respects to the extremists and even to the liberals of his day, men with whom Myshkin has nothing in common. The lofty, radical ideas of these young blackmailers are in sharp contrast to their shabby, dirty appearance, and to their arrogant, dishonourable, petty natures. Compared to the pure-minded hero they cut sorry

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79 Carr, p. 175.
80 Dostoyevsky, *Letters*, XXXIX (January 1, 1868), 142.
81 Carr, p. 211.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
figures, and their behaviour reveals their self-seeking designs. Myshkin is one of Dostoyevsky's champions in his denunciation of radicalism. Both Myshkin and Dostoyevsky equated Roman Catholicism with socialism. Dostoyevsky feared the alliance of the two in order to achieve world power, while Myshkin sees the Catholic Church as the originator of socialism and atheism. At the Epanchins' party, Myshkin launches into a wild tirade against socialism, atheism, and the Roman Catholic Church. As he sees it, socialism and atheism are brothers, and are the offspring of Catholicism. Only the Russian Christ can save Russia from an invasion of these three dangers. To Myshkin "there are two ways to unite society into a harmonious whole--the way of oppression through authority, which amounts to establishing equality by force, and the way of service, which achieves harmony through mutual submission of one to another." Both socialism and Catholicism oppress in the name of equality; it is only the Russian Orthodox Church that achieves true equality by its emphasis on willing submission and service.

In 1869 Dostoyevsky was working on a new novel dealing with conspirators, when he learned of the murder of a student

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84 Simmons, p. 175.
85 Payne, p. 357.
87 Simmons, p. 174.
named Ivanov, a member of a revolutionary conspiracy, by the leader of the group, Sergey Nechayev. Ivanov had refused to obey Nechayev on some matter, and Nechayev decided to show his power as leader by making an example of the disobedient Ivanov. 88 This murder-case was incorporated into Dostoyevsky's novel, with Nechayev becoming the fictional Pyotr Verkhovensky and Ivanov, Shatov. 89 The main character, Stavrogin, is based on Nikolay Speshnev, the leader of the Durov circle twenty years before. 90 Dostoyevsky was becoming more and more afraid of the dangers of the radical movement in Russia; his trips to Europe in the 1860's convinced him that Russia's plight was a result of European influences. Then came the Nechayev-Ivanov affair. Dostoyevsky decided to turn his latest novel into an expose of radicalism. 91 In a letter to the future czar, Alexander III, Dostoyevsky states "that the novel virtually represents a historical study in which he tries to show that the radical movement resulted largely from the fact that Russian intellectuals were out of touch with the masses and unsympathetic to them." 92

Dostoyevsky uses the character Shatov (Ivanov), the "reformed radical," as his answer to the revolutionaries. 93 Shatov is of peasant birth, and it is he who symbolizes that

88 Payne, pp. 252-3.  
90 Ibid., p. 62.  
92 Ibid., p. 228.  
89 Ibid., pp. 258-9.  
91 Simmons, p. 225.  
93 Ibid., p. 214.
the radicals "must return to the soil, to the masses, and to the Russian Christ,"\textsuperscript{94} the path which must be achieved by the "universal negation of reason."\textsuperscript{95} That is Dostoyevsky speaking, as he does also in Shatov's statements concerning socialism. Shatov says that no societies have been founded successfully on socialist principles. There is some other force--"the seeking for God,"\textsuperscript{96} as Shatov calls it--that governs the development of nations. This is where socialism fails, because it is indistinguishable from atheism and denies "the seeking for God."\textsuperscript{97}

Roe sees the main value of the novel in the assertion that from revolution always comes a reactionary power worse than the one rebelled against.\textsuperscript{98} For the past twenty years, Dostoyevsky had been pondering this point concerning social revolutions, and the Nechayev-Ivanov affair gave him the inspiration to formulate his theory concerning the necessary outcome of all such upheavals. The truth of this statement is shown in the theory of the revolutionary Shigalov that he proposes at a meeting of the group. Even though he says that "... nothing can take the place of the system set forth..."\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{94}Ibid., p. 229. \hfill \textsuperscript{95}Ibid., p. 217.
\textsuperscript{97}Ibid., pp. 267-8.
\textsuperscript{98}Ivan Roe, \textit{The Breath of Corruption} (London, n. d.), p. 93.
in my book, and there is no other way out of it; no one can
invent anything else,"99 he is in despair because of his
conclusion: "I am perplexed by my own data and my conclusion
is a direct contradiction of the original idea with which I
start. Starting from unlimited freedom, I arrive at
unlimited despotism."100

In 1876, Dostoyevsky began publishing his The Diary of
a Writer, a collection of articles on various subjects. In
the April, 1877, edition, there appeared a short story
entitled "The Dream of a Strange Man." In it, the hero plans
to commit suicide because nothing in life matters to him. He
is prevented from taking his life the night he has planned
because he cannot rid himself of the memory of a little girl
he has refused to help. However, he cannot understand why
this insignificant incident should stay his suicide plans.
In this perturbed state of mind, he falls asleep and dreams.
In his dream, he does shoot himself—but not in the head as
originally planned, but in the heart, signifying the fact that
the incident with the child had awakened his human emotions.
He is buried, and after a time, the grave is opened and he is
whisked through space with an unknown companion towards a
planet that is a duplicate of the earth, where the inhabitants

100 Ibid.
know not the meaning of sin. "It is definitely a picture of earth before the Fall." In some unexplained way, the hero corrupts this sinless earth. The inhabitants grow wicked and begin talking about brotherhood and humanitarianism; science is introduced and they seek to explain life in order to teach others how to live. . . . Knowledge is esteemed as higher than feeling . . . .

In despair, the hero begs to be crucified as punishment for his crime against these people, but they only threaten to put him in an insane asylum. At this point, the hero awakes from his dream with a renewed desire for life.

The dream has taught him the truth that evil is not a normal condition of mankind and that people can be happy without losing the power of living on earth. The story ends with the Ridiculous Man [the hero] repeating Dostoyevsky's own convictions of the necessity to combat the idea that the consciousness of life is higher than life and that knowledge of the laws of happiness is higher than happiness. All that one must do is to love others like oneself.

Dostoyevsky's anti-socialist moral lies in the treatment of the fall of this sinless society. "Dostoyevsky's picture of their moral disintegration suspiciously resembles a description of modern society corrupted by rationalism and the radical movement."

102 Simmons, p. 261.
103 Ibid.
105 Simmons, p. 261.
106 Ibid.
Dostoyevsky's most complete denunciation of socialism occurs in his last work, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880). It is Ivan Karamazov's "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor." This terrible story of the denunciation of Christ in the name of the happiness of mankind is Ivan's because he is a man of learning and considerable intellectual attainments, but in Dostoyevsky's times these characteristics were linked with lack of faith, scepticism and a spirit of scoffing, in accordance with a tradition which had originated in the preceding century.107

In a letter to his editor N. A. Liubimov, Dostoyevsky says that Ivan's convictions form the "synthesis of contemporary Russian anarchism."108 The doubt-ridden Ivan theorizes that if there is no God, there is no immortality; consequently, there is no virtue. If there is no virtue, there is no vice; therefore, everything is permissible.109 Ivan can see no justice in a world in which there is so much undeserved suffering, especially that of innocent children. He tells his saintly brother Alyosha: "'It's not God that I don't accept, Alyosha, only I most respectfully return Him the ticket.'"110 It is God's world that Ivan will not accept—a

107Mackiewicz, p. 189.


110 Ibid., p. 291.
world in which the innocent suffer for the sins of others. Alyosha maintains that the world is built on the conception of the Christ who suffered innocently in redeeming man's sins, who therefore "has the right to forgive all this suffering of the innocent." But Ivan cannot accept the way of submission to Christ. He would remake the world to exclude suffering. This amounts to a surrender of the whole position of the world of Christianity and the social order founded upon it. It is revolution; it is the very argument of socialism that the world should be remade, and by force, if necessary. Ivan knows why there is suffering; it is because of man's God-given freedom. That is the point he makes to Alyosha in his legend, which is a story of the second coming of Christ. The setting is Seville during the Spanish Inquisition. Christ is welcomed and adored by the people, and performs miracles for them. At the command of the Grand Inquisitor, He is thrown into prison. There He is visited by the Grand Inquisitor, who rejects His teachings in the name of mankind. Christ's mistake was to reject Satan's temptations which would have insured man's fidelity to Him. Christ gave mankind freedom of choice instead, which insured that man choose Him only through love, but which is a terrible responsibility and burden to man. The Church has corrected this mistake by giving man happiness, through submission to

111 Simmons, p. 282. 
112 Ibid., p. 283.
the Church, in exchange for his freedom. If Christ does not leave the Church in peace now that it has corrected His teachings, the Grand Inquisitor threatens to have Him burned at the stake. The silent Christ kisses the Grand Inquisitor in reply, who releases Him. In another letter to Liubimov, Dostoyevsky says that his "socialist (Ivan Karamazov) is a sincere man who frankly confesses that he agrees with the Grand Inquisitor's view of mankind, and that Christ's religion (as it were) has raised man much higher than man actually stands."  

Perhaps Ivan, along with the socialists, could rationally consider overthrowing Christ's world and establishing a new one based on happiness and contentment, with the elimination of suffering and freedom, but Dostoyevsky could not. In a letter to Madame N. D. Fonvisin, wife of one of the Decembrists whom Dostoyevsky met on his way to the prison at Omsk, he says that "If anyone could prove to me that Christ is outside the truth, and if the truth really did exclude Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and not with truth." By equating the word "socialism" with "the truth" in this letter, we can see why Dostoyevsky could not permit socialism to construct a better world, if it possibly could. To Dostoyevsky, socialism

113Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, pp. 294-311.

114Dostoyevsky, "Dostoyevsky on The Brothers Karamazov," pp. 554-5.

and atheism were synonymous, Christ and socialism were mutually exclusive. He could not accept any system which excluded Christ.

Dostoyevsky did not accept the tenets of socialism, but why is this fact important in considering his concept of the role of suffering in human existence? In considering the relationship between socialism and Dostoyevsky's novels, it is necessary to see that one of the basic motives of socialism is the elimination of suffering, that is, the doctrine of happiness for all. One of the dominant themes in the works of Dostoyevsky, perhaps the basic one, concerns the suffering that is part of life. Dostoyevsky's concept of suffering was original in his age of humanitarianism, because he saw suffering as necessary, inevitable, and desirable—whereas socialism tries "to make man happy by relieving him of his personal responsibility." But to achieve this state of happiness, the socialists would eliminate freedom, because they recognized, as Dostoyevsky did, that freedom and complete happiness are incompatible. When man possesses freedom, he has inescapable responsibilities: he must make a continual choice between good and evil. When man deliberately makes the wrong choice, he has misused his freedom to the


117 Carr, p. 293.
extent that he has acted wilfully. It is this wilfulness that produces evil, which results in suffering. Man has been created with free will--his most godlike attribute. But freedom and suffering are juxtaposed in life. The world is full of evil and suffering because it is based on freedom. Suffering could be eliminated by the abolition of freedom, which in turn would eliminate evil. The world would be "happy" and "good," "but man would have lost his likeness to God, which primarily resides in his freedom." And Dostoyevsky repudiated a world of compulsory happiness without freedom. He saw a contradiction between freedom and happiness in that freedom implies a choice between alternatives that may cause suffering, while happiness implies the absence of suffering and, therefore, the absence of freedom. Dostoyevsky did not believe that God wants man to be an adoring automaton who is predestined to be good and love Him; God wants man to love Him enough to freely choose good over evil.

"I want to make you free," Jesus had said. But by proclaiming the freedom of choice between good and evil, Jesus proclaimed man's responsibility, condemned man to the torments of his conscience, and made him the object of a whole machinery of suffering, in which remorse, temptation, and hope are inextricably mixed. Freedom is inconceivable

118 Berdiaev, p. 179.
without suffering. Freedom can be bought only at the price of suffering. And Christianity is above all a religion of suffering.  

Dostoyevsky explores the problem of freedom versus happiness in *Notes from Underground* and in "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" in *The Brothers Karamazov*. The underground man states:

"Does not man, perhaps, love something besides well-being? Perhaps he is just as fond of suffering? Perhaps suffering is just as great a benefit to him as well-being? Man is sometimes extraordinarily, passionately, in love with suffering, and that is a fact. . . . And yet I think man will never renounce real suffering, that is, destruction and chaos. Why, suffering is the sole origin of consciousness. Though I did lay it down at the beginning that consciousness is the greatest misfortune for man, yet I know man prizes it and would not give it up for any satisfaction."  

The thesis of "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" is that there must be freedom of choice and suffering or absence of freedom in a life of organized contentment.  

Dostoyevsky's letter stating that he would choose Christ over the truth has been cited. " . . . in Christ he saw a way of life. Christ was for him the most valiant, the most noble, the most gentle, the most perfect knight that ever rode forth on the awful Quest . . . ."  

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120 Troyat, p. 407.
121 Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground*, p. 151.
122 Berdyaev, *Dostoyevsky*, p. 190.
reject socialism, humanitarianism, rationalism, and all the other "-isms" because they revolted "against God in the name of human happiness"\textsuperscript{124} and sought "to replace divine ideas by human ideas . . . "\textsuperscript{125}

But Dostoyevsky, like Ivan Karamazov, had rejected God's world because it contained so much suffering. Because of this, he had flirted with socialism, which promised to remake the world into one in which all suffering was excluded. His experiences in Siberia and Europe, especially after his first trip abroad, finally convinced Dostoyevsky that socialism was not the answer.

Dostoyevsky's rejection of socialism made it necessary for him to reject the corollary of socialism: the elimination of human suffering. Thus he was forced to evolve a personal interpretation for the suffering that he would not let be abolished. Critics generally consider Siberia to be the turning point in Dostoyevsky's life, both from a personal and a literary standpoint. Before his imprisonment, Dostoyevsky's values were too immature for him to develop a significant theory illuminating the problem of suffering. It took Siberia to teach Dostoyevsky the meaning of metaphysical suffering--the search for the meaning of God and reality. This meaning can be traced in the majority of his post-Siberian works in

\textsuperscript{125}Ibid.
the form of the theory that happiness and ultimate salvation are made available to man through the purifying effects of his metaphysical sufferings.
CHAPTER II

DOSTOYEVSKY'S INTERPRETATION OF SUFFERING IN HIS WORKS

If, as Simmons states, Dostoyevsky learned the doctrine of salvation through suffering in Siberia, how did he present the theme of suffering in his pre-Siberian period? In *Poor Folk*, Dostoyevsky's first novel, and subsequent works, suffering is treated merely as a puzzling phenomenon lacking in spiritual value to the sufferer. Murry states that Dostoyevsky does not preach the doctrine of salvation through suffering, basing his view on the fact the suffering shown in the pre-Siberian works, especially in *Poor Folk*, is "not the suffering which is supposed to make men, but that which prevents men from being men." Troyat qualifies Murry's statements by stressing that Dostoyevsky's early examples of suffering are concerned only with that of a "moral, social, material, and earthly" nature, whereas in the post-Siberian period, Dostoyevsky concerns himself with metaphysical suffering.

2 Murry, pp. 64, 67.
3 Ibid., p. 64.
4 Troyat, p. 70.
Before Siberia, Dostoyevsky tended to present a sentimental picture of suffering. Mackiewicz says that from his first novel, Poor Folk (1846) to The Insulted and Injured (1861), Dostoyevsky was influenced by Gogol's "The Cloak," the story of a pathetic minor official who is crushed by the meaningless sufferings in his life.  

Even the best of his Dostoyevsky's short stories in the "Cloak" manner are over-sentimentalised and over-sweetened presentations of human torment. I say "over-sweetened" because at this period meditation on human suffering acted like a sedative on Dostoyevsky.  

Meier-Graefe agrees with Mackiewicz that through The Insulted and Injured, the primary factor in Dostoyevsky's style was sentimentality. In fact, Meier-Graefe divides Dostoyevsky's works into two distinct periods of development. The first stage is not complete until Notes from Underground (1864), five years after his return to Petersburg. The second period begins with Crime and Punishment (1866) and ends with The Brothers Karamazov (1880). Meier-Graefe stresses the fact that it is not until Crime and Punishment that Dostoyevsky's experiences in Siberia are made manifest in his literary development. Even the post-Siberian works, The Village of Stepanchikovo (The Friend of the Family), Uncle's Dream,  

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5Mackiewicz, p. 24.  
6Ibid.  
7Meier-Graefe, p. 96.  
8Ibid., p. 61.  
9Ibid., p. 140.
and *The House of the Dead*, while first conceived in Siberia, do not show the matured theme of suffering illustrated in the later novels. Simmons, however, judges *The Village of Stepanchikovo* to be the true link between Dostoyevsky's first and second literary periods, coming as it does between *Uncle's Dream* (1859) and *The Insulted and Injured* (1861). Even *Notes from Underground* is not strictly a product of Siberia, but rather shows the influence of *The Double* (1846). These facts show that the positive influence of Siberia was delayed in Dostoyevsky's literary development, either because Siberia was not influential enough in itself or the experience was too profound to be exposed immediately to the public.

As Dostoyevsky's life was one long search for God, he developed the theme in his novels of the search for the meaning of God's world and God's reality, especially the relationship between man and his suffering. But there are two types of suffering--general sufferings and absolute suffering--and Dostoyevsky's characters are victims of the latter, the ultimate in human torment which can never be forgotten in the oblivion of transitory happiness. It is on this basis that Murry states that Dostoyevsky does not expound the doctrine of purification, regeneration, and happiness through suffering.

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10 Simmons, p. 73.  
12 Ibid., p. 81.  
13 Simmons, p. 61.  
14 Murry, p. 47.  
15 Ibid., p. 64.
Most critics, however, agree with Berdyaev, who says that "Dostoyevsky believed firmly in the redemptive and regenerative power of suffering: life is the expiation of sin by suffering."\textsuperscript{16}

Simmons points out that The Insulted and Injured is the first novel to express the "famous Dostoyevskian doctrine" of happiness and salvation earned through suffering.\textsuperscript{17} The heroine, Natasha, rejects the love of the faithful Vanya and her duty to her family by becoming the mistress of the immature and weak-willed Alyosha, whom she loves with an inexplicably insane yet motherly passion. She knows that her love for the vacillating Alyosha will bring her nothing but anguish, but she is willing to pay the price of being his abject slave in order to be near him. With pathetic insight, she tells Vanya:

"Listen, Vanya, I knew beforehand, and even in our happiest moments I felt that he would bring me nothing but misery. But what is to be done if even torture from him is happiness to me now? Do you suppose I'm going to him to meet joy? Do you suppose I don't know beforehand what's in store for me or what I shall have to bear from him?"\textsuperscript{18}

With resignation, Natasha accepts the destiny that her love for Alyosha has brought her. After living with him for six months, Natasha painfully decides that, if she really loves

\textsuperscript{16}Berdyaev, Dostoyevsky, p. 95.

\textsuperscript{17}Dostoyevsky, The Possessed, introduction by Ernest J. Simmons, p. 11.

him, she must destroy the bond between them, to prevent their liaison from ruining his future. But, what will happen to Natasha? She can return to her family only at the unacceptable price of repudiation and repentance of her love for Alyosha. She can only passively await her future with the statement that "We shall have to work out our future happiness by suffering; pay for it somehow by fresh miseries. Everything is purified by suffering."19

In one way, her statement is true—in another, perhaps it is not. At the end of the novel, Natasha has suffered from jealousy of Alyosha and his ideal fiancee Katya; curses from her father; insults from Prince Valkovsky, Alyosha's vile father; and shame from her own conduct. All of these sufferings do result finally in some measure of happiness for Natasha: she is lovingly reconciled with her family. However, there will always be the doubt that her sufferings have insured her future happiness; there will always be the painful memory of Alyosha and the thought that she will never be able to possess the true happiness that could have been hers with Vanya. "Vanya, why did I destroy your happiness?" And in her eyes I read: "We might have been happy together for ever."20

If Natasha's sufferings sound of little consequence to any true understanding of Dostoyevsky's conception of suffering

19 Ibid., p. 75.  
20 Ibid., p. 333.
in human existence, it is because they are Murry's "general sufferings," rather than the "absolute suffering" of the conflict between man and God and reality. The Insulted and Injured is a sentimental, romantic, melodramatic tale, employing many techniques of "sensational 'lower' fiction," that clearly demonstrates why critics place this novel in Dostoyevsky's pre-Siberian literary period, even though it was published after his return from Siberia. It was not until Dostoyevsky's transitional work, Notes from Underground (1864), that suffering was dealt with on a less superficial level.

Although Notes from Underground does not specifically equate suffering with happiness, it does contain some provocative statements concerning man's desire for and need of suffering. The underground man, speaking for Dostoyevsky, says:

Does not man, perhaps, love something besides well-being? Perhaps he is just as fond of suffering? Perhaps suffering is just as great a benefit to him as well-being? Man is sometimes extraordinarily, passionately, in love with suffering, and that is a fact. . . . And yet I think man will never renounce real suffering, that is, destruction and chaos. Why, suffering is the sole origin of consciousness. Though I did lay it down at the beginning that consciousness is the greatest misfortune for man, yet I know man prizes it and would not give it up for any satisfaction. 22

The underground man knows from personal experience the masochistic pleasure to be derived from suffering. " . . . he

21 Janko Lavrin, Dostoyevsky (New York, 1947), p. 34.
22 Dostoyevsky, Notes from Underground, p. 151.
does nothing but think, thinks of the humiliations which he has suffered and could suffer and doubtless would have to suffer if he were to stick his nose out of doors, and enjoys it."^23

While Notes from Underground does little to elucidate Dostoyevsky's theory of happiness earned through suffering, it is important for an over-all picture of Dostoyevsky's development, because it states his view that suffering is invaluable to man's experience of life, which is developed in subsequent novels. It is Dostoyevsky's "first incursion into philosophy, and forms in a certain sense an introduction to the series of his great novels,"^24 which themselves are dramatizations of

the problems of life and philosophy: in Crime and Punishment with the meaning of ethics; in The Idiot with the ethical ideal; in The Possessed with the relations between ethics, politics, and religion; and in The Brothers Karamazov with the foundations of religion.^25

It is in Dostoyevsky's next novel, Crime and Punishment (1866), that he returns to the theme of happiness through suffering, first stated in The Insulted and Injured, which is then developed into one of the main ideas of the novel.

Meier-Graefe calls Crime and Punishment (1866) "the ripe fruit of the katorga /penal settlements in Siberia/.^26

Ivanov says that "Crime and Punishment was Dostoyevsky's first great revelation to the world, and the main pillar of his subsequent philosophy of life." In a negative way, Crime and Punishment continues the theme of suffering first developed in Notes from Underground. Carr says that Dostoyevsky uses Raskolnikov as an exponent of the rationalistic theories expounded in Chernyskevsky's What's to be Done?, which Dostoyevsky attacked in Notes from Underground. The problem of both the underground man and Raskolnikov is that of complete freedom. The underground man unquestioningly believes that man wants both freedom and suffering. Believing himself to be an "extraordinary" individual or superman, Raskolnikov desires complete freedom of will. But the underground man knows that suffering is a result of freedom, whereas Raskolnikov will not admit this fact. Even after he has decided to confess his crime, Raskolnikov is still unwilling to accept his punishment:

"They say it is necessary for me to suffer!
What's the object of these senseless sufferings?
Shall I know any better what they are for, when I am crushed by hardships and idiocy, and weak as an old man after twenty years' penal servitude?"

28Carr, p. 195.
29Troyat, p. 265.
30Dostoyevsky, Crime and Punishment, p. 504.
Until Raskolnikov truly repents of his crime, which is obscurely and unconvincingly hinted at in the Epilogue, he will continue to reject suffering as the force that will compel him to submit to God's laws. In fact, Raskolnikov does not know really why he confessed in the first place. He felt compelled to do so by some inexplicable force that he could not comprehend, which Dostoyevsky explains in his letter to Katkov, his editor:

The feeling of separation and isolation from mankind, which he felt immediately after the crime, have tortured him. Human nature and the law of truth have taken their toll. The criminal decides to accept suffering so as to redeem his deed.

In the notebooks for Crime and Punishment, Dostoyevsky develops the doctrine of happiness through suffering further, which indicates its growing importance in his conception of suffering:

There is no happiness in comfort; happiness is brought by suffering. Man is not born for happiness. Man earns his happiness and always by suffering. Here there is no injustice, for life's calling and consciousness (i.e., the immediately felt in body and spirit, i.e., in the whole vital process) is acquired by experience pro and contra which must be felt in the process of living. By suffering, such is the law of our planet. But this immediate consciousness, felt in the process

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31 Ibid., pp. 530-2.
32 Ibid., p. 502.
of living, is such a great joy, for which one may pay by years of suffering.34

This view is expressed in the novel by Sonia, Raskolnikov's beloved. When Raskolnikov can no longer live with the burden of his conscience, he confesses to Sonia that he is a murderer, begging her for a solution to his intolerable situation. Speaking for Dostoyevsky, Sonia tells Raskolnikov that he must admit his guilt to everyone and accept his punishment:

"Suffer and expiate your sin by it, that's what you must do."
"No! I am not going to them, Sonia!"
"But how will you go on living? What will you live for?" cried Sonia . . . 35

Later, Raskolnikov hears similar words from Porfiry, the police inspector, who knows that Raskolnikov is guilty, even before he confesses. Porfiry tries to convince Raskolnikov that he needs to forget about living life according to rationalistic theories and throw himself "straight into life, with deliberation . . ."36 and that he needs to suffer:
"This may be God's means for bringing you to Him,"37 Porfiry knows that ultimately Raskolnikov will confess on his own accord, will feel compelled to do so, because "there's an idea in suffering."38

34 Iz arkhiva F. M. Dostoevskogo, Prestuplenie i Nakozeanie, quoted by Ernest J. Simmons in Dostoyevsky, The Making of a Novelist, p. 120.
36 Ibid., p. 445. 37 Ibid. 38 Ibid., p. 447.
The novel itself is rather indefinite about whether Raskolnikov discovers the "idea in suffering" or not. There is an unconvincing repentance scene, and then the enigmatic words: "He did not know that the new life would not be given him for nothing, that he would have to pay dearly for it, that it would cost him great striving, great suffering." Supposedly, Raskolnikov will gradually become reconciled to the fact that he can only be reborn again through suffering. But what if a person continued to reject the idea that suffering is necessary and valuable? This question is one of the subjects in Dostoyevsky's next novel.

In *The Idiot* (1868), Dostoyevsky confronts for the first time the problem of man's struggle to understand the bewildering forces behind suffering in the seventeen year old nihilist, Ippolit Terentyev, who is dying of consumption. Ippolit's illness has given him time and reason to begin thinking about human suffering:

"You know, a great many ideas have come into my head as I lay on the pillow... Do you know, I am convinced that Nature is very ironical....

... why does she create the best beings only to laugh at them afterwards? It is her doing that the sole creature recognized on earth as perfection... it is her doing that, showing him to men, she has decreed for him to say words for which so much blood has been shed, that if it had been shed at once, men must have been drowned in it.... Ah, it's a good thing that I

am dying! Perhaps I too should utter some horrible lie, Nature would beguile me into it....I have not corrupted anyone....I wanted to live for the happiness of all men, to discover and proclaim the truth."40

Knowing that he only has weeks to live and deciding that "it's not worth while living a fortnight,"41 Ippolit writes a confessional essay illuminating his struggle against the chaos of the world. He is furious with himself because now he has a consuming desire to live. "'It's life that matters, nothing but life--the process of discovering, the everlasting and perpetual process, not the discovery itself, at all.'"42 He cannot control nature and will himself to live, but he can will himself to die. ""...I do not want this life! If I'd had the power not to be born, I would certainly not have accepted existence upon conditions that are such a mockery. But I still have power to die...""43 His longing to be able to control his life, at least, takes definite form after an incident that proves to him that the forces of creation deserve to be vanquished. He sees a picture of the crucified Christ, which is a terrifying comment on Christ's subjection to the laws of nature.

"Looking at such a picture, one conceives of nature in the shape of an immense, merciless, dumb beast, or more correctly... in the form of a huge

41Ibid., p. 376.  
42Ibid., p. 382.
43Ibid., p. 402.
machine of the most modern construction which, dull and insensible, has aimlessly clutched, crushed and swallowed up a great priceless Being, a Being worth all nature and its laws, worth the whole earth, which was created perhaps solely for the sake of the advent of that Being. This picture expresses and unconsciously suggests to one the conception of such a dark insolent, unreasoning and eternal Power to which everything is in subjection."

Seeing this power of nature in his mind's eye as a gigantic spider, Ippolit makes suicide plans: "'I could not go on living a life which was taking such strange, humiliating forms. That apparition degraded me. I am not able to submit to the gloomy power that takes the shape of a spider.'" 45

Further on in his confession, Ippolit presents the question that always plagues man: Why is suffering necessary in the scheme of universal harmony? Is man really expected to submit joyfully to this suffering?

"Let consciousness, kindled by the will of a higher Power, have looked round upon the world and have said—'I am!' and let it suddenly be doomed by that Power to annihilation, because it's somehow necessary for some purpose—-and even without explanation of the purpose—so be it, I admit it all, but again the eternal question: what need is there of my humility? Can't I simply be devoured without being expected to praise what devours me? Can there really be Somebody up aloft who will be aggrieved by my not going on for a fortnight longer? I don't believe it; and it's a much more likely supposition that all that's needed is my worthless life, the life of an atom, to complete some universal harmony . . . ." 46

Ippolit concedes that perhaps there is a need for suffering and death for this incomprehensible world harmony, but must he understand it also? "But if this future life or its laws is so difficult and even impossible to understand, surely I shan't be held responsible for not being able to comprehend the inconceivable."\(^{47}\)

Then, Ippolit utters a variation of the doctrine of happiness and salvation through suffering but somehow it no longer sounds positive, coming as it does from the dying youth. Now it sounds like a homily of obsequious degradation for mankind: "'It's true, they tell . . . that submissive faith is needed, that one must obey without reasoning, simply from piety, and that I shall certainly be rewarded in the next world for my humility.'\(^{48}\)

Perhaps, this statement sounds like a mockery of Dostoyevsky's theory of suffering because he intended it to be. While Dostoyevsky was writing The Idiot, not only was he oppressed by voluntary but necessary exile in Europe, extreme poverty, and sickness, but his beloved first-born died at the age of three months and his sufferings knew no bounds. The child's death "shattered him, tore him to pieces. For the first time he was tempted to revolt against destiny."\(^{49}\)

His "revolt against destiny" found utterance in the revolt of

\(^{47}\)Ibid.  \(^{48}\)Ibid., p. 402.  \(^{49}\)Troyat, p. 312.
Ippolit, because Ippolit does not gain happiness and salvation from his sufferings. Instead he makes an abortive attempt at suicide that makes him the laughingstock of his acquaintances. He feels so ashamed of his confession that he repudiates it as the result of fever and delirium, thereby rejecting his very soul. And he finally ignominiously dies of consumption without an answer to his questions and with only the hero's words, "Pass by us, and forgive us our happiness," for his only comfort.

In *The Possessed* (1872), Dostoyevsky is more intent on exposing the destructive aims of the nihilists rather than expounding on the doctrine of salvation through suffering. Nevertheless, a subtle implication of the theory is present in the characters Stavrogin and Kirillov. Perhaps Dostoyevsky used these two characters to illustrate the various facets of suffering because neither of them is truly a nihilist; they have been ensnared by those who would make use of them, and they are disinclined to free themselves—Stavrogin because he is too bored with life to make the effort and Kirillov because he is oblivious to everything besides his theory of self-will.

Explaining his theory to the narrator of the novel, Kirillov says that complete freedom lies in suicide, which

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makes a person God, but only if the suicide is an attempt to destroy the fear of death.

"God is the pain of the fear of death. He who will conquer pain and terror will become himself a god. Then there will be a new life, a new man; everything will be new . . . then they will divide history into two parts: from the gorilla to the annihilation of God, and from the annihilation of God to . . . ."

"To the gorilla?"

". . . To the transformation of the earth, and of man physically. Man will be God, and will be transformed physically, and the world will be transformed and things will be transformed and thoughts and all feelings."51

Troyat sees in Kirillov and his theory an attempt to save mankind because of an overwhelming love of all creation.

Like Christ he [Kirillov] sacrifices himself to save mankind. Actually he is obsessed by the figure of Christ. He longs to ascend the cross, to suffer in behalf of others, to pay with his blood for the happiness of others. His ecstatic love for his fellow men transforms this atheist into an almost Christian figure.52

This love of mankind is elevated into an "ecstatic love" of all creation because "everything's good," not merely the joyous aspects of life, but also everything that is repulsive and vile: "'It's all good, all. It's good for all those who know that it's all good. If they knew that it was good for them, it would be good for them, but as long as they don't know it's good for them, it will be bad for them.'"53 Even though Kirillov accepts suffering, Dostoyevsky sees his

51Dostoyevsky, The Possessed, p. 133.
52Troyat, p. 359.
53Dostoyevsky, The Possessed, p. 255.
theory as invalid because it leads not to adoration of Christ but to the deification of man as the man-god. 54

Stavrogin also illustrates the fact that suffering will not result in salvation and regeneration unless the sufferer can finally surrender himself to the force beyond his own existence. Stavrogin's confession to Bishop Tikhon shows his "terrible, undisguised need for penalties, the need for a cross, for universal punishment" 55—for suffering. Stavrogin admits that he is seeking suffering, 56 but suffering is of no value to him because it does not purify him of his capacity to commit both good and evil actions with equal pleasure, or rather with equal lack of pleasure. He is so bored with life that he welcomes his propensity for evil as a force that may cause him the blessed feeling of grief and remorse. But his ennui has stifled his emotions to such an extent that the distinction between good and evil no longer exists. "Indignation and shame I can never feel, therefore not despair." 57 Until he feels despair, he will not care whether he finds salvation or not. That is why he deliberately commits so many foul deeds—in order to see if perhaps he can loathe his actions enough to suffer. He tells Tikhon that he wants to forgive, to which Tikhon answers that Christ will forgive him once he forgives himself. However, to believe in Christ and

54 Ibid., p. 256. 55 Ibid., p. 707. 56 Ibid., p. 731. 57 Ibid., p. 689.
His forgiveness would require Stavrogin to feel despair about his sins, but he can never feel despair about anything. Therefore, nothing is left for him but to commit suicide in hopes of reaching oblivion.

A Raw Youth (1875), coming as it does between Dostoyevsky's greatest novels, is a retrograde work in that it raises no new philosophical or metaphysical problems. It is a story of a son's search for his father, and is "concerned only with the psychological reactions of human beings on one another."\(^{58}\) This comparatively innocuous theme probably can be traced to the fact that the publisher for this novel was Nekrasov, a radical in whose journal it appeared. Since the political views of Nekrasov and Dostoyevsky were completely opposite, Dostoyevsky did not feel free to raise any vital new problem. Dostoyevsky switched to Nekrasov from his regular publisher, Katkov, because the latter had just printed Tolstoy's Anna Karenina and felt that it would not be good business to print another novel immediately.\(^{59}\)

Therefore the sufferings endured by the hero of the novel, Arkady Dolgoruky, are not the absolute sufferings of a Raskolnikov, Ippolit, Kirillov, or Stavrogin. Rather, they are the tribulations—often deliberately sought—of a twenty-one year old youth who feels that he has been mistreated by life. In fact, the tone of the novel is reminiscent of

\(^{58}\)Carr, p. 251.  \(^{59}\)Ibid., pp. 243, 251.
The Insulted and Injured. Lavrin calls Arkady an illustration of "voluntary self-degradation."\textsuperscript{60} Troyat agrees: "The greater his sufferings, the greater the pleasure he derives from imagining a future of joy and valor. He seeks suffering not for its own sake, but because it adds value and brilliance to his idea of future happiness."\textsuperscript{61} Arkady does not struggle with the meaning and importance of his "sufferings"; his main concerns in life are to achieve power through the independence that money affords and to establish a satisfactory relationship with his real father, Versilov. Arkady is Versilov's illegitimate son; his mother was a serf in his father's house. As a boy, Arkady was sent by Versilov to the best boarding-school in Moscow. When Monsieur Touchard, the headmaster, discovered that Arkady was illegitimate, he immediately began treating Arkady as a servant, and was immediately mimicked by the other students. Arkady's ill-treatment at school soon turned him into an anti-social dreamer whose one consolation was his "idea"--to become as rich as a Rothschild and achieve power through money.\textsuperscript{62} Arkady has the desire but not the will to carry his plans out successfully; he constantly complains of his abject nature. His worst fault is "the impulse to throw myself on people's necks that they might think well of"

\textsuperscript{60}Lavrin, p. 47. \hspace{1cm} \textsuperscript{61}Troyat, p. 376.

me and take me to their hearts . . . ." However Arkady may despise this fault in himself, it has guided his life ever since his childhood and will continue to do so until he reaches maturity. Perhaps this is why he desires to establish contact with Versilov so ardently, realizing that only after he has found himself in Versilov can he stop cringing before insults and his own shame.

Arkady does attain some measure of happiness from his sufferings—he is reconciled with Versilov. Now he has attained maturity, and only now is he ready to ask, define, and resolve questions concerning absolute suffering.

The short story "The Dream of a Strange Man" (1877) not only reflects Dostoyevsky's anti-socialist views but also his theories on suffering. Maurina regards it as a pessimistic work and states that if it had been Dostoyevsky's last work, it would have shown him to be an embittered man. Perhaps Maurina regards it as pessimistic because it extolls the virtues of suffering. However, if the story denounces socialistic society, then it must approve of suffering. When the dreaming hero, who is being borne from earth to the star-planet, ponders whether or not there will be suffering on this new earth and then says that "on our earth we can truly love only with suffering, only through suffering! We do not

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63Ibid., p. 56. 64Maurina, p. 218.
know how to love otherwise . . . " he is pronouncing Dostoyevsky's view that suffering, through love, leads to happiness.

After the hero has corrupted the star people, they grow sinful, and love and crave suffering as the origin of truth and thought, which illustrates the tenet that suffering is an outgrowth of freedom of choice. When the hero says that he loved them, perhaps even more than before when there was no suffering on their faces and when they were innocent and so beautiful. I grew fonder of their earth desecrated by them than when it was a paradise, for the sole reason that sorrow appeared on it, that is Dostoyevsky speaking. But when the hero states that his dream taught him "that men can be beautiful and happy without losing their faculty of living on earth. I refuse and am unable to believe that evil is a normal condition in men. Yet they all laugh at this belief of mine," perhaps it is Dostoyevsky laughing, believing as he did that human nature is not basically good and that man will deliberately choose evil over good, suffering over complacency. Since the hero is termed "strange," "queer," or "ridiculous" in various translations of the title, perhaps it was Dostoyevsky's

66Ibid., p. 686.
67Ibid., p. 688.
68Ibid., p. 689.
69Carr, p. 120.
intention to imply that only an insane person or a socialist would yearn for a world without suffering.

The **Brothers Karamazov** (1880), Dostoyevsky's last and greatest novel, is a culmination of everything that he had learned, thought, and felt during his lifetime. In this novel Dostoyevsky "exhausts himself so completely that everything preceding could be regarded merely as preparatory sketches."\(^{70}\) The major themes in the novel are the problems of sin and suffering. The problem of sin—the will to do evil—is embodied in Dmitri Karamazov; this problem was foreshadowed in *Crime and Punishment*, *The Possessed*, and *A Raw Youth*.\(^{71}\) The problem of suffering—first approached in Ippolit in *The Idiot*—finds expression in the metaphysical duel on the subject of suffering between Ivan Karamazov and Father Zossima.

Like Kirillov in *The Possessed* and Ippolit, Ivan struggles with the meaning of God's world, but never were man's doubts uttered so convincingly. Ivan rejects God's world because it contains so much apparently undeserved suffering. He refuses to accept the fact, as Dostoyevsky did, that world harmony is dependent on the freedom that produces suffering.\(^{72}\) Ivan rejects world harmony at such a price, as the incomprehensibility of suffering caused Dostoyevsky's own doubts at

\(^{70}\)Meier-Graefe, p. 380.  
\(^{71}\)Carr, p. 294.  
\(^{72}\)Berdyaev, *Dostoyevsky*, p. 77.
one time.  

Events in Dostoyevsky's life, however, made him realize that Ivan's path leads to disintegration of the personality and madness, because it is a conflict with reality. There was one other way for Dostoyevsky to turn, which he did in Ivan's antithesis, Zossima. "Having found no answer in Ivan, he looked for it in another direction and thus created the figure of Father Zossima." Dostoyevsky recognized the fatality of Ivan's logic; therefore, he was compelled to see in Zossima the truth of God's logic, even though he had his own doubts about the rhetorical effectiveness of Zossima's answers to Ivan's questions.

He frankly wrote to Pobednostsev [his conservative friend and Procurator of the Most Holy Synod] that he was dissatisfied with his refutation and feared that it was insufficient, and that he had not achieved one fraction of his purpose.

Berdyaev sees Dostoyevsky's answer to the Ivans and Ippolits and Kirillovs as illustrating the necessity of suffering.

> The existence of evil is a proof of the existence of God. If the world consisted wholly and uniquely of goodness and righteousness there would be no need for God for the world itself would be god. God is, because evil is. And that means that God is because freedom is.

Unlike Ivan, who rejects this world of suffering, Zossima loves everything about the world because everything in the world is the creation of God. To Zossima, it is merely a question of belief in the basic goodness of Divine Providence,

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73 Maurina, p. 213.  
74 Lavrin, p. 138.  
75 Simmons, p. 290.  
76 Berdyaev, Dostoyevsky, p. 87.
which has decreed suffering to be a necessary element in life. Zossima believes that

suffering is not a violation but a fulfilment, an act of Godly justice, which corrects transgression for the sake of the whole and for our own good. That is, the secret of universal harmony is not achieved by the mind, as the rationalizing Ivan imagines, but by the heart, by feeling and faith. If one loves all living things in the world, this love will justify suffering and all will share each other's guilt. Suffering for the sins of others will then become the moral duty of every true Christian.\textsuperscript{77}

As Zossima tells the saintly Alyosha Karamazov: "... every one of us is undoubtedly responsible for all men and everything on earth, not merely through the general sinfulness of creation, but each one personally for all mankind and every individual man.\textsuperscript{78}

This theory is embodied in Dmitri Karamazov, the "one in whom his \cite{Dostoyevsky}'s doctrines of sin and suffering are most profoundly expressed ...\textsuperscript{79} Dmitri is a wild, passionate, dissipated man who is convicted of his father's murder. Legally, he is innocent, but he is morally guilty because he \textit{wanted} to commit the murder. On the eve of his arraignment, Dmitri has a dream about the suffering of children, which serves to fill him "with the love of God

\textsuperscript{77}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 291.
\textsuperscript{78}Dostoyevsky, \textit{The Brothers Karamazov}, p. 194.
\textsuperscript{79}Carr, p. 297.
and humanity." This dream has the effect of making Dmitri realize that he needs his suffering and punishment in order to expiate his sins and pay for his future happiness with his beloved Grushenka. He accepts his punishment "because we are all responsible for all," echoing Zossima's statement to Alyosha previously cited. Even though Dmitri later makes plans to escape to America with Grushenka—aided by Ivan physically and Alyosha morally, who realize that Dmitri's sufferings are enough punishment—his ordeal has awakened a new man in him willing to earn his happiness and salvation through suffering. Dmitri never swerves from his conviction that his sufferings are just. He suffers, if not for the death of his father, then for his other sins; or if not for his own sins, then for the sins of others. And since he accepts his suffering as a just expiation for sin, it becomes his path to salvation.

The Brothers Karamazov is the culmination of twenty years' work on Dostoyevsky's part to develop the theory that suffering is the means by which happiness and salvation are attained. Dmitri illustrates the fact that suffering is a condition of man's God-given freedom, which man must reconcile in Christ's own suffering.

Dostoyevsky believed that as Christ the innocent one took upon himself the suffering of all the innocent

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81 Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov, p. 720.
82 Carr, p. 297.
ones in the world, and so redeemed them along with the guilty, so the individual man has in him an innocent part which must take on the suffering caused by the guilty part.  

This is the point which Natasha (The Insulted and Injured) and Arkady (A Raw Youth) are too absorbed in their personal sufferings to perceive, and which Raskolnikov (Crime and Punishment), Ippolit (The Idiot), Kirillov and Stavrogin (The Possessed), and Ivan Karamazov are too absorbed in their assertions of self-will to admit.

This chapter has dealt with Dostoyevsky's interpretation of suffering in his novels, stressing the fact that suffering is a means of expiation and purification. Now it is necessary to study Dostoyevsky's personal suffering in order to understand the correlation between it and the sufferings endured by his characters.

CHAPTER III
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOSTOYEVSKY'S PERSONAL SUFFERING AND THE SUFFERING PORTRAYED IN HIS FICTION

A study of Dostoyevsky's life reveals that he suffered as much as any of his characters. In fact, Dostoyevsky's suffering was as necessary to him, if only from a literary standpoint, as that endured by his characters. "The spring which fed him, rendered him great and powerful and never quite dried up, was suffering." This suffering was the very inspiration needed for the development of his literary genius. "Had Dostoyevsky led the life of a peaceful citizen in some country house near Petersburg his novels would never have been written." Possibly suffering as a literary theme intrigued him because his own life was fraught with suffering that frustrated his peace of mind, but gave him his prophetic and compassionate insight into the mind and heart of man. He knew the three-yet-one anguish of spiritual, mental, and physical suffering in himself and others, and he projected this knowledge of suffering into the lives of his characters.

1 Meier-Graefe, p. 36.
2 Ibid., p. 35.
"Dostoyevsky never denied that his novels were autobiographical. He was—he could not help being—all his characters."3 He underwent the terror of a mock execution and subsequent imprisonment, he suffered from gambling fever for a while and epilepsy for at least half his life, he knew the torments of love and death and the search for God. These personal sufferings were often metamorphosed into his novels: he describes his "execution" in The Idiot, while Prince Myshkin (The Idiot), Kirillov (The Possessed), Smerdyakov (The Brothers Karamazov), and Nellie (The Insulted and Injured) are characterized as epileptics. His gambling fever is pictured in The Gambler and A Raw Youth, while the death of his first-born influenced Dostoyevsky's first presentation of the problem of suffering in The Idiot.

Dostoyevsky's imprisonment in Siberia was probably the most influential of his many torments in relation to his literary development. While the experiences of Siberia were recorded in the detached and objective The House of the Dead, it was not until Crime and Punishment that the full impact of prison life matured and was made manifest. Not only was imprisonment instrumental in the development of Dostoyevsky's concept of suffering, but it also introduced Dostoyevsky to a new kind of human being that was thereafter to people the pages of his novels. "Normal men are as rare in Dostoyevsky's

3Payne, p. 212.
novels as they must have been in the prison compound. His world was no longer peopled with men of normal stature; it was a world of criminals and saints, of monsters of vice or of virtue."

Carr also notes that Siberia was responsible for a new sense of relative morality in Dostoyevsky's thinking, which is first reflected in *Crime and Punishment*. In Siberia, Dostoyevsky met criminals who had transgressed accepted moral laws, yet they felt no remorse or repentance. In fact, they displayed as many noble qualities as any people that Dostoyevsky knew.

The prison overthrew every standard of morality of which Dostoyevsky had ever heard. The conventional categories of virtue and vice no longer seemed to be placed at opposite poles of the moral horizon; indeed it was clear that they were not even mutually exclusive. It was in the House of the Dead that Dostoyevsky first learned to perceive the inadequacy not merely of human law, but of the ordinarily accepted code of moral values, and to ponder on the quest for a remoter truth beyond the frontiers of good and evil as ordinarily defined. It was there that he caught his first dim and uncertain glimpses of the ethical problem which was to form the burden of *Crime and Punishment*.

In a sense, all of Dostoyevsky's novels from *Notes from Underground* to *The Brothers Karamazov* illustrate this search for the true ethical values of human actions and reflect the moral lessons gained from Siberia.

4Carr, p. 70.

5Ibid.
In addition to resulting in a more liberal morality, Siberia also had the effect of creating in Dostoyevsky "a certain spiritual malaise and a vague longing for the support of some religious belief,"\(^6\) although throughout his lifetime he was tormented by religious doubts.\(^7\) During his four years of imprisonment at Omsk, Dostoyevsky's sole reading matter was the New Testament. Through his perusal of it, Dostoyevsky became reacquainted with Christ, who became the basis of his Christianity. "In prison he rediscovered Christ, and his passionate reading of the New Testament enabled him spiritually to rationalize his misfortunes."\(^8\) Dostoyevsky was plagued throughout his life with doubts concerning God's wisdom in permitting suffering; but he finally became reconciled to the necessity of man's suffering, not as the decree of an unjust and cruel God, but as an inevitable result of the human condition of freedom of choice. However, even The Brothers Karamazov, his last work, expresses his religious conflict. Ivan Karamazov embodies the search for God that characterized Dostoyevsky's own doubts. In contrast to Ivan, Father Zossima and Alyosha Karamazov illustrate Dostoyevsky's beliefs in reconciliation with suffering and redemption of man's suffering through the sufferings of Christ. Although Dostoyevsky tried to destroy his doubts symbolically through

\(^6\)Ibid.
\(^7\)Simmons, p. 255.
\(^8\)Ibid., p. 61.
Ivan's psychic disintegration, the very force of Ivan's dialectic illustrates the vacillations that Dostoyevsky himself endured, which found artistic expressions in some of the most irrefutable doubters in literature.

Siberia also introduced Dostoyevsky to a new type of suffering--romantic love--in the person of Maria Dmitrievna Issayeva. Maria was pretty and about thirty, but also consumptive, hysterical, and married. Dostoyevsky adored her with all the fervor of first love, but the situation became worse when her husband was sent to another village, where he died. To the torments of separation was added the knowledge that Maria was toying with the idea of marrying a young schoolteacher she had met. She finally decided, however, that Dostoyevsky was the better of her two suitors, and they were married in February, 1857. Thus began a hellish existence for both of them until Maria's death from consumption in April, 1864.

Maria proved to be a virago. He endured her tantrums, cared for her when she was ill, adopted her son Pasha as his own, and sometimes, when he could endure her no longer, he abandoned her for long periods while he sought the company of other women. He loved her and hated her, and long after her death he continued to speak of her with a special veneration.

During a visit to his friend Baron Wrangel in 1865, Dostoyevsky confirmed a statement about his marriage cited in an earlier letter to Wrangel: "We were both thoroughly

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9 Payne, pp. 131-4; 141.  
10 Ibid., p. 141.
unhappy, but could not cease from loving one another; the more wretched we were, the more we clung together."\(^{11}\) Lavrin interprets this paradoxical statement in light of Dostoyevsky's masochistic tendencies: "It is quite possible that Dostoyevsky was in love not so much with his wife, but with the torments which he had endured through her."\(^{12}\)

Maria's hysterical and ailing character was remembered by Dostoyevsky when he portrayed Katerina Marmeladov in *Crime and Punishment*, the hysterical remarried widow who dies of consumption, and Lise Hohlakov in *The Brothers Karamazov*, the hysterical, sixteen-year-old cripple. More than these characterizations, Maria provided Dostoyevsky with a new experience that developed his literary perception. Carr says that the years following Siberia provided Dostoyevsky "with the sexual experience which gave him the key to the hidden recesses of human character."\(^{13}\) Simmons also emphasizes the importance of this factor in Dostoyevsky's literary development:

The paucity of female characters in the works of Dostoyevsky written before his exile to Siberia, and the insufficient treatment of the few that do appear, are no doubt a reflection of his lack of interest in women during these early years. To be sure, he would write to his brother of gay parties with pretty actresses, but there is a false note in this boasting, for he appears to have led a peculiarly


\(^{12}\) Lavrin, p. 19.

\(^{13}\) Carr, p. 100.
sexless existence up to the time of his marriage at the age of thirty-six.  

The most influential sexual experience in Dostoyevsky's life was not his marriage to Maria however, or even his very happy second marriage, but his adulterous affair with Polina Suslova, a young university student. Both Maria and Polina influenced Dostoyevsky's presentation of sexual love in his novels:

Sexual love in Dostoyevsky is invariably associated with suffering rather than with happiness—a fact which suggests that Maria Dmitrievna and Suslova played a more important part in the formation of his ideas on sex than did his second wife . . . .  

Dostoyevsky and Polina probably met in 1861 when she submitted a short story to Time, the magazine Dostoyevsky was then publishing. Their affair probably began in the winter of 1862; the following summer they toured Europe together, at Dostoyevsky's insistence as "brother and sister." Entries in the diary that Polina kept at the time show

... Dostoyevsky at the mercy of a woman whose greatest pleasure lay in inflaming his desire and then denying him. He depended terribly upon her favors, and when she denied him he was reduced to quivering jelly. She had no love for him; he was simply a brother to whom she could always run for advice.  

Later Polina began to hate Dostoyevsky, casting him in the role of her seducer, a reaction that Dostoyevsky himself subtly

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14 Simmons, p. 90.  
15 Carr, p. 259.  
17 Ibid., p. 171.
analyzed: "You cannot forgive me for the fact that you once
gave yourself to me . . . and now you are taking your revenge.
That is a feminine trait."\(^{18}\)

Dostoyevsky's experience with Polina Suslova was one of
the most torturous in his life, but it was probably also one
of the most influential in his literary development. Not
only is Polina characterized more or less as Polina in The
Gambler, Katerina Nikolaevna in A Raw Youth, Lizaveta in The
Possessed, Nastasya in The Idiot, and both Grushenka and
Katerina Ivanovna in The Brothers Karamazov, but she also gave
Dostoyevsky great insight into at least one facet of human
psychology by virtue of her own contradictory conduct towards
him.

It was she who showed him how intimately hate may
be interwoven with love. She had revealed to
him the appetite for cruelty and the appetite
for suffering, the sadistic and the masochistic,
as alternating manifestations of the sexual
impulse.\(^{19}\)

This lesson from Dostoyevsky's personal life is later translated
into his fiction in the relationships between the hero and
Polina in The Gambler, Nastasya and Myshkin and Rogozhin in
The Idiot, Lizaveta and Stavrogin in The Possessed, Versilov
and Katerina Nikolaevna in A Raw Youth, Katerina Ivanovna
and Dmitri in The Brothers Karamazov, and even Sonia and

\(^{18}\) A. P. Suslova: Gody Blizosti s Dostoyevskim, quoted by

\(^{19}\) Carr, p. 112.
Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*.  

Carr even traces Dostoyevsky's "cult of suffering" not only to religious and romantic influences, but also to Polina; it was she who showed him how both love and hate can result in suffering.  

Certainly Dostoyevsky never forgot this woman who tormented him past endurance; to the end of his life he continued to characterize her in his most memorable heroines and to fictionalize their relationship in his novels.  

Before his second marriage in 1867, Dostoyevsky once again metamorphosed his personal humiliations and sufferings into his literary creations in the person of Anna Korvin-Kruckovsky. Anna was the wilful, twenty-year-old daughter of a respectable provincial family. In the summer of 1864, she submitted two stories to Dostoyevsky's magazine *Epoch* and began corresponding with him. That winter, Anna, her sister, and their mother made their annual visit to Petersburg, with the father's grudging permission to receive Dostoyevsky. He became a constant visitor and soon proposed to the charming yet coquettish Anna, who had the intelligence and common sense to refuse him. While Dostoyevsky was wooing Anna, he apparently was living with a Russian adventuress named Martha Brown, for whom he felt a mixture of infatuation and compassion. He would have proposed to her probably if she had not been

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still legally married to an American sailor who had long since disappeared.\textsuperscript{22}

The unhappiness that Dostoyevsky experienced in his simultaneous relationship with these two women, plus the ever-present memory of Polina Suslova, found expression three years later in \textit{The Idiot}, in which Dostoyevsky depicts "... his hero divided, as he had then been, between passionate admiration for a pure young girl and no less passionate pity for a fallen woman, and loving each with a love which had nothing in common with his love for the other."\textsuperscript{23} Thus, Anna becomes the model for the capricious Aglaia, while both Martha Brown and Polina Suslova are characterized in Nastasya.

In 1860 Dostoyevsky met Nikolay Strakhov, who became a close friend and later Dostoyevsky's official biographer. In this biography, Strakhov records that the circle in which he met Dostoyevsky condoned or tolerated all sorts of physical excesses, implying that Dostoyevsky agreed with such practices. The matter attracted no attention until 1910, when a letter dated November, 1883, was published. This letter was from Strakhov to the recently deceased Leo Tolstoy.\textsuperscript{24} The letter is remarkable not only for the vilification of Dostoyevsky's character, but especially for Strakhov's statement that Dostoyevsky

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 127-134.
\item \textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 134.
\item \textsuperscript{24}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 101-2.
\end{itemize}
... had a penchant for filthinesses and was proud of them. Viskovatov began to tell me how he boast ed that he had fornicated at the baths with a little girl who was brought to him by her governess. Note for all this, for all his animal sensuality, he had no taste, no feeling for feminine beauty and charm. This can be seen in his novels. The characters most resembling him are the hero of Notes from Underground, Svidrigailov in Crime and Punishment, and Stavrogin in The Possessed. 25

Payne notes that there are many versions of this incident, which vary in details. Most variations, however, agree that Dostoyevsky raped a child some time during his life, probably in the 1860's. Also, he is supposed to have related this episode to many different people at different times. 26

It is known definitely that he mentioned this theme as part of a projected novel to Anna Korvin-Krukovsky, her sister Sophie, and their mother, 27 but this certainly is not a declaration of his personal actions.

A variation of this rumor is Dostoyevsky's alleged confession of child-rape to his bitter literary and ideological rival Ivan Turgenev. 28 Gide claims to have heard this anecdote from an unnamed Russian, presumably Strakhov. Gide, who evidently believes that it is true, explains Dostoyevsky's confession to Turgenev as an example of the supposedly

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25Ibid., p. 102.  
26Payne, pp. 393-4.  
28Ibid.
Russian compulsion for public confession.  

The fact remains that Dostoyevsky, after an adventure of this nature, was moved to what one must needs describe as remorse. This remorse preyed upon him for a while. . . . The need for confession became urgent, but confession not merely to a priest. He sought to find the person before whom confession would cause him the acutest suffering. Turgenev, without the shadow of a doubt! Dostoyevsky had not seen him for long, and was on uncommonly bad terms with him. M. Turgenev was a respectable man, rich, famous, and held in wide esteem. Dostoyevsky summoned up all his courage, or rather, he succumbed to a kind of giddiness, to a mysterious and awful attraction.

Troyat also mentions the oral tradition of Dostoyevsky's confession to Turgenev. He states that Dostoyevsky is supposed to have made this confession to Turgenev in order to show his contempt of and hatred for him. Dostoyevsky certainly disliked Turgenev—partly from professional jealousy and partly because of ideological differences. Therefore Turgenev would be the plausible choice if Dostoyevsky desired someone before whom he could debase himself for his guilt.

Critics, however, are divided on the question of Dostoyevsky's guilt. Gide and Mackiewicz apparently believe Strakhov's accusation to be valid, while such critics as Meier-Graefe, Carr, Troyat, and Payne state that the evidence against Dostoyevsky is either inconclusive or altogether false and slanderous in character.

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31 Troyat, p. 362.
Mackiewicz places the child-rape incident in Dostoyevsky's youth, probably on his father's properties at Darovoye or Chermashnya. This theory stresses Dostoyevsky's youth at the time of the incident; as evidence, Mackiewicz cites Dostoyevsky's confession at the time of his arrest in 1849, in which he made the following remark: "Perhaps I must confess certain serious matters of the nature that burden the conscience of every man." Mackiewicz also supports his argument with the statement that one of the main classifications of female characters in Dostoyevsky's early works is the wronged child, and capricious young girl. This is probably a reminiscence of the girl whom Dostoyevsky seduced or raped, but of whom we know neither the name nor anything else. We do not even know whether she was really capricious, or whether Dostoyevsky added this characteristic because it suited his own taste.

Payne also notes the recurrent theme of the defenseless young child in Dostoyevsky's novels, but he does not see this theme as indicative of Dostoyevsky's personal life but rather as an expression of his artistic empathy.

He spoke about such children so often and so convincingly . . . that some people believed he had himself raped one of these defenseless children. . . . Strakhov seems to have been unbelievably ignorant of the novelist's task, which is to know all the triumphs and all the degradations of the human spirit by means of a perpetual act of sympathy. Remy de Gourmont once described the great artist as chaste de

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32 Mackiewicz, p. 177.  
33 Ibid., p. 185.  
34 Ibid., p. 50.  
35 Ibid., p. 103.
Meier-Graefe agrees that Dostoyevsky's novels are not as autobiographical as some critics are led to believe by certain incidents in them. "The intensity of Dostoyevsky's representations leads frequently to the inference of a closer connexion between the man and creation than actually exists. ... It has been sought to impute to him his heroes' crimes." This last statement illustrates the fact that the well-known autobiographical character of Dostoyevsky's novels serves his calumniators as proof of the verity of Strakhov's allegation. There is the theme of alleged child-rape in both Crime and Punishment (1866) and especially The Possessed (1871), personified by Svidrigailov and Stavrogin respectively. Carr sees "Stavrogin's Confession," the chapter dealing with Stavrogin's confession of child-rape to Bishop Tikhon, as the sole basis for Strakhov's statement.

In vindication of Dostoyevsky, Carr states that even if Strakhov's letter to Tolstoy is not a deliberate lie, it can be possibly the result of honest error on Strakhov's part.

... Strakhov may have misunderstood Viskovatov, or (more probably) Viskovatov may have misunderstood Dostoyevsky. If we exclude also the hypothesis of honest error, we are still faced with the question of the value of Dostoyevsky's

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36 Payne, p. 158.  
37 Meier-Graefe, p. 36.  
38 Carr, p. 114.
confession. A person making such a confession to a casual acquaintance (for Viskovatov was no more) is in a state of mind which can only be called pathological. Did Dostoyevsky, in this pathological state, confess a disgraceful action which he had committed? or did he attribute to himself a disgraceful action which in fact he had not committed? It is impossible to answer with confidence; but the latter alternative is prima facie no more improbable than the former. So that if we accept unreservedly the accuracy of Strakhov's statement, we still cannot be sure whether we are dealing with a fact or with a case of pathological self-accusation.39

Meier-Graefe believes that the vindicative nature of Strakhov's letter exposes the falsity of his assertion to Tolstoy. "This letter, full of calumny and stupidity, is so obviously dictated by the wish to flatter Tolstoy with the crudest arguments at the expense of Dostoyevsky that the libel condemns itself."40

Carr also cites the repudiation of Strakhov's statement by Dostoyevsky's second wife as evidence of the author's innocence.

Some weight must be given to the indignant denial published by Dostoyevsky's widow as soon as she heard of Strakhov's letter. She supports her denial with no serious arguments; but it is palpably sincere. Now Dostoyevsky lived the last fourteen years of his life with Anna Grigorievna, falling more and more under her influence. . . . His tendency to "exhibitionism" and to self-humiliation is notorious; and it is doubtful whether there was much in his past, however unsavoury, which she did not learn sooner or later from his lips. At any rate, it is hard to believe that he confessed to others things which he did not confess to her. The fact that she was totally unaware of this alleged

39Ibid., p. 113. 40Meier-Graefe, p. 395.
act of this alleged confession constitutes a strong
testimony against their authenticity.41

Troyat stresses the fact that, although there is
insufficient data for proof of Dostoyevsky's guilt or
innocence, there is no assertion that Dostoyevsky never
wished to commit the crime:

Was Dostoyevsky an actual pervert like
Svidrigailov or Stavrogin, or are we confronted in
his case only with a repressed impulse. "It is
not himself that he depicts," writes Gide in his
Journal, referring to Dostoyevsky. "But what he
depicts he could have become if he had not become
himself." Why should we not assume that
Dostoyevsky did desire a little girl, and that the
very idea of this imaginary offense sufficed to
poison his life? He evoked the rape he could have
perpetuated, in a kind of grandiose hallucination.
He accused himself of it with morbid pleasure, and
tasted the joy of cynically humiliating himself
before another man . . . Turgenev whom he hated
and despised more than anyone else in the world.42

Perhaps the question of Dostoyevsky's guilt or innocence
will never be established conclusively. Probably Dostoyevsky
never raped a child either as a youth or man. But it is this
uncertainty that bothers Payne:

The issue is a grave one, of fundamental
importance for the understanding of Dostoyevsky's
character and the motives which lay behind his
life's work. If he committed the crime, he was
one kind of man. If he did not, he was another
kind of man. He was essentially a moralist, and
a moralist who rapes or murders places himself
outside the human family and all his verdicts are
cancelled. He cannot repent, for the crimes he
has committed are skandalika, beyond the power of
divine forgiveness.

41 Carr, p. 113.  42 Troyat, p. 363.
As few other men, he knew the depths of depravity in the human heart. He knew that in their imaginations all men are murderers, and all or nearly all have raped children, and this is only the beginning of their depravity and corruption. "We are all guilty, for all of us and for everything," he wrote in The Brothers Karamazov. 43

Perhaps it was Dostoyevsky's wish to commit child-rape that made him guilty in his own eyes. The guilt of both Svidrigailov and Stavrogin is not conclusive, based as it is on rumor and braggadocio. It is almost as if Dostoyevsky were saying through these characters:

Even Svidrigailov and Stavrogin may not be guilty—it is rumor that convicts them. So it is with me; my guilt may be the result of my desires, not my actions. As Svidrigailov and Stavrogin may be innocent, so may I. But as Svidrigailov and Stavrogin were thought to be capable of their evil, so may I be guilty of my desire for evil, which I must expiate through suffering. As a masochist, I will humble myself before the man I hate; and as an artist, I will metamorphose my guilt and suffering into an expression of my creativity.

Less than a year before his death, Dostoyevsky answered a letter from a girl who complained of her dual nature. Speaking of this capacity for antithetic actions, Dostoyevsky answers:

That trait is indeed common to all...that is, all who are not wholly commonplace. Nay, it is common to human nature. It is precisely on this ground that I cannot but regard you as a twin soul, for your inward duality corresponds most exactly to my own. It causes at once great torment, and great delight. Such duality simply means that you have a strong sense of yourself.

43 Payne, p. 395.
much aptness for self-criticism, and an innate feeling for your moral duty to yourself and all mankind. . . . Yet such duality is a great torment. . . . do you believe in Christ and in His commandments? If you believe in Him (or at least have a strong desire to do so), then give yourself wholly to Him; the pain of your duality will be thereby alleviated, and you will find the true way out--but belief is first of all in importance.44

This statement is important not only in the study of Dostoyevsky the man, but also in the understanding of his art and philosophy, since at least half of his main characters are doubles, which is one classification in Dostoyevsky's trilogy of types, along with the meek and strong-willed characters.45 Simmons sees Dostoyevsky's dualism as the mainspring of his life and work:

In truth, the evidence of the present study seems to justify the conclusion that the dual impulses of his nature were the most significant factor in the development of his creative art and profoundly influenced his opinions on religious, social, and political questions.46

Dostoyevsky's literary development of the theme of dualism implies that he had long been aware of the characteristic in himself; his second work, The Double (1846), was in fact an illustration of a character's persecution mania which resulted in hallucinations of his alter ego.47 Three years before Dostoyevsky wrote the above letter, he had Versilov in

45 Simmons, p. 91.
46 Ibid., p. 295.
A Raw Youth (1877) explain the paradoxical nature of dualism:

"Yes, I am really split in two mentally, and I'm horribly afraid of it. It's just as though one's second self were standing beside one. One is sensible and rational oneself, but the other self is impelled to do something perfectly senseless, and sometimes very funny, and suddenly you notice that you are longing to do that amusing thing, goodness knows why. That is, you want to, as it were, against your will; though you fight against it with all your might, you want to." 48

Dostoyevsky's own dualism convinced him that

... human nature in its very essence is made up of boundless moral contradictions which struggle with one another within each human being, and do unceasing, furious battle within the human soul. ... It [Dostoyevsky's art] is simultaneously the stubborn and painful struggle between various moral qualities within the soul of each character in the story... The dual, triple, multiple nature of human character is the dominating feature of Dostoyevskism. 49

Even a casual study of Dostoyevsky's novels reveals this dualism in his fictional world:

... people hate those they love and love those they hate; they kill those whom they are ready to die for, and take the tenderest care of those they want to kill. Obeying hidden and contradictory impulses, they do what they are trying to avoid; and avert, for reasons they themselves do not understand, what their conscious will is striving for. They are aware of the utter senselessness of an action even while they are trying with all their might to carry it through. 50

But perhaps Dostoyevsky himself best illustrates the nature of dualism. Although Dostoyevsky's letter in the last year of his life states the panacea for dualism--belief, or the

48 Dostoyevsky, A Raw Youth, p. 553.
49 Mackiewicz, p. 11.
50 Fueloep-Miller, p. 85.
desire for belief, in Christ--his just-published *The Brothers Karamazov* indicates doubts about the efficacy of his remedy, as is shown in his apparent recognition of the fact in Ivan that "religion was not the answer to the problem of the Double." 51 If Simmons' supposition is true, it illustrates the fact that even to his death, Dostoyevsky was able to transform not only his external sufferings, but also the torments of his inner nature into his creative development.

51 Simmons, p. 246.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

As an exploration of Dostoyevsky's view of the role of suffering in human existence, this thesis has presented several major conclusions on the subject.

It has been established in the Introduction that Dostoyevsky's youthful relationship with socialism was severed after his imprisonment in Siberia and subsequent trip to Europe. It was in Siberia that Dostoyevsky gained a new awareness of Christ, while conditions in Europe led him to adopt a political conservatism. These experiences taught him that the aim of socialism—elimination of suffering through elimination of freedom—was fallacious because, as socialism was basically atheistic in nature, it sought to establish a world order based on compulsion rather than brotherly love based on Christ. Simmons states that from the very beginning of his creative life, Dostoyevsky had profoundly distrusted the capacity of the intellect to establish those principles by which men may live in universal peace and happiness. He felt that hate, not love, was the medium through which the socialists would attempt to achieve the unification of man. They did not understand that love, like God, was apprehended by the heart, not by the reason. This conviction led him to God, and to His religion, for he perceived that without religion, morality was impossible.¹

¹Ibid., p. 296.
But Dostoyevsky's acceptance of Christ was not a quick nor a complete surrender. Questions and doubts about the relationship between suffering and the existence of God remained with him until his death, as is seen in Ivan Karamazov's irrefutable condemnation of the suffering of innocent children. Ivan's "why?" remained unanswered by Dostoyevsky. Dostoyevsky could not explain the suffering of innocent children, but he could answer for the suffering of guilty adults. Suffering, even if apparently undeserved, is spiritually healthy because it breeds all thought. But Dostoyevsky believed that there are no wholly innocent people; thus, there is no such thing as completely undeserved suffering. "Each of us shares in the world's guilt and each must share in its pain. It is for the purification of the criminal in all of us that suffering is ordained."4

It is the conclusion of the second chapter that Dostoyevsky believed that it is the purifying power of suffering that leads to happiness and salvation, but only if the sufferer is repentant for the evil within himself. As Maurina states,

a wicked beast dwells in man beside the light of God, and to overcome it, to free the way for God's light, we must go through great suffering.

It is suffering that like hammer and chisel hews out personality; brittle material crumbles

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2Ibid., p. 285.  
3Westbrook, p. 77.  
4Ibid.
away, but that which endures stands out the more strongly. Suffering is the test of spiritual greatness, and suffering has its meaning if only we are patient and know how to seek it.\(^5\)

Dostoyevsky discovered a meaning to suffering and expressed it in his doctrine of happiness and salvation through suffering. He was a firm believer in the spiritualizing role of suffering; it was not caused by sin but was a necessary condition to the forgiveness of sin. That is, the sinner was not forgiven by others, but by his suffering he earned the right to forgive himself...\(^6\)

Carr concurs, saying that "this forgiveness would only be won by voluntary submission to, and deliberate seeking of, suffering."\(^7\)

The third chapter establishes the fact that Dostoyevsky often transmuted his own sufferings into his literature. Therefore, his novels often give a more complete and coherent picture of the sufferings he endured in his Siberian experience, his relationships with his women, his politics and religion, than do his letters on the same subjects. His novels, however, probably are not as autobiographical as some critics are led to assume by rumors of his personal life.

It was Dostoyevsky's personal suffering that gave him insight into the nature of suffering and the problems it imposes on man's relationship to reality. To Dostoyevsky, 

\(^5\)Maurina, p. 213. \(^6\)Simmons, p. 285. \(^7\)Carr, p. 292.
suffering not only is, but also is desirable for the complete fulfillment of human existence. He constantly gives expression to the idea that man is certainly not a reasonable being who strives after happiness, but that he is an irrational creature who stands in need of suffering and that suffering is the one and only cause of the awakening of thought.

Dostoyevsky saw the necessity of suffering as the basis for the ascent to God. As man will always sin, suffering is necessary for man to feel worthy of forgiveness for his sins, because suffering makes man worthy of forgiveness. Only suffering gives man the right to forgive himself, be repentant, and ready to seek God because it helps him to be closer to God through Christ, the mediator between God and man. To Dostoyevsky, the problem of suffering was "solved by freedom, as the foundation of the world, and by Christ, that is to say, by the taking upon Himself the suffering of the world by God Himself."  

8Berdyaev, The Russian Idea, p. 77.
9Ibid., p. 79.
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