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A Study of the Relationship Between the Human Will and the Learning Process: An Examination of Stavrogin, A Character in Dostoevsky's The Possessed

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A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HUMAN WILL AND
THE LEARNING PROCESS: AN EXAMINATION OF STAVROGIN, A
CHARACTER IN DOSTOEVSKY'S THE POSSESSED

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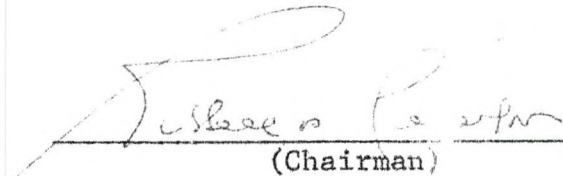
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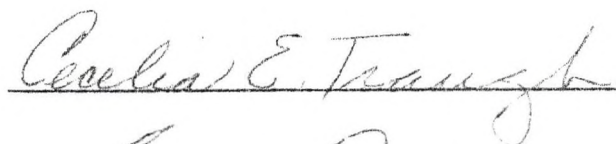
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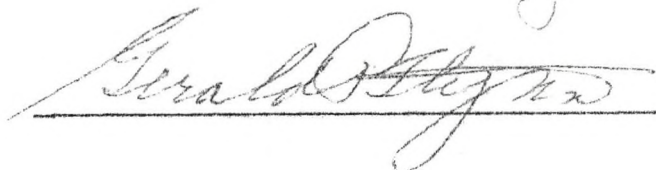
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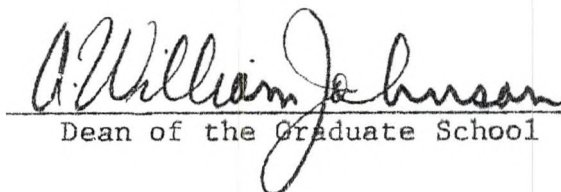








This dissertation meets the standards for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.


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Date March 18, 1981

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ABSTRACT

The research problem is to examine the epistemological nature of the relationship which exists between the human will and the learning process using the development of a fictional character, i.e., Stavrogin in Dostoevsky's The Possessed, as focus for the study.

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze Dostoevsky's theory of will as that theory describes the educational growth and development of the individual and defines the process by which the individual comes to know his own nature and that of the world. The study derives from the theory of will specific educational principles.

Dostoevsky's theory of will is defined as a movement of mind in which progress is made towards a closer realization of the absolute. This movement towards union with the absolute gives rise to a heightened sense of self. This heightened sense of self gives rise, in turn, to an awareness of the inter-relationships and dependencies which make up the structure of the world.

The principles derived from the study of Dostoevsky's theory of will are considered as epistemological principles which have relevance to educational theory. They are identified as follows:

1. Dostoevsky's epistemology demands as a starting point the concept of the self as a choosing subjectivity. Educational theory should take into consideration the concept of self as it seeks to develop the individual worth of those involved in education.

2. The concept of self is tied to a recognition of man's will as an agent of decision and commitment. Educational theory must acknowledge the existence and function of will if it wishes to promote the development of self.

3. The will is that aspect of mind which commits the individual to the relationship with the other-as-subject which is at the heart of the learning process. The learning process refers to the interaction which takes place when two individuals freely enter into relationship in order to examine those ideas which have a bearing on their existence.

4. Learning will not take place unless one acknowledges the existence of the other-as-subject. Education implies relationship, i.e., the unique relationship which exists between educator and student.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Among the concepts which are basic to the field of education, one of the most important is "learning process." It is the contention of this study that in order to gain a deeper insight into the nature of this particular process it is necessary to examine the way in which it interacts with the human will. As Peterson has pointed out, "it is the will which continually insists upon the mind being actively engaged in the learning process" (Peterson 1977b, p. 16). This study, in order to illuminate the nature of the relationship which exists between will and learning process, analyzes the moral development of a fictional character. The rationale underlying this approach is that in examining the development of a fictional character the learning process is being viewed from an entirely unique point of view. Not only is it a unique approach, it is an eminently valid one.

. . . literature is . . . pre-eminently concerned with man's social world, his adaptation to it, and his desire to change it. Thus the novel . . . can be seen as a faithful attempt to re-create the social world of man's relationship with his family, with politics, with the state; it delineates too his roles within the family and other institutions (Laurenson and Swingegood 1972, p. 12).

In one important respect, literature achieves much more than "mere description and scientific analysis" (Laurenson and Swingegood 1972, p. 12), i.e., it goes beneath the surface in order to shed light on the way in which individuals "emotionally" experience society. Not

only does literature share the same concerns as the social sciences, it transcends them. In studying the development of a character who embodies the major themes of this study, the reader is being presented with a study whose vividness is far more persuasive than any discursive argumentation. In utilizing a work of art, the analysis of any human phenomenon is clarified and deepened.

Need for the Study

It is the contention of this study that there is a definite need to illuminate the nature of the relationship which exists between the "will" and "learning process" in that this relationship is the major determinant of success or failure insofar as the teacher-student interaction is concerned. The relationship between the two has not been fully explored heretofore.

In order to understand any phenomenon, it is necessary to examine it from a variety of points of view. This study seeks to illuminate the nature of the relationship which exists between the "will" and "learning process" through the study of a character in a novel by Dostoevsky, i.e., Stavrogin in Dostoevsky's The Possessed. This particular approach is utilized for the following reasons:

1. Dostoevsky was convinced of the importance of "will" insofar as human behavior was concerned:

. . . he (Dostoevsky) sees human existence as expressed primarily in will, not reason. Will is not an opposite to reason but a greater whole which includes it, "a manifestation of the whole . . . of human life, including reason with all its concomitant headscratchings" (Friedman 1970, p. 155).

This particular concept of will concurs with the concepts put forward by Peterson and Schrag, the two theorists whose ideas concerning the will

form the theoretical underpinning of the study. Both Peterson and Schrag, while acknowledging the importance of reason, are firmly convinced that it is part of a greater whole.

Unlike Schrag and Peterson, who chose to present their ideas in the form of systematical philosophical treatises, Dostoevsky chose to embody his ideas and themes in fictional characters. In examining the development of Stavrogin, therefore, the reader is being presented with a concrete example of what Schrag and Peterson are discussing in an abstract way. In so doing, their formulations are further illuminated.

2. Stavrogin was chosen because of his ability to illuminate the theoretical discussions of Schrag and Peterson. Both theorists, in their studies of the will, emphasize the fact that the will, in order to function effectively, is dependent upon the interaction which occurs between the cognitive and affective aspects of the mind. The relationship between the cognitive and the affective was one of the central concerns of nineteenth century literature. As Clive points out, this literature was especially concerned with the consequences of a rift between the cognitive and the affective. Nowhere is this concern more clearly evidenced than in Dostoevsky's The Possessed.

Nineteenth century literature is filled with expressions of this daemonic rift between insensitive knowing and wayward feeling. . . . Stavrogin's "Confession" in Dostoevsky's Possessed is perhaps the "last" word on the subject. Stavrogin, knowing that in the closet in back of him a child is hanging itself, does not interfere, for he is reading his paper (Clive 1960, p. 29).

In studying Stavrogin's development, light is shed on a relationship (between cognitive and affective) which both Schrag and Peterson consider to be of the utmost importance.

3. Dostoevsky also emphasizes the importance of the teacher-student relationship to human development. He does this through a description of the relationship which existed between the young Stavrogin and Stephan, his tutor. At the heart of the learning process lies the relationship which exists between teacher and pupil. As Herman Nohl points out, "the foundation of education is the intense relationship of a mature person to a becoming man" (Quoted in Mundackal 1977, p. 213). It is through such a relationship of openness and mutuality between man and man that an individual achieves self-awareness and is confirmed in his uniqueness. Friedman, in summarizing Dostoevsky's beliefs concerning man, makes the same point:

. . . Man can find meaning and spiritual joy even in the midst of suffering if he is moving towards a whole and genuine way of life, a reciprocally confirming relationship with other men and with nature (Friedman 1970, p. 275).

Such a "reciprocally confirming relationship" entails a commitment on the part of the individual to those individuals with whom he is involved. Commitment, as Schrag points out, is an act of will.

. . . Willing is a project that reaches towards figures (that which is willed) outlined against a background.
 . . . The self in its volitional activity assumes a decision making stance and inserts itself into a plan of action. It becomes committed to . . . something . . . (Schrag 1969, p. 101).

Will and learning process are thus inextricably intertwined.

Dostoevsky provides the reader with a concrete example of this interaction. Not only does he focus in on the relationship which exists between Stavrogin (student) and Stephan (teacher), he, in addition, discusses the relationship between Stavrogin and his three disciples: Kirilov, Shatov, and Pyotr Verkhovensky. The reader is presented with a portrait of Stavrogin as both pupil and teacher. In presenting

the reader with this dual perspective, Dostoevsky shows how an initial student-teacher relationship influences the way in which an individual behaves in similar situations at a later stage in his existence, the only difference being that the student has now become the teacher.

4. Stavrogin is an especially suitable character for analysis because in examining his development light will be shed on other characters in Dostoevsky's work as well as on modern man in general.

Nicholas Stavrogin . . . inherits and intensifies the alienation and inner division of the Underground Man and Raskolnikov. Stavrogin, more than any other of Dostoevsky's characters, represents the divided man as exile, and for this reason he embodies the problematic of modern man as perhaps no other of Dostoevsky's characters, . . . (Friedman 1970, p. 172).

5. Farber, in his discussion of will, points out that psychologists and philosophers, among others, on those rare occasions when they have turned their attention to the concept of will, have dealt with it in such a way as to make it "difficult for the reader to know that the will had any relevance to human considerations" (Farber 1966, p. 29). For this reason, Farber believes that the individual should turn to literature in order to acquire insight into the workings of will:

. . . literature was spared the attrition born of academicism. Literature--in whose view the human condition is inevitably a drama of conflict--has always been interested in man as a creature with some capacity, even if only potential, for independent personal volition: the one human capacity above all others that gives both interest and meaning to the literary records of conflicts between man and man, man and the world, or within man himself. It can hardly surprise us to find that the subject of will--explicitly and literally--has engaged the interest of authors as diverse as Flaubert, Butler, Goncharov, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Ibsen, . . . (Farber 1966, pp. 29-30).

The dearth of relevant material on the will in the areas of philosophy, psychology and other areas of specialization forces the reader to turn to literature in order to gain meaningful insights into the nature of

will. Dostoevsky, as Farber pointed out, is one of those authors who was interested in the will.

Delimitations

This study is not intended to be a comprehensive examination of Dostoevsky's literary output. It is concerned solely with the development of one character in one novel, i.e., Stavrogin in The Possessed. This character is the major focus of this study because his development, more so than that of any other character in the novel, illuminates the relationship which exists between the will and the learning process. Therefore, the other characters in the novel are of interest only insofar as they affect this development. In addition, even though other works of Dostoevsky are, upon occasion, cited, this is done solely in order to shed light on the development of Stavrogin.

Limitations

The concept of will which is utilized in this study has been extracted from the work of but two authors: Peterson and Schrag. Although other authors, such as Farber and May, have written extensively about the will, they have not done so in the systematic and thorough manner of Schrag and Peterson. The concept of learning has been extracted, primarily, from the work of Peterson. Other writers who contributed to the formulation of this concept, albeit to a lesser degree, are Kneller, Buber and Morris.

Design and Organization of the Study

A definition of terms completes chapter I. Chapter II is a review of the literature which, in addition to concerning itself with

the critical commentary having to do with the character of Stavrogin, examines the manner in which the concepts of will and learning process have been handled by a number of writers. Chapter III consists of an examination of Dostoevsky's epistemology, or theory of knowledge. As will be pointed out in the Definition of Terms section, Dostoevsky's philosophical stance is similar to that adopted by that group of individuals commonly referred to as Christian existentialists. In chapter III, the relationship between Dostoevsky and Christian existentialism will be further clarified. It is important that the nature of this relationship be understood because it is the contention of this study that an existential framework is the ideal instrument for examining and clarifying Dostoevsky's concern with the will, a concern which was pointed out by Friedman in the Need for Study section. Existentialism, which is, above all else, a philosophy of freedom, is best suited for an examination of a concept which is inextricably connected with the concept of freedom, i.e., the will. Chapter IV is divided into two sections. The first section consists of an overview of Stavrogin's life. This overview details, in a chronological manner, the major events in Stavrogin's life and, in so doing, lays the foundation for the analysis of Stavrogin's life. This analysis forms the second section of chapter IV. This analysis focuses on the effect that the learning process, in this case the relationship between pupil (Stavrogin) and teacher (Stephan), had on Stavrogin's future development. An analysis of such a concrete situation sheds light on the way in which learning process and will interact. Chapter V which is grounded in the examination of Stavrogin's educational development suggests ways in which the relationship between the will and the learning process may be enhanced.

Definition of Terms

The two key concepts in this study are "learning process" and "will." Even though the two concepts are inextricably related, the relationship will, for clarity's sake, be broken down into two component parts:

1. As pointed out in the Need for Study section, the relationship between student and teacher is the most important component of the learning process. The function of the teacher in this process has been stated by Wynne:

The truly creative teacher . . . must be willing to recognize, above all, the worth and dignity of students: he must provide adequate support for efforts of self-determination and direction; he must be the resource from whom the student can secure the necessary direction (Wynne 1970, p. x).

The relationship which exists between student and teacher should duplicate the "reciprocally confirming relationship" which Friedman referred to in his discussion of Dostoevsky's philosophy, a relationship which entails a commitment on the part of the individual to those with whom he is involved. This kind of relationship facilitates the exploration and understanding of ideas.

To learn with the student by experiencing a common perspective of meaning of inherent potentialities of an idea is to apprehend the meaningfulness of a relationship which holds value to be the embodiment of truth. It is upon this working premise the creative teacher is able to realize his own potentiality (Peterson 1970, p. 21).

Growth takes place when one individual enters into a relationship with another in order to explore the world of ideas. The relationship with the other is extremely important because, as Friedman points out:

" . . . our knowledge of things is for the most part mediated through the minds of others" (Friedman 1960, p. 178). Man exists in a state

of relationship. Learning takes place when two individuals freely enter into a relationship in order to explore those ideas which have a bearing on their existence. This kind of intellectual exploration enables the individual to perceive the connections which exist between ideas and the bearing these connections have on the individual's existence.

2. Learning entails an act of commitment on the part of both teacher and student. Commitment constitutes an act of will for the will is, above all else, the agency of direction and commitment: " . . . it is the will which continually insists upon the mind being actively engaged in the learning process" (Peterson 1977b, p. 16). As defined by Peterson, will is: " . . . an integral part of the mind which is dependent on interaction between the cognitive and the affective, together with the conative" (Peterson 1977b). "Conative" refers to the will in interaction. The will can be looked upon as a way of perceiving. This means that the reactions of mind will, by definition, vary from individual to individual since no two individuals perceive the world in exactly the same way.

Schrag looks upon the will as an agent of decision and action which, in order to function effectively, must remain in league with "the intellectual-theoretical posturing of world experience" (Schrag 1969, p. 103) as well as "sentinent world experience" (Schrag 1969, p. 103). In other words, the will interacts with both the cognitive and the affective.

Both Peterson and Schrag look upon the will as a determinative. As such it is "a directive" (Peterson 1977a, p. 119). The mind is to be viewed as a process wherein the will, the cognitive, and the affective act upon, in an interrelated manner, data which they have received

via the senses. The will, in the context of this process, is the agent of commitment. Selecting from the options which the cognitive and the affective are continually casting up before it, the will selects a course of action and commits itself to it. It must be kept in mind throughout that the will is more than a mediator between the cognitive and the affective:

It (will) is neither primarily intellectual nor primarily emotive; nor is it half of each. Will stakes out its own region of deployment and becomes manifest as a continuous development of behavior with its peculiar intentional field and distinctive meaning (Schrag 1969, p. 103).

Will is a "basic phenomenon" (Schrag 1969, p. 103), a pivotal aspect of personality which plays a central role in any, and all, acts of the individual. Will is "the pivotal presupposition of both existence and truth" (Peterson 1977a, p. 119). It is: " . . . a field of moral activity in which various styles of life can be assumed, arising out of the possible configurations of experience" (Schrag 1969, p. 106). Will is that which determines the nature of one's lifestyle, i.e., it determines the choices which define who one is. One is defined through one's acts and it is the will which decides which actions one performs. Experience, as Peterson points out, plays a central role in this process in that it is through experiencing that the individual becomes aware of the options which are open to him: "All learning begins with experience" (Peterson 1977a, p. 69). To learn is to become aware of what one can become. In deciding upon a particular option, a particular lifestyle, the individual becomes aware of himself as a deciding being who is engaged in a quest for meaning. To decide is to create oneself. To create oneself is to create meaning. The will decides and, in so doing, binds the self to the project which it, the will, has decided upon. As a result of this

commitment "reference to the self" (Schrag 1969, p. 107) germinates and develops:

The self is not given prior to its projects. It does not antedate its actions. It emerges with its projects and its actions and first discovers itself in them. The phenomenon of willing . . . announces its resident self (Schrag 1969, p. 108).

It is through deciding that man becomes aware of himself as a creature who is capable of making decisions. In deciding, one creates oneself, becomes aware of who one is: "It is only through the historical advance of the decision-making process that the self comes to a stand, constitutes itself, and finds itself within its commitment" (Schrag 1969, p. 108).

The freedom of the will is not unlimited. Schrag refers to the will as the agent of decision and commitment. However, not all courses of action decided upon by the will can be actualized. As Schrag points out, the will's ability to execute a course of action is finite and conditioned: "No action is absolutely within my power. It is conditioned by my personal and social past, by the demands of my present environment, and by my limited perception of future possibilities" (Schrag 1969, p. 102). Total freedom is an impossibility. Freedom is always conditional. The will, in order to function properly, must acknowledge, and operate within, the limitations imposed upon it.

As pointed out earlier, the will is a "directive" (Peterson 1977a, p. 119). As such, it projects itself into the future while, at one and the same time, remaining aware of the lessons of the past. "The committed will apprehends time as a horizon for its decisive action and engagement" (Schrag 1969, p. 105). In deciding upon a course of action in the present, the will is cognizant not merely

of the present but of the past and the future as well. In deciding one is assuming that certain things will occur in the future as a result of what one does now: "In decision the future is anticipated, possibilities of what might be are envisaged, and goals and purposes are entertained" (Schrag 1969, p. 105). A disordered will is one which is unable to see beyond the present. For such a will time is little more than an unconnected and meaningless series of "nows." Such a will is unable to grasp the relationship which exists between past, present, and future. To deny the future is to deny meaning, and in so doing one ends up by denying oneself. The past is important in that past actions limit present ones as well as providing the individual with a glimpse of his potentiality. " . . . in remembering the past the decided self continues to grow in wisdom and stature, cognizant of both its finitude and transcendence" (Schrag 1969, p. 105). A will which denies the importance of past and future exists in a vacuum and in so doing ends up by destroying itself.

Although, as Schrag pointed out, the will does not consist of equal parts "affective" and "cognitive," it does function best when an equilibrium exists between itself and these other two domains of mind. "To experience, the mind must be fully functional, that is, there must be a balance among its domains, namely, the cognitive, conative and affective" (Peterson 1977b, p. 9). However, it is possible that one of the two--"cognitive" or "affective"--could take precedence over the other. In an individual in whom the cognitive dominates, the world is reduced, for the most part, to a collection of abstractions. Individuals become transformed into labels. Such an individual feels the need to be in total control of himself and the world he inhabits. In order to achieve that kind of control, he perceives himself, as well as the

external world, as a thing, or collection of things. Such an individual is similar to the schizoid intellectual described by Guntrip. For such an individual: "Life is the pursuit of truth, not love, the thinking out of an ideology; and ideas become more important than people" (Guntrip 1976, p. 64). Such an approach to life is resorted to in order to deny the reality of the feeling-self. Abstractions take the place of feelings because they are not threatening. Such an individual views language, for example, as a weapon; a tool which he resorts to in order to manipulate others. He is continually constructing scenarios; pre-planning encounters with others. In so doing, he is reducing the other to the level of an object. Objectification of others can be looked upon as a form of "defusing." Human beings are threatening. Objects are not.

In some instances, the affective takes precedence over the cognitive. This kind of relationship gives rise to uncontrolled hedonism. The individual is concerned with but one thing, i.e., satisfaction of his every desire. Morality, insofar as this type of individual is concerned, is nothing more than a meaningless abstraction. As in the case of the cognitive-dominated individual, others are looked upon as things which the individual manipulates in order to gratify his every whim. This type of individual places no constraints on his own behavior. In a way, he looks upon the external world as being little more than an extension of himself. He is unable to differentiate between self and other.

In both instances, one is dealing with reactions to an experience of emotional flooding which usually occurs at a relatively early age. Boyer, in his article on the etiology of schizophrenia, states

that a child possesses an "inborn stimulus barrier" (Boyer 1971, p. 371) which protects him against internal, as well as external, excitations. However, in addition to his own stimulus barrier, the child is usually in need of an external one which is usually provided by the mother. In some instances, particularly those where the protection is inadequate, the child might seek out a substitute for the mother. In Stavrogin's case, for example, the relationship between mother and child was never very close. At the age of eight, he was placed in the care of Stephan. Stephan, however, instead of providing the child with the protection denied him by his mother, did the exact opposite. He added to Stavrogin's difficulties by adding, to a traumatic degree, to an already overwhelming sensory input. This failure to protect gives rise to a form of traumatization which is directly attributable to the child's inability to cope with the stimuli to which he is constantly exposed. This traumatization hinders normal development.

The cognitive-dominant response to this kind of experience represents a form of reaction formation. The overwhelming emotional experience causes the individual to equate the affective with that which is destructive of self. The affective-dominant response represents a surrendering to what the individual perceives as the overwhelming and irresistible demands of the affective. Since he cannot adequately defend himself against the affective, he ends up by identifying with it totally. The affective becomes the only reality.

Boyer, in the article cited in the above paragraph, was discussing the development of schizoid states in children. There is a close connection between the so-called schizoid state and the problem

of the will in that in both instances problems arise when a split between the cognitive and affective occurs. "In The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology, Drever defines 'schizoid' as a 'personality-type tending toward dissociation of the emotional from the intellectual life: a shut-in personality'" (Quoted in Guntrip 1976, pp. 95-96). Guntrip, in his book on schizoid states, emphasizes that: "The significance of human living lies in object-relationships, and only in such terms can our life be said to have a meaning, for without object-relations the ego itself cannot develop" (Guntrip 1976, pp. 20-21). This is a conclusion with which Peterson, Schrag, and Dostoevsky would concur. The schizoid's problems lie in the area of object relationships. "The schizoid condition consists in the first place in an attempt to cancel external object-relations and live in a detached and withdrawn way" (Guntrip 1976, p. 19). In examining the works of individuals concerned with the problem of schizophrenia, therefore, light will be shed on the problem of the character of Stavrogin, reference will be made to the work of authors such as Iaing and Guntrip.

Schrag and Peterson, in their discussion of will, frequently allude to the term existential. In addition, Dostoevsky's philosophical orientation was similar to that of those individuals commonly referred to as existentialists. "Indeed, Dostoevsky, Kafka, Proust are sources for existential thinking as much as the professional philosophers . . ." (Harper 1972, p. 6). Since existentialism plays such an important part in this study, it is necessary to articulate its major themes. This is essential because, as Frank has pointed out: "So vague remains the boundaries of the term 'existential' that even figures as widely separated in time as Socrates and Baudelaire have

been interpreted in the light of such existential notions as commitment, nothingness, and authenticity" (Clive 1972, p. xiii). The true existentialist believes "in himself as a self-determining being" (Peterson 1970, p. 15). The true existentialist realizes that he is a free being whose choices define him: "He believes he possesses the freedom of will; he makes himself, both with the assistance of others and things: he has potentiality, the actuality of which depends upon the decisions he makes and not the conditions which confront him" (Peterson 1970, p. 15). From an existential point of view, man is a choosing subjectivity who must assume responsibility for his choices. The existential man creates himself through the choices which he freely makes. To choose is to create meaning.

Dostoevsky is most closely associated with that group of existentialists commonly referred to as Christian existentialists. This association is most clearly revealed in the sayings of Father Zossima, a character in The Brothers Karamazov. As Masaryk points out in his study of Russian thought, " . . . we are . . . offered the very catechism of Dostoevsky's religious philosophy from the mouth of the monk Zosima" (Masaryk 1961, Vol. III, p. 15). Dostoevsky himself, in a letter he wrote concerning the character of Father Zossima, stated: "I myself hold the same opinions he expresses . . ." (Quoted in Gibson 1973, p. 197).

According to the Christian existentialists, God is the Divine Being who has created all else. This God has left man in a darkness from which he can escape only if he chooses to act in such a way that his behavior will lead him back to God. Man can find God only by choosing to love others, i.e., his fellow men. Father Zossima

stresses the importance of love when he states: "Fathers and teachers, I ponder 'What is hell?' I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love" (Dostoevsky 1955, p. 336). He who is unable to love will never find his way back to God. This love enables the individual to transcend himself and, in so doing, enables him to re-establish contact with God. Harper expresses the same idea in the following manner: " . . . a man is so astonished that someone loves him that he feels that he must attribute this 'grace' to a third who is beside them and whose divine existence he assumed for the occasion" (Harper 1966, p. 81). Or, as Buber puts it: "In each 'you' we meet the eternal 'You'" (Quoted in Harper 1966, p. 80). To love is to perceive the divine. Father Zossima makes this very clear when he states:

Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth. Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand in it. Love every loaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals. Love the plants, love everything. If you love everything you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better each day (Dostoevsky 1955, p. 332).

Choice plays an extremely important part in Christian existentialism. God does not force the individual to love others. He does not make men's decisions for him. Each individual is free to choose. He can choose to seek after God, a search which entails opening oneself up to one's fellow man, or he can turn his back on God and, in so doing, turn his back on all others. As Zernov points out in his discussion of Dostoevsky's concept of Christianity:

This emphasis on freedom is another keynote of Dostoevsky's interpretation of Christ. Christ can only be found by those who are not afraid of freedom. . . . Only Christ, freely and unconditionally accepted by a human being, can destroy evil and restore unity and brotherhood among man (Zernov 1944, p. 108).

Zossima emphasizes the fact of man's freedom in his discussion of those who have turned away from God:

Oh, there are some who remain proud and fierce even in hell, in spite of their certain knowledge and contemplation of the absolute truth; there are some fearful ones who have given themselves over to Satan and his proud spirit entirely. For such, Hell is voluntary and ever-consuming; they are tortured by their own choice. For they have cursed themselves, cursing God and life (Dostoevsky 1955, p. 337).

Friedman, in commenting on this passage, states: "Thus evil and freedom remain, but the responsibility for them rests with man in his irrevocable freedom and not with God" (Friedman 1970, p. 276).

It is the contention of most, if not all, schools of existentialism that suffering is an integral part of human existence. To come to grips with suffering is to grow as an individual. To run away from it is tantamount to running away from oneself: "Dostoevsky shows that suffering lies in the very nature of man as a free and morally responsible being . . . only those who are not afraid of pain are matured and truly free people" (Zernov 1944, p. 93).

Man is a moral being who is perpetually obsessed with the struggle between good and evil. It is man's moral life which endows his self with authenticity. Morality, in the context of Christian existentialism is the power which enables man to use or abuse his freedom. To deny the existence of good is to isolate oneself from all others as well as from God and oneself.

Dostoevsky firmly believed that man contained within himself a demonic realm as well as an "angelic principle" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 43).

Both his (Dostoevsky's) psychologic and ontological description are permeated by the element of the moral or the ethical, the struggle between good and evil . . . man finds himself inescapably confronted with the dilemma of good and evil . . . (Reinhardt 1969, p. 43).

He who does not choose the path of good inevitably ends up entangled in "the web of evil" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 43). In choosing the path of evil, the individual isolates himself from God and his fellow men. In thus abusing his freedom "morality is deprived of every foundation and liberty turns into a chaotic amoralism" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 43).

His (Dostoevsky's) conclusion was that, having freed himself from belief in God, man was bound to deify himself, to put himself above all moral laws, to proclaim that everything was permissible, for if God did not exist then man was the lord of creation. This assertion of his own absolute freedom brought man face to face with the presence in his soul of dark and irrational forces which dragged man from his high pedestal and enslaved him by establishing their iron control over his personality. As soon as man declared that everything was lawful he became a helpless victim of his own passions, fears and doubts. He found himself in the clutch of his impotence and corruption, and the only act left to his freedom was suicide (Zernov 1944, p. 90).

To choose the path of good is to elevate oneself to the "heights of spiritual transfiguration" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 44). Evil, on the other hand, constitutes a flight from God. In denying God one is denying one's moral nature which is the same as saying that one is denying oneself. "As a condition of the individual soul evil is the conclusive shirking of direction, of the total orientation of the soul by which it stands up to personal responsibility before God" (Buber 1963 p. 104). Man must choose which path he shall take. The choice he makes determines the nature of his self: "The existentialist is aware that he has been created as a human being; from this point he becomes the creator of the self, the finisher and qualifier of his existence" (Peterson 1970, p. 14). God, who has created all of mankind, has endowed each individual with the freedom to choose which direction his existence shall take.

In order to better understand the nature of Christian existentialism, it is necessary to define key concepts. One of these concepts is faith. Faith entails a movement from the act of commitment to the realization of the fulfillment of commitment which is the acceptance of responsibility. It is through assuming responsibility for one's commitments that man gains his freedom.

Faith entails a belief in that which cannot be empirically validated, i.e., the existence of God. As Edie points out, "faith is not subject to scientific demonstration and . . . is impervious to complete rational or logical justification" (Edie 1963, p. 9).

Faith constitutes a transcendent act which enables the individual to move outside of himself and towards other men and God:

. . . it (faith) is an action, not only in the sense of a practical doing, but primarily in the sense of a becoming by which the self is established in a dynamic relationship of continual self-transcendence towards itself, the world, other men and God (Edie 1963, p. 9).

Faith in God is inseparable from faith in one's fellow men.

"Only through the relationship with man as 'Thou' does the 'I' find his freedom and fulfillment. By loving others, man transcends his own limited self. . . . God is the absolute 'Thou' . . . (who) is encountered in man's personal engagement with Him" (Misiak and Sexton 1973, p. 78). The truly free man is one who enters into relationships with the full weight of his being. Inherent in this act of commitment to others is the recognition that such commitment constitutes the highest good. In affirming the individuality of others one is affirming one's own individuality and, in so doing, reaching out to God.

In addition to the positive form of faith which has just been described, there exists a negative faith whose salient characteristic

is the objectification of others. Such an individual looks upon others as little more than surfaces or things. This particular individual, in negating the subjectivity of others, negates his own subjectivity. In denying others, he denies himself. As was pointed out earlier, to cut oneself off from others is to cut oneself off from the good. Such an individual leads a directionless existence in which God is conspicuous by His absence. For such an individual "liberty turns into a chaotic amoralism" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 43). He becomes a "helpless victim of his own passions, fears and doubts" (Zernov 1944, p. 90).

A concept which is closely related to that of faith is intuition. Intuition is: " . . . the act of pure consciousness which immediately recognizes the unquestionable validity of particular form of evidence when it 'sees' it" (Sadler 1969, p. 27). An intuition is a flash of wisdom--a perfect moment when time stops and the pattern of the universe is suddenly revealed. It is as though, as Dostoevsky put it, "time suddenly stops and becomes eternal" (Quoted in Harper 1972, p. 33). It is a time when everything can be comprehended for what it is. The individual suddenly becomes aware of underlying meaning, of evidence pointing to the existence of an all-encompassing pattern. These moments bring home to the individual, in a powerful manner, a sense of harmony and symmetry.

Transcendence entails a movement beyond one's specific location in time and space:

The self knows the world . . . because it stands outside both itself and the world, which means that it cannot understand itself except as it is understood from beyond itself and the world. This essential homelessness of the human spirit is the ground of all religion (Niebuhr 1941, p. 14).

What is of crucial importance is the fact that the self makes itself the object of its own thought. In moving outside of itself, the self is more clearly able to perceive the relationship which exists between itself and the external world. This particular mode of perception enables the individual to perceive the relationship which exists between all things. In other words, it makes the individual aware of God because, from a religious point of view, God is the source of harmony and order. To perceive harmony is to perceive God. Intuition and transcendence are inextricably intertwined in that transcendence gives rise to that intuition, or flash of knowledge, concerning the Being who is situated at the centre of man's existence, i.e., God.

Presence "suggests an alteration in everyday temporality" (Sadler 1969, p. 180). It involves the individual exposing himself to reality. In exposing himself, he is allowing his space and time to be invaded by the other-as-subject. Simultaneously, he is invading the space and time of the other. Two individuals are themselves sharing of one another:

Presence is a moment which transcends individualistic structures. I sense his presence; but it is a presence which fills my world and my time. When I receive his presence into my world, it is no longer his alone. It is a moment of shared presence; the moment belongs to us (Sadler 1969, p. 181).

The moment of meeting, which is a meeting of shared presence, transcends the limits of self. In communing with another, one is, from a religious point of view, communing with God. Shared presence constitutes a moment of love "which carries man beyond his individual fate into a reality of personal fullness, into eternity" (Sadler 1969, p. 181). By engaging in a relationship characterized by hope, trust and love one is transcending the limitations of self and reaching out for the divine. Father Zossima

states: "Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth. . . . If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things" (Dostoevsky 1955, p. 332).

Presence entails love, and it is love which enables man to truly understand himself: "The full truth of man emerges only when one confronts another in the dual mode of the loving We" (Sadler 1969, p. 182).

Self, in the context of this study, is not a static psychic structure. It is: " . . . a unique centre of meaningful experience growing in the medium of personal relationships" (Guntrip 1976, p. 127). The self is a unifying force which transforms the various experiences which it initiates into a meaningful wholeness which is unique to that particular self. It is an active force which, in a religious context, is continually striving towards spiritual fulfillment, i.e., communion with God. The self is a process whose salient characteristic is a striving after transcendence. It is a conscious subjectivity which freely makes choices which it hopes will lead it to God.

One cannot speak of self without at one and the same time making reference to Being. As Marcel has stated: "Being is a sort of ontological permanence, to which we are linked and owing to whose endurance we ourselves endure; it is a permanence which implies or demands a history" (Quoted in Reinhardt 1960, pp. 216-217). God is the Being who creates all other things. By "ontological permanence" Marcel is referring to the fact that God, who is the essence from which all else originates, always has been and always will be. His presence continually manifest itself through his creations, i.e., man. It is an active presence which is continually calling upon man to seek out its ultimate source, i.e.,

God himself. To deny this call is to deny not only God but oneself as well.

Marcel makes use of the word ontology. Ontology concerns itself with the nature of being: ". . . to perceive from an ontological base is to determine the nature of existents as well as their potential" (Peterson 1977a, p. 81).

Reality, or the real world, refers to the world of the "existing" (Kneller 1958, p. 3). Being is the only reality. From a religious point of view, God would represent Ultimate Reality since he is the Being from which all other beings originate.

Epistemology refers to that: ". . . branch of philosophy which investigates the origin, structure, methods and validity of knowledge" (Wood 1960, p. 94). In speaking of an individual's epistemology, what is being referred to is that particular individual's theory of knowledge.

Reason refers to that faculty of the mind which is concerned with the elucidation of those experiences undergone by the self. It is continually in the process of evaluating, and reevaluating, that which the self has experienced.

Experience is synonymous with awareness. According to Buber, the individual experiences, or is aware of, the world in two different ways. One form of awareness has to do with the objectifying of the world. This involves the individual detaching himself from his surroundings and viewing the world as a collection of objects: ". . . the I-It world is one of utilization, orientation, separation and detachment of the subject, vis-a-vis an object in which the subject manipulates, exploits or uses the object . . ." (Mundackal 1977, p. 87). The other

form of awareness Buber discusses entails involvement in the world. The emphasis is placed on perceiving the world as being inhabited by others-as-subjects. The individual is actively engaged in establishing relationships with these others. This particular type of awareness, from the Christian point of view, is superior to the first in that the individual, in reaching out to others is, at one and the same time, reaching out to God.

Numinous refers to a state of being during which the individual feels as though he was in direct contact with something sacred. This feeling, which does not lend itself to rational analysis, is closely tied in with two concepts which have previously been defined, i.e., intuition and transcendence. It is as though the mind has suddenly come into direct contact with God and, in so doing, transcended its limitations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first consists of an examination of those critical works relating specifically to the moral and educational development of Stavrogin. The second consists of an examination of those works having to do with the will and the learning process.

Stavrogin

The salient characteristic of the critical literature pertaining to Stavrogin is its uniformity. The critics discussed in this section are in essential agreement in regard to such aspects of Stavrogin's personality as the nature of the affliction from which he suffers as well as the root causes, or causes, of that affliction. The most important points of agreement can be summarized in the following manner:

Nature of Affliction

The affliction from which Stavrogin suffers can be broken down into several component parts. The critics discussed in this section have all discussed one or more of these component parts in their commentaries. The following five sub-divisions constitute a complete picture of Stavrogin's affliction:

Boredom. In "The Masks of Stavrogin," an article concerned solely with the development of Stavrogin, Frank states: "Stavrogin

is a victim of the famous *mal du siècle*, the all-engulfing ennui that haunts the literature of the first half of the nineteenth century" (Frank 1969, p. 683). Ennui, according to Frank, invariably gives rise to "one or another form of moral perversion" (Frank 1969, p. 683). In the case of Stavrogin, the moral perversion takes the form of child molestation, i.e., the young girl, Matryosha. In addition to violating Matryosha, he sits by and does nothing while she is committing suicide in the room next to his. The boredom which pervades his entire being prevents him from going to her aid.

Kuhn, in his discussion of ennui, defines it as: ". . . the state of emptiness that the soul feels when it is deprived of interest in action, life and the world (be it this world or another)" (Kuhn 1976, p. 13). He stresses the fact that it plays a central role in many of Dostoevsky's characters, i.e., Stavrogin:

A tension-laden ennui leads the characters of Dostoevsky to emotional self-laceration and to the torture of others; Stavrogin, in The Possessed, exhibits a demonic nihilism that can find satisfaction neither in the total destruction with which Piotr Stepanovich Verhovenski tempts him nor in the sainthood that the Elder Tikhon holds out as an ideal (Kuhn 1976, p. 256).

Clive, in his study of Russian fiction, emphasizes the self-destructive boredom which is such a salient characteristic of Stavrogin's character. Like Frank, he states that this kind of boredom, or ennui, proliferated in nineteenth century literature. In Stavrogin's case, the boredom is so extreme that it is slowly driving him mad. The spread of this particular brand of boredom is linked, by Clive, to the rise of the scientific intellectual. The scientific intellectual, according to Clive, is one who stresses the primacy of detached observation and scientific abstractions

over "direct lived experience" (Clive 1972, p. 76). Stavrogin: " . . . carries this cult of dispassionate objectivity to an extreme by detaching his own stake from the thrust of his most persuasive arguments (Clive 1972, p. 76). Stavrogin's similarity to the scientific intellectual described by Clive is noted by Reinhardt: "He (Stavrogin) observes the consequences of his actions as a detached spectator, or like a scientist who observes the results of his experiments" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 65). Stavrogin, in common with the scientific intellectual described by Clive, no longer takes pride in "local traditions and associations" (Clive 1972, p. 72). His is a rootless existence which exists in a vacuum.

Stavrogin's boredom is so intense that it transforms the world into a stale and meaningless place peopled by individuals whose ideas and feelings are as stale and contemptible as the world they inhabit:

It is worth noting that Stavrogin's boredom is far from being totally "subjective." Rather his whole world of ideas and intentions has become stale to him within the context of his everyday activities. In other words, not only is Stavrogin's psyche disturbed by what might be called a sickness of the soul but this disturbance reaches out, so to speak, to distort his whole sense of reality (Clive 1972, p. 76).

Clive compares this particular brand of boredom to a corrosive acid which eats away and destroys anything with which it comes into contact. It gives rise to an intense self-hatred which, in turn, gives rise to intense hatred of the external world. Intense boredom is extricably intertwined with intense hatred. Stavrogin, for example, reacts to anything and everything with an intense hatred: a hatred which would enable him, without a second's hesitation, to destroy himself and the world simultaneously, assuming he possessed the power to do so.

Stavrogin's Confession, as Clive points out, provides us with several examples of the relationship which existed between boredom and hatred of self and others. For example, Stavrogin begins his Confession by stating: "I could have hanged myself out of sheer boredom" (Quoted by Clive 1972, p. 76). Stavrogin goes on to say: "I just felt I'd have liked to put gunpowder under the four corners of the world and blow the whole thing sky-high. . . . I would have done it without malice, simply out of boredom" (Quoted in Clive 1972, p. 76). Stavrogin, as Clive points out, is "a tormented individual, almost crazed by his condition of uprootedness and boredom" (Clive 1972, p. 75).

De Jonge, in commenting on Stavrogin, states that he is characterized by a: ". . . spiteful indifference to a world he knows too well as stale, flat and unprofitable" (de Jonge 1975, p. 132). From Stavrogin's point of view, the world is a sterile place in which nothing is possible and nothing is of any value. Ennui, as de Jonge points out:

. . . is a mood of spiritual dispersal which saps the will, negating everything except for a belief in ennui itself. All forms of meaningful activity become impossible and man is left with nothing but his sense of time's passing (de Jonge 1975, p. 40).

The individual, in an attempt to extricate himself from the boredom in which he finds himself mired, engages in extreme forms of behavior. However, as de Jonge points out, such attempts, instead of alleviating boredom, merely exacerbate it: ". . . he (Stavrogin) has so overabused his capacity for experiencing sensation, for instinctive response, that it is worn out, no longer able to respond. The nerves are dead . . ." (de Jonge 1975, p. 186).

Winegarten, in her study of writers and revolution, states that Stavrogin is an individual who engages in criminal acts in a futile

attempt to shake off the boredom which is slowly suffocating him. According to her: "Stavrogin is revealed as a frigid and sterile monster of moral indifference" (Winegarten 1974, p. 207). Stavrogin engages in acts of debauchery "a la Sade out of sheer boredom" (Winegarten 1974, p. 206).

Howe also emphasizes the important part that boredom plays insofar as Stavrogin's character is concerned. According to Howe, Stavrogin is characterized by: ". . . acedia, that torpor of the spirit which provides the greatest resistance to God because it lacks the power to resist anything" (Howe 1962, p. 62). Stavrogin's boredom is so intense that it impairs his ability to make moral choices.

Jackson states, in his study of Dostoevsky's *Underground Man*, that both Stavrogin and the *Underground Man* are characterized by acute states of boredom. Like the *Underground Man*, Stavrogin is one who has been overwhelmed by boredom to the point where: "The features of his personality have become frozen like the features of his face" (Jackson 1958, p. 56).

Reinhardt, in his study of the theological novel, states that Stavrogin, when he does act, does so, more often than not, out of sheer boredom, a boredom which is so intense that Stavrogin is unable to shake it off: "When he (Stavrogin) occasionally does spring into action, it is from sheer boredom" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 67). Reinhardt goes on to state that "his (Stavrogin's) inertia has deep roots in his being" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 67).

Friedman concurs with the other critics when he states that Stavrogin is a "bored and listless observer" (Friedman 1970, p. 174).

Divided Personality. The narrator of The Possessed, in describing Stavrogin, states: "People said that his face reminded them of a mask" (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 57). His face is so described, according to Frank, in order to emphasize the fact that beneath the beautiful facade there is to be found the "horror of evil and corruption" (Frank 1969, p. 670). Clive, in a work entitled The Romantic Enlightenment, discusses one of the central concerns of nineteenth century literature, namely, the rift between the cognitive and affective aspects of man's being: "Nineteenth century literature is filled with expressions of this daemonic rift between insensitive knowing and wayward feeling" (Clive 1960, p. 29). Stavrogin, according to Clive, is a prime example of the divided man who played such an important part in nineteenth century literature: "Stavrogin's Confession in Dostoevsky's The Possessed is perhaps the last word on the subject" (Clive 1960, p. 29). In a later work, Clive summarizes the paradox that is Stavrogin in the following manner:

He turns to dissipation for an anodyne, but not being a sybarite, he cannot enjoy losing himself in mere pleasure. Not being a pragmatist either, he proceeds to act outrageously in society (Clive 1972, p. 79).

Steiner, in his discussion of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, states that Stavrogin appears to combine in his person characteristics of both Christ and the Antichrist. Steiner attempts to explain this apparent paradox by surmising that Dostoevsky, in portraying Stavrogin in this way, was attempting to demonstrate the innate duality of God:

In imagining him (Stavrogin), Dostoevsky may have succumbed to an ancient and desperate suspicion. If God is the creator of the universe, he is, by the same token of entirety, the creator of evil. If all grace is encompassed in His

being, so is all inhumanity. . . . There seem to be moments in the novel in which Stavrogin conveys to us a tragic apprehension of the duality of God (Steiner 1971, pp. 315-316).

Peace, in his discussion of Dostoevsky's major novels, states that "the depiction of Stavrogin reveals a duality at every point; every facet reveals a great enigma" (Peace 1975, p. 180). Peace says essentially the same thing that Steiner does when he states that Stavrogin "embraces within himself both the saint and the sinner" (Peace 1975, p. 180). This duality, according to Peace, would help to account, at least in part, for Stavrogin's ability to implant conflicting ideas (atheistic materialism and a form of Christianity) into two of his disciples, i.e., Shatov and Kirillov, simultaneously. Stavrogin is both saint and sinner: Christ and Antichrist.

Friedman, in his work on the literary rebel, points out that Stavrogin intensified the "alienation and inner division of the Underground Man and Raskolnikov" (Friedman 1970, pp. 170-171). Stavrogin, according to Friedman, is the divided man par excellence. Stavrogin's being is so helplessly splintered that he is unable to commit himself to a specific course of action. He is "the divided man as exile. . . . As a result he must remain ambiguous and perplexing" (Friedman 1970, p. 172). According to Friedman, nowhere is the duality of Stavrogin's character more in evidence than in the Confession episode. Stavrogin, according to Friedman, wrote the Confession in a futile attempt to get out from the boredom which is slowly crushing him to death. He hopes that the Confession will elicit a response from the public which will, in turn, arouse some sort of response in himself. For every action there is a reaction, or so Stavrogin hopes. However, as Friedman points out:

This desire for sensation does not mean that Stavrogin is indifferent or lacking in despair and a sense of guilt that might lead to repentance. But he is too split to bring all of himself even into this action of confessing. His problem is not that he does not believe in anything, but that he believes in opposites, that he is torn by extremes. Like love and self-degradation, confession cannot do for him what he cannot do for himself--make him give himself over to life as a whole person (Friedman 1970, p. 180).

Stavrogin is engaged in a desperate quest for an external force which will bring together the disparate aspects of his personality. What he fails to realize, however, is that no external force can do for him what he cannot do for himself, i.e., transform him into a unified whole. The division which exists in Stavrogin's character prevents him from being able to commit himself to life. He ends up killing himself out of despair: ". . . the despair of a man with strength but no direction, a man with passion and potentiality but with no image of authentic existence" (Friedman 1970, p. 180).

Guerard also emphasizes the duality of Stavrogin's character.

As he points out:

At times he (Stavrogin) seems merely bereft of will, at other to be holding aggression under control, as when, after Shatov's slap, he holds his hands clasped behind his back. The hollow man, on a few occasions, seems to be boiling with criminal energy (Guerard 1976, p. 285).

Stavrogin fluctuates between extremes. At times he appears to be little more than a listless husk, an absence. At other times, he appears to be on the verge of an intense emotional eruption. What is paradoxical, as Guerard points out, is that Stavrogin, even though he seems to be, more often than out, "absent" from the novel in the sense of not being an active participant in the action, is the central focus of the novel. As Guerard points it, "He is like a dead sun about which the planets

continue to move with borrowed light and heat" (Guerard 1976, p. 286). Stavrogin embodies in his person the duality and ambiguity which is a salient characteristic of the novel as a whole.

Isolation from Others. Wasiolek states: "Stavrogin needs no one" (Quoted in Guerard 1976, p. 286). His isolation from others is most clearly evidenced, as Clive points out, during the episode when Stavrogin, knowing that a young girl is hanging herself next door, "does not interfere for he is reading his paper" (Clive 1960, p. 29). Harper describes Stavrogin in the following manner: "He cannot arise from the self-isolation in which he has entombed his personality" (Harper 1967, p. 53). Stavrogin destroys others in a capricious manner in order to "see whether by doing so he could take something seriously" (Harper 1967, p. 69). In so doing he demonstrates his distance from others, because only one who is totally isolated from others would treat those others in such a callous and destructive manner. Jackson, like Harper, emphasizes Stavrogin's "divorce from the people and the 'living Life'" (Jackson 1958, p. 56). Reinhardt states: ". . . he is unable to communicate with others . . . others cannot communicate with him. . . . He is . . . unable to give himself to others in devotion and in love" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 67).

Holquist states that Stavrogin is one of those individuals who is terrified that others might play some part in shaping his destiny. Stavrogin's attitude towards anything external to himself is a combination of fear and abhorrence. Stavrogin's quest for what Holquist refers to as "absolute ego" (Holquist 1977, p. 139), an ego which is formed independently of external forces, human or otherwise, indicates the extent to which Stavrogin is divorced from others. Stavrogin is

continually attempting to break free of those patterns which he believes determine who he is. However, "He keeps discovering the power of structure to subvert his lust for a unique identity" (Holquist 1977, p. 140). Stavrogin is unable to accept the fact that identity is to a large extent the product of interaction with others. In order to deny this fact he behaves in an outrageous manner in order to demonstrate his total freedom from external constraints. He rapes a young girl and marries a mad woman in order to demonstrate his purported freedom. He behaves unconventionally in order to prove that he is free from all external control, but, ironically, unconventionality itself soon becomes transformed into one of those stifling patterns which Stavrogin abhors.

At the end of the novel, Stavrogin has become convinced that his inability to find a totally unique identity leaves him but one choice, i.e., suicide. Having reached what he considers a dead end, he ends up by committing suicide.

Acute Self-Consciousness. Like the Underground Man, Stavrogin can truthfully state: "I am extremely self-conscious" (Quoted in Clive 1960, p. 115). The kind of acute self-consciousness which is characteristic of both Stavrogin and the Underground Man is extremely debilitating in that it causes the individual to:

. . . muse and brood over himself; before long he enters into monologues with himself and comes to resent any interruption as unwarranted, embarrassing, and terribly difficult to bear. Soon his egocentricity may make him unfit to live with--and worse, to live with himself (Clive 1960, p. 115).

The extremely self-conscious individual, by virtue of the fact that he dwells continuously on self, becomes "divorced from reality" (Clive 1960, p. 115).

Acute self-consciousness gives rise to an intense despair: "With every increase in the degree of consciousness, and in proportion to that increase, the intensity of despair increases: the more consciousness, the more intense the despair" (Quoted in Clive 1960, p. 115). The despair which acute self-consciousness gives rise to causes the individual to seek out a transcendent which will enable him to go beyond the bounds of a world which he finds stale and meaningless. Paradoxically, however, the very same self-consciousness which prevents the individual from being content with mundane reality, at one and the same time, prevents him from giving himself over totally to the transcendent which he is presumably seeking. Self-consciousness prevents the individual from moving outside of himself. As Frank points out in regard to Stavrogin's spiritual quest: "His quest is a spiritual experimentation totally preoccupied with itself, totally enclosed within the ego, and hence incapable of self-surrender to the absolute that it is presumably seeking" (Frank 1969, p. 669). Intense self-consciousness prevent Stavrogin from committing himself to anything in a total manner. As de Jonge points out, consciousness is diametrically opposed to intensity: "The greater the degree of consciousness the harder it becomes to experience the surge of vertigo with which intensity overwhelms its subjects" (de Jonge 1975, p. 132). Stavrogin craves intense emotional experiences, but his self-consciousness prevents him from being able to "let go" to the extent that would be required if one were to become totally immersed in the kinds of experiences he so desperately desires. Intensity of experience relieves tedium and endows life with meaning. Those who are unable to experience life intensely are condemned to a life of sterility.

Friedman, in analyzing Stavrogin's self-awareness, states that it prevents him from being able to engage in an act of genuine repentance: an act which might have enabled Stavrogin to save himself:

"The very acuteness of Stavrogin's self-awareness, reflected in his penchant for analyzing his motives in his Confession, stands in the way of a genuine repentance" (Friedman 1970, p. 179).

Although Stavrogin has a profound effect on the other characters in the novel, he remains totally untouched by them: "Stavrogin is the source of the chaos that streams through the characters; he possesses them but is not himself possessed" (Howe 1962, p. 62).

Disordered Will. Friedman, in his discussion of Stavrogin's intense self-consciousness, mentions the fact that Stavrogin's unwillingness to prevent what is happening to him even though he is conscious of what is transpiring "may cause us to suspect that his perfect mastery of his will is an illusion" (Friedman 1970, p. 223). Stavrogin, according to Friedman, makes the mistake of "equating consciousness and will and of thinking that because he knows what is happening, he is free to stop it" (Friedman 1970, p. 223). The will is more than merely consciousness; it is, as Schrag and Peterson have pointed out, the agent of decision and commitment.

One of the salient characteristics of will is, as Schrag has pointed out, "irremediable finitude" (Schrag 1969, p. 102). A healthy will is one which acknowledges its inability to actualize any and all courses of action. In the case of Stavrogin, however, one is dealing with a will which refuses to acknowledge the existence of limitations. Like the Underground Man, "He is obsessed by the pursuit of the

impossible, which for him means freedom. He rants against every supposed obstacle to the satisfaction of his will" (Clive 1960, p. 113). Howe makes the same point when he states: ". . . the awareness of human limits which Dostoevsky regards as essential to human life he (Stavrogin) entirely lacks" (Howe 1962, p. 62). The refusal to acknowledge the existence of limitations prevents Stavrogin from behaving in a constructive and moral manner:

The first two impulses (passion for martyrdom and craving for remorse) in Stavrogin, genuinely moral, are always crippled and distorted by the third (moral sensuality) which stems from his enjoyment of the outrageously perverse, shocking, and sheerly gratuitous manifestations of his absolute self-will (Frank 1969, p. 677).

For example, in the novel there is a duel scene where Stavrogin, in a genuine attempt to avoid needless bloodshed, fires his pistol into the air. However, he does so in such an arrogant way that he only increases his opponent's anger:

Here Stavrogin is attempting to achieve self-mastery and to avoid useless bloodshed; but his manner is so arrogant and contemptuous that he only arouses the uncontrollable hatred of his opponent all the more (Frank 1969, p. 679).

Stavrogin's problem has to do with the fact that he can "never negate his egotism entirely to the point of a total abandonment of reflexive self-concern" (Frank 1969, p. 680). Stavrogin can never entirely overcome, or triumph over, his egotism and self-will. Even his Confession, as Tikhon points out, is merely, "another and more extreme form of the 'moral sensuality' that has marked all his previous attempts at self-mastery" (Frank 1969, p. 685). Tikhon, realizing that Stavrogin is incapable of attaining a state of true humility on his own,

. . . urges Stavrogin to submit his will completely to the secret control of a saintly starets, and thus discipline

himself by a total surrender to another as the first step along the path to the acceptance of Christ and the hope of forgiveness (Frank 1969, p. 685).

Stavrogin, however, cannot bring himself to submit his will to another and so ends up by rejecting Tikhon's advice. In so doing, he condemns himself to self-destruction. Stavrogin proved himself to be an individual who was incapable of placing any constraints on the "absolute autonomy of his self-will" (Frank 1969, p. 670).

In refusing to place limitations on his self-will, Stavrogin ended up by destroying himself. Paradoxically, in refusing to acknowledge limitations, Stavrogin ended up by reducing his will to the level of total impotence. Peace, in commenting on Stavrogin's suicide note, stated that it revealed a will which "shorn of all else is revealed in all its impotence; it lacks direction" (Peace 1975, p. 209).

Cause of the Affliction

Kuhn, in his discussion of his ennui, states that it is "a condition that is the immediate consequence of the encounter with nothingness" (Kuhn 1976, p. 13). This encounter with nothingness usually entails the loss of faith in the existence of God. Without God, man is cast into the void. This was a belief which was strongly held by Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky, according to Clive, was characterized by a:

. . . sustained conviction that man's greatest problem everywhere and any time is to be properly related to himself and that this relationship can only be sound if ultimately anchored in the presence of God (Clive 1960, p. 99).

De Jonge stresses the centrality, insofar as Dostoevsky's work is concerned, of the theme of the "living life":

He (Dostoevsky) uses the term to describe a particular kind of exultant joy at God's creation: it is close to Christ's

"the waters of life," and has the sense of an immediate experience of the sheer plenitude of existence. . . . To attain the living life is the ultimate Dostoevskian experience: to taste paradise on earth (de Jonge 1975, p. 218).

To be cut off from God is to be cut off from the living life. Enjoyment of life is inextricably bound up with a belief in the existence of God.

The critics are almost unanimous in attributing Stavrogin's affliction to his loss of religious faith. Reinhardt, for example, states:

Raskolnikov, Stavrogin, Ivan Karamazov and most of the other Dostoevskyan "heroes" suffer because they have stifled in themselves the sentiment of the good (that is, the sentiment of God): they are left alone with themselves (Reinhardt 1969, p. 63).

In divorcing himself from the good, Stavrogin "loses something very precious without which he cannot live a human life" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 43). To renounce the good is tantamount to renouncing one's humanity. In place of God, Stavrogin substitutes "the hybris of mere rebellious self-assertion" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 47). This egotistic self-assertion, according to Dostoevsky, leads eventually to the destruction of the individual. In order to survive, it is essential that the individual give himself over to a form of Christianity which combines in itself "freedom and universal love" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 47). For love, Stavrogin substitutes a diabolical pride, a pride grounded in the drive for "absolute self-assertion" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 51). This pride prevents him from accepting God and, in so doing, paves the way for his eventual suicide. Reinhardt summarizes Stavrogin's plight in the following manner:

The psychological and theological implications of the disintegration of Stavrogin's character point to the descriptive analyses presented in Kierkegaard's most gloomy work,

The Concept of Dread. Here the author depicts . . . the progressive forlornness of the human person in the advancing dread of nothingness and the concomitant or subsequent emergence of the demoniac forces. In the end there remains nothing positive at all. Everything disintegrates under the impact of the powers of evil, the work of the "possessed," the work of those "devils" who carry out the designs of their master Stavrogin. The daemonic world circles about nothingness, meaninglessness and despairing emptiness (Reinhardt 1969, p. 73).

Stavrogin, throughout the course of the novel, is attempting to discover an appropriate channel for his enormous potential. What he fails to realize is that in denying the existence of God he is transforming the world into a sterile desert devoid of meaning: a place where all talents are useless. What Stavrogin fails to realize is that egotistic self-assertion in a moral vacuum is little more than an exercise in total futility. This is the point that Reinhardt makes in his analysis.

Harper attributes Stavrogin's affliction to the unhappiness caused by "the awareness of the vacuum left in (him) by the departure of the old gods, too unhappy to go on living" (Harper 1967, p. 54). In turning from God, Stavrogin is turning from morality because Dostoevsky linked "the destruction of God with the destruction of morality" (Harper 1967, p. 64). This world devoid of morality gives rise, as Howe points out, to a "torpor of the spirit" (Howe 1962, p. 62) which cripples Stavrogin's will and prevents him from exercising his freedom in a constructive manner. Stavrogin looks upon the world as a void and this perception gives rise to a total lack of desire. Stavrogin becomes transformed into a empty husk. As Guerard states:

. . . he (Stavrogin) does not as a rule seem to be present . . . in the present time of the novel. . . . Ideologically . . . he is scarcely present as he listens passively or ironically and with irritation to his doctrines of two years ago (Guerard 1976, p. 285).

Peace attributes Stavrogin's lack of direction to "the absence of any ethical code" (Peace 1975, p. 209). He is neither good nor evil; "he is uncommitted" (Peace 1975, p. 209). Stavrogin lacks direction because he has denied God and in so doing denied the possibility of meaningful action. Peace sums it up when he states: "Stavrogin's moral neutrality is in essence a religious problem" (Peace 1975, p. 214). Stavrogin's tragedy resides in the fact that "in him boundless potential has become the impotence of an existence without aim" (Peace 1975, p. 217).

Frank differs from the other critics in that he traces Stavrogin's inability to believe back to the pernicious influence of the tutor Stephan on the young Stavrogin:

The tutor communicated all the moral uncertainty and instability of his own character to his unfortunate pupil without providing anything positive to counteract their unsettling effects; the result was to leave an aching emptiness at the center of Stavrogin's being (Frank 1969, p. 668).

This aching emptiness gives rise to a sacred longing which becomes an obsession. Stavrogin becomes engaged in a quest for an absolute. However, his quest is doomed to failure because, as Frank points out: "His quest is a spiritual experimentation totally preoccupied with itself, totally enclosed within the ego, and hence incapable of self-surrender to the absolute that it is presumably seeking" (Frank 1969, p. 669). Stephan's influence, while giving rise to a desire for a spiritual absolute, at one and the same time dooms such a quest to failure because it has implanted a sense of insecurity in Stavrogin which is so strong that it prevents him from being able to move out of himself. Trapped within the confines of self, it becomes impossible for Stavrogin to find salvation. The critics are almost

unanimous in attributing Stavrogin's affliction to his loss of religious faith. Reinhardt, for example, states:

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In divorcing himself from the good, Stavrogin "loses something very precious without which he cannot live a human life" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 43). To renounce the good is tantamount to renouncing one's humanity. In place of God, Stavrogin substituted "the hybris of mere rebellious self-assertion" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 47). This egotistic self-assertion would, according to Dostoevsky, lead eventually to the destruction of the individual. In order to survive, it is essential that the individual give himself over to a form of Christianity which would combine in itself "freedom and universal love" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 47). Stavrogin's diabolical pride, a pride grounded in the drive for "absolute self-assertion" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 51), prevents him from accepting God and, in so doing, paves the way for his eventual suicide.

Harper, like Reinhardt, attributes Stavrogin's affliction to the unhappiness caused by "the awareness of the vacuum left in (him) by the departure of the old gods, too unhappy to go on living" (Harper 1967, p. 54). Stavrogin has never known God.

Friedman differs from the other critics discussed to date in that he views Stavrogin as an incredibly complex character who transcends analysis. While acknowledging the fact that Stavrogin's affliction represents, in large part, a response to a lack of faith in God, he, at one and the same time, states that any and all analyses of

Stavrogin's behavior are, by definition, partial and incomplete.

Stavrogin defies such categorization.

. . . there is always more to Stavrogin than the psychological categories that he himself offers us. Dostoevsky has created in Stavrogin a truly independent character who has the right to give us his own conclusions about himself and to demand of us that we meet him as a person--an existential subject--and not just the object of his or our analyses (Friedman 1970, p. 224).

Summary

The critics are in essential agreement in regard to the nature of the affliction from which Stavrogin is suffering. The salient characteristics of the affliction are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a) boredom | d) acute self-consciousness |
| b) divided personality | e) disordered will |
| c) isolation from others | |

The various symptoms are in a constant state of interaction. For example, as Friedman points out, "The secret of Stavrogin's boredom and his passionless indifference lies, more than anything, in the fact that he is not only cut off and detached but irreparably divided" (Friedman 1970, p. 174). Boredom, isolation, disordered will, division, and isolation are symptoms which are inextricably intertwined in a whole which results from, according to the critics, a loss of faith. The only critic who is not totally in agreement with this analysis is Friedman. According to Friedman, human behavior does not lend itself to complete analysis. Although it is possible to analyze a character's behavior, such analyses are bound to be incomplete.

The Will and the Learning Process

"The concept of will has undergone a tortuous development in the history of philosophy" (Schrag 1969, p. 99).

One of the basic problems confronting anyone who wishes to investigate the nature of the will has to do with the fact that "there is no other capacity of the mind whose very existence has been so consistently doubted and refuted by so eminent a series of philosophers" (Arendt 1978, p. 4). Arendt attributed this negative attitude towards the will on the part of philosophers to the existence of a basic conflict between "the experiences of thinking ego and those of the willing ego" (Arendt 1978, p. 5). This basic conflict revolves around the problem of freedom: ". . . what aroused the philosophers' distrust of this faculty (will) was its inevitable connection with freedom: 'If I must necessarily will, why need I speak of will at all?' as Augustine put it. . . ." (Arendt 1978, p. 5). Willing is inextricably associated with freedom which, as Schrag points out, "needs to be understood in the light of . . . finitude and ambiguity" (Schrag 1969, p. 102). Freedom is an extremely difficult term to come to terms with largely because of the fact that, in regard to human conduct, it is extremely difficult to determine where freedom ends and determinism begins. In other words, freedom is a concept whose parameters are continually shifting. As Schrag puts it: "In freedom the contribution of initiation (originating the action) and facticity (prior action upon one) remain ambiguously intertwined" (Schrag 1969, p. 102). This fact has caused professional philosophers to regard the concept of will as a "curse" (Arendt 1978, p. 5) which they would rather not deal with.

The ambiguity surrounding the relationship between will and freedom might account for the fact that will is a relatively recent concept. It was unknown to the Greeks and, according to Arendt, was not "discovered" until the beginning of the Christian era.

There is an additional problem which might have caused philosophers to shy away from the concept of will. This has to do with the fact that will concerns itself with the future.

. . . (will) deals not merely with things that are absent from the senses and need to be made present through the mind's power of re-presentation, but with things, visibles and invisibles, that have never existed at all (Arendt 1978, pp. 14-15).

The future is, by definition, uncertain. It is extremely difficult to predict, with any degree of certainty, what will happen. As Arendt points out, ". . . the future's main characteristic is its basic uncertainty, no matter how high a degree of probability prediction may attain" (Arendt 1978, p. 15). The will is continually projecting itself into a future whose salient characteristic is uncertainty.

In order to fully understand the will, it is necessary to utilize an approach which is capable of coming to terms with the concept of freedom as well as with the fact that when one is discussing the will one is discussing a future fraught with uncertainty. The existentialist approach is best suited for this purpose because:

1. Existential philosophy is a philosophy of freedom. "The existentialist believes in himself, not as a thing but as a self-determining being. Things determine each other. He believes he possesses the freedom of will; . . ." (Peterson 1970, p. 15). Seetharamu, in his discussion of the educational implications of existentialism,

makes the same point: ". . . existentialists prefer to view man as an infinitely free, responsible being. According to Sartre freedom is identical with existence" (Seetharamu 1978, p. 83).

2. According to the existentialists, man creates himself through his acts or projects, the outcomes of which are always uncertain. The world in which man lives, according to the existentialists, is, by definition, an uncertain, or unpredictable, one: "'Certainty,' to the existentialist, is an entirely relative experience. . . . Because each new decision will involve a new set of circumstances, no event, law, or standard can be 'certain'" (Barnes 1968, p. 211). The only certainty the existentialist will acknowledge is that as a human being he is free to choose or not to choose.

Existentialism's ability to cope with the concept of freedom as well as with the uncertainty inherent in human existence make it the ideal theoretical framework with which to examine the workings of the human will. The function of such an approach is to:

. . . relocate volition in the stream of temporalized and spatialized experience and to study its development and advance. To describe, analyse, and interpret the phenomenon of willing in its lived concreteness and existential development . . . is the task which confronts the phenomenologist of the will (Schrag 1969, p. 100).

The function of an existential approach is to show that the will is more than a mere abstraction; it is an integral aspect of personality which determines the ways in which the individual interacts with his environment.

At this juncture, it is necessary to point out that any analysis of will is bound to be, by definition, incomplete. Since man is not God

he cannot totally comprehend all facets of his behavior. His knowledge of self is bound to be incomplete.

In focusing on the phenomenon of willing one finds that the wealth of proliferating meanings is so vast that total comprehension can at best be a regulative ideal. The finitude of world experience affords no privileged standpoint . . . from which a God-like survey might be conducted (Schrage 1969, p. 100).

The definition of will which forms the theoretical underpinning of this study has been extracted from the work of Schrage and Peterson. Both utilize an existential approach in their examination of the will, an approach which, as has been pointed out, is best suited to coping with the ambiguity inherent in the concept of will. Both theorists focus in on the will in its "lived concreteness and existential deployment" (Schrage 1969, p. 100). Peterson is especially concerned with the way in which the will is inextricably intertwined with the learning process. He focuses in on the will as an active agent which is continually involved with the external world. The will, from his point of view, is not a reified faculty but rather a phenomenon which plays an active and crucial part "in the stream of temporalized and spatialized experience" (Schrage 1969, p. 100).

While it is true that other theorists have dealt with the topic of will and provided the reader with valuable insights into its workings, none have dealt with it in the systematic manner in which Schrage and Peterson have. Nietzsche, for example, made an invaluable contribution to the study of the will in that he: ". . . centralize(d) the notion of the will. . . . Nietzsche was able to understand will as the movement of self-affirmation in life, particularly as life comes to grips with its existence problem" (Schrage 1969, p. 103). Nietzsche

acknowledged the fact that the will was the prime agency of direction and commitment. He went astray, however, when he decided to "absolutize the will and to confer upon it a metaphysical supremacy" (Schrag 1969, pp. 103-104). Nietzsche failed to realize that the will's ability to execute a course of action was finite and conditioned.

Two other theorists who have examined the problem of will are Farber and May. Farber's definition of will is somewhat similar to that of Schrag and Peterson: ". . . will is the category through which we examine that portion of our life that is the mover of our life in a certain direction or toward an objective in time" (Farber 1966, p. 7). However, even though Farber, like Peterson and Schrag, looks upon will as "responsible mover" (Farber 1966, p. 31), he fails to treat the subject in a very systematic fashion. However, there is one point which he makes in his discussion which is of crucial importance insofar as an understanding of the will is concerned. In discussing previous attempts to come to terms with the concept, he mentions the fact that the scholarship on the will has been either self-serving or so incredibly abstract that it is difficult "for the reader to know that the will had any relevance to human considerations" (Farber 1966, p. 29). This, as Farber points out, has caused the subject of will "to lose its connection with existence itself" (Farber 1966, p. 29). The only area in which will played a pivotal role was literature. This was attributable to the fact that literature "has always been interested in man as a creature with some capacity, even if only potential, for independent personal volition" (Farber 1966, p. 30). Because of this fact: ". . . the subject of will--explicitly and literally--has engaged the interest of authors as diverse as Flaubert, Butler,

Goncharov, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, . . ." (Farber 1966, p. 30). Therefore, in order for us to gain insights into the will it is necessary for the reader to turn to literature.

The refusal on the part of thinkers, whether in the area of philosophy or psychology, to tackle the problem of will has given rise to certain problems, the most important of which being the tendency on the part of thinkers to smuggle the concept of will into their discussions under another name, "this contraband will being usually an irresponsible mover of our lives" (Farber 1966, p. 30). When some other faculty, or agency, is called upon to become will "the existential or phenomenological relevance of these aspects is diminished" (Farber 1966, p. 30). Freud, for example, posited sexuality as the prime mover of our existence. In so doing, he presented us with a distorted picture of human sexuality: ". . . when Freud insisted that sexuality be the will of his system, it was his and ultimately our understanding of the place of sexuality in existence that suffered . . ." (Farber 1966, p. 30). Sexuality is merely one of many categories that have been made to do the work of will in various psychological theories. Some of these categories are: "unconscious, aggression, dependence, power, inferiority, sadomasochism, guilt, and, of course, anxiety" (Farber 1966, p. 31).

What holds true for psychological theories is equally applicable to educational theories. One of the categories educators frequently make use of is "motivation." They attempt to make this concept do the work of will even though the resemblance between the two is, at best, superficial.

Motive and will have some superficial resemblance in that they both provoke movement or action. If I disparage my friend's achievements out of envy, envy is the motive of my disparagement. However, envy is not the same as will, even though my will to disparage may be incited by my motive of envy. In other words a motive cannot be responsible for an action of will, even though it may provoke or prompt such action. This has been the usual distinction between will and motive. . . . It is when motive is used as a cause that it begins to usurp the will's domain and at the same time defeat the phenomenological venture. If, out of envy, I will to disparage, I still have the option of willing not to disparage (Farber 1966, pp. 30-31).

Hill, in his study of educational thought, while acknowledging the fact that educators have a tendency to use motivation in place of will, seems to imply that this is merely a matter of "jargonesque" and therefore unimportant: "Learning involves the arousal of the emotions and the wooing of the will (the technical jargon for it is 'motivation') as well as the extension of the mind" (Hill 1973). What Hill fails to realize is that in substituting motivation for will educators are precluding the possibility of choice on the part of the individual. To place motivation at the heart of education is to, knowingly or unknowingly, subscribe to a deterministic concept of man. Man is reduced to the level of an organism who responds to external stimuli in a predictable and rigid manner. Man reacts because there is a "reason" or "motive" for so doing. The possibility of not responding is not even considered. This is the point Farber made in his discussion of will and motive. Will and freedom are inextricably intertwined. Motive and freedom are not. One cannot, therefore, equate motive with will.

In failing to come to terms with the concept of will, educators almost invariably end up by putting forth theories of education which lack a central focus. An example of such a lack of focusing is

Berman's New Priorities in the Curriculum. In her discussion of creativity, for example, she states: "In an interrelated manner, the individual's cognitive skills, his emotions, his moral insights, and his physical being are brought to bear upon a significant creative act" (Berman 1968, p. 139). This passage is confusing due to the fact that Berman fails to address herself to a crucial question: What aspect of the self brings together these disparate elements in such a way that a creative act comes into being? What is lacking is a "prime mover" (Farber 1966, p. 30). It is this prime mover which, as Schrag pointed out, binds the self "to its project" (Schrag 1969, p. 107). Both Farber and Schrag refer to this prime mover as "will." In failing to take into consideration the part played by will, Berman is presenting us with a disjointed and extremely nebulous concept of man:

The search by this author for a view of man led to a description of him as a process-oriented being. Process orientation, as used in this book, means that a person has within his personality elements of dynamism, motion, and responsibility which enable him to live as an adequate and a contributing member of the world of which he is part (Berman 1968, p. 9).

In this passage, as in the one quoted above, Berman fails to specify what brings together the elements of "dynamism, motion, and responsibility." She presents the reader with a list of characteristics, asserts that these characteristics interact in a meaningful way, but ends up by failing to specify exactly what it is that is responsible for this meaningful interaction. Her analysis of human behavior is, at best, partial.

May is another theorist who has written about the will. He defines will in the following manner: "Will is the capacity to organize one's self so that movement in a certain direction or

toward a certain goal may take place" (May 1969, p. 218). As was the case with Farber, May, while putting forward a definition of will which agrees, for the most part, with that provided by Schrag and Peterson, fails to treat the will in a systematic and thorough fashion.

May does, however, make one point which is worthy of consideration. Like Farber, May believes that the period in which we are living should be called "the age of the disordered will" (Quoted in May 1969, p. 27). Underlying this disordered will, according to May, is: ". . . a state of feelinglessness, the despairing possibility that nothing matters, a condition very close to apathy" (May 1969, p. 27). Will implies commitment and movement--a reaching out to the future. Apathy, on the other hand, entails "the withdrawal of will and love, a statement that they 'don't matter,' a suspension of commitment" (May 1969, p. 33). According to May there is an extremely close connection between apathy and violence:

There is a dialectical relationship between apathy and violence. To live in apathy provokes violence and . . . violence promotes apathy. Violence is the ultimate destructive substitute which surges in to fill the vacuum where there is no relatedness. . . When inward life dries up, when feeling decreases and apathy increases, when one cannot affect or even genuinely touch another person, violence flares up as a daimonic necessity for contact, a mad drive forcing touch in the most direct way possible (May 1969, pp. 30-31).

May's theory concerning the relationship between apathy, violence, and the disordered will is helpful insofar as an understanding of Stavrogin is concerned, particularly in regard to his relationship to the young girl (Matryosha). Violence (Stavrogin's violation of the young child) is followed by apathy (Stavrogin not acting even though he is aware of the fact that next door the young girl is in the process of committing

suicide). From May's point of view, Stavrogin would be a prime example of a disordered will.

The salient characteristics of that which is referred to as the learning process have, for the most part, been extracted from the work of Peterson. It is Peterson who states that "it is the will which continually insists upon the mind being actively involved in the learning process" (Peterson 1977b, p. 16). He goes on to say that the basic underlying assumption of the learning process is that "man lives, moves and has being on some plane of judgment" (Peterson 1970, p. 22). Man is a moral creature who must continually make choices which will determine who he is. The function of the learning process is to bring the individual to that point where he will be able, and willing, not merely to act, but to assume responsibility for his actions. Wynne, in his introduction to Peterson's study of the relationship between existentialism and education states that the philosophy underlying the learning process:

. . . is one that will recognize the person, one that will support this person in his efforts for self-development, one that will provide necessary resources, one that will not stifle emerging qualities and one that will be accepting of the total product developed (Wynne 1970, p. vii).

As pointed out earlier, learning takes place when individuals freely enter a state of relationship in order to explore ideas. Such exploration reveals the connections which exist between various ideas and the bearing these connections have on the lives of the learners. Learning entails commitment and, as pointed out in the Definition of Terms section, commitment is an act of will.

Summary

The portrait of Stavrogin which emerges from an examination of the critical commentary is of an "irreparably divided individual whose unearthly beauty is the facade behind which festers the horror of evil and corruption" (Frank 1969, p. 670). His is an essentially empty existence, the salient characteristic of which is a self-destructive boredom which is so extreme that it periodically gives rise to acts of extreme violence. He is an extremely isolated individual who is able to touch others only through the infliction of pain. Frank attributes Stavrogin's inner emptiness to the disastrous relationship which existed between the young Stavrogin and his teacher Stephan.

In regards to the concept of will, the most outstanding feature of this concept is the lack of knowledge we possess concerning its workings. As Arendt and Farber pointed out, the concept has either been totally ignored or else handled in such a way that it no longer retains any human characteristics. This is attributable in large part to the fact that when discussing will one must, of necessity, also discuss freedom--a concept whose ambiguity most philosophers find extremely threatening. In order to fully comprehend its true nature it is necessary to utilize an existential framework because existentialism is, above all else, a philosophy of freedom. As such, it is best suited to deal with the ambiguity which is an inherent part of any discussion concerning the will. Both Schrag and Peterson, the two theorists from whose work the definition of will being utilized in this study has been extracted, utilize such an approach. While Farber and May do, upon occasion, provide us with insights into the workings of the will, the

fact remains that their discussions are not as thorough and comprehensive as Peterson's and Schrag's. May does provide us with one extremely important insight into Stavrogin's behavior. As he points out, there is a definite relationship between apathy, violence and the disordered will. This observation is especially applicable to Stavrogin's case. As most of the critics who have discussed Stavrogin have pointed out, he is an individual characterized by an extreme apathy which gives rise to occasional bouts of violence. His is a disordered will.

CHAPTER III

DOSTOEVSKY AS EPISTEMOLOGIST

In the introduction to this study it was stated that epistemology refers to that: ". . . branch of philosophy which investigates the origin, structure, method and validity of knowledge" (Wood 1960, p. 94). It is the contention of this study that Dostoevsky should be recognized as an epistemologist even though he never wrote a treatise in which he outlined, in a systematic manner, his theory of knowledge. He was not an epistemologist in the academic sense of the word. Rather, he was a writer who presented the reader with a variety of fictional characters who embodied his most pressing concerns. He was one of those Russian writers whom Clive refers to as intuitive existentialists, i.e., writers who created "a gallery of characters who embody existential themes and insights not only by virtue of the way they think but also through their actions" (Clive 1972, pp. xiii-xiv). These particular writers utilized the approach that they did because they firmly believed that in examining the development of a character, or characters, who embodied those themes which most concerned them they were presenting the reader with studies whose vividness was far more persuasive than any discursive argumentation.

Thus, emphasis is being placed on Dostoevsky's The Possessed because it is the novel in which he, through his study of Stavrogin, articulates his views concerning the nature of the learning process.

This is of particular importance because, as Peterson has pointed out, in examining an individual's views concerning the learning process what one is actually doing is examining that individual's philosophy of man: "Philosophy is more than a scientific discipline or one of the arts of learning. It is the learning process" (Peterson 1970, p. 22).

In examining the student-teacher relationship as manifested in the relationship between Stavrogin and Stephan, what is being examined is the nature of man and the way in which man interacts with others. For this reason, The Possessed can be looked upon as the summation of Dostoevsky's ideas concerning the nature of man.

The major concepts which will be utilized in this section were defined in the Definition of Terms section. In this particular section these concepts will be shown in context, i.e., as ideas which have an impact on human beings. Dostoevsky firmly believed that in order to understand a concept it was necessary to understand the way in which it influenced men.

In a letter written to his brother Michael (October 31, 1838), the young Dostoevsky addressed himself to the problem of "knowledge":

What do you mean precisely by the word know? Nature, the soul, love, and God, one recognizes through the heart, and not through reason. Were we spirits, we could dwell in that region of ideas over which our souls hover, seeking the solution. But we are earthborn beings, and can only guess at the Idea--not grasp it by all sides at once. The guide for our intelligences through the temporary illusion into the innermost center of the soul is called Reason. Now, Reason is a material capacity while the soul or spirit lives on the thoughts whispered by the heart. Thought is born in the soul. Reason is a tool, a machine, which is driven by the spiritual fire. When human reason penetrates into the domain of knowledge, it works independently of the feeling, and consequently of the heart. But when our aim is the understanding of love or of nature, we march towards the very citadel of the heart. . . . Philosophy cannot be

regarded as a mere equation where nature is the unknown quantity. Remark that the poet, in the moment of inspiration, comprehends God, and consequently does the philosopher's work. Consequently poetic inspiration is nothing less than philosophical inspiration. Consequently philosophy is nothing but poetry, a higher degree of poetry (Dostoevsky 1961, pp. 6-7).

The main tenets of Dostoevsky's argument, as put forward in the letter just quoted, are as follows:

1. As Zbilut, in his study of Dostoevsky's philosophical concerns, states: ". . . the real world is composed of ideations, i.e., nature, the soul, love and God" (Zbilut 1973, p. 42).

2. The real world is known through the heart, as opposed to reason.

3. Man is a limited creature. He is "earth-born." Because of this fact he must resort to reason in order to elucidate those truths which are accessible only to heart.

4. However, because man does not have direct knowledge of the truths of heart and can gain only a ~~partial~~ knowledge of them through the use of reason, he can only "guess at the idea."

5. In summary, what truths man does possess are uncovered only when the heart and reason interact in that act referred to as the "guess." Trouble occurs when the heart and reason, or the affective and the cognitive, are unable to function together in such a way as to "guess at the idea."

Reality refers to the world of the existing, i.e., to a world inhabited by others-as-subjects as well as, from a Christian existential point of view, God or Ultimate Reality. God constitutes Ultimate Reality because He is the Being from whom all other beings originate. According to Zbilut, man is continually attempting to "guess" at the nature of

this Ultimate Reality. Man is continually attempting to establish contact with God because it is only after this contact has been established that man will become a united whole. In order to better understand the nature of this quest, it is necessary to understand the meaning of a pivotal concept, i.e., presence.

Presence refers to "the mode of existing that is personal" (O'Malley 1966, p. 96). This entails, in addition to the perception of self as subject, the recognition of the other-as-subject. The individual opens himself up and allows the other to enter into his time and space. Simultaneously, he enters into the space and time of the other. Two individuals who are sharing of themselves in this way are involved in a meeting of shared presence. In so communing with another, one is transcending the limitations of self and reaching out for God. The Christian existentialist is one who believes that the path to God must be traversed via communion with others.

In order for the communion with other to occur, there must exist, within the individual, a balance between the affective and the cognitive. Such a balance enables the individual to perceive and experience the other-as-subject. Where such a balance is lacking, no communion occurs and the individual personality becomes distorted. In those instances where reason exists independently of the affective, what remains is a pervasive sterility which transforms the individual into little more than an empty husk, i.e., Stavrogin or Goliadkin in The Double. Individuals, on the other hand, whose lives are characterized by a lack of reason, are little more than impotent dreamers. Individuals such as these are unable to deal, in an adequate manner, with the world which they inhabit. The un-named hero of "White Nights" is a prime example

of just such an impotent dreamer.

However, even in those instances where the affective and the cognitive are in balance, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for man to achieve perfect communion with God. According to Dostoevsky, this is attributable to the fact that man is, by definition, an imperfect creature. He pointed out in the letter to his brother Michael which was quoted earlier: "But we are earthborn beings, and can only guess at the Idea (God-G. Toews)-not grasp it by all sides at once" (Dostoevsky 1961, pp. 6-7). Zbilut expands on this idea in his discussion of Dostoevsky's ontology:

. . . the ontological reality of Dostoevsky's "self," his "I," revealed to him the possibility of extending itself to become a different, a better "I" growing out of man's ability to be spontaneous and different. This better "I" would root itself in the unity of all humanity, and worked for teleologically with the assumption that death and an afterlife were necessary phases of this teleology. To expect such a unity "here and now" was an impossibility for Dostoevsky, and totally contrary to what he had come to understand regarding man's nature (Zbilut 1973, p. 73).

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to point out that "teleology" refers to a "theory of purpose, ends, goals, final causes, values, the Good(s)" (Long 1960, p. 315). Teleology explains the past and the present in terms of the future. In Dostoevsky's case, the future which gives meaning to all else is man's ultimate coming together with God--a union which will occur after man's death. God is the Good.

It is impossible for man to unite with God in the "here and now" because of the fact that his egoism prevents him from being able to abandon, or transcend, himself to the point where such a union could take place. The best man can hope for is the occasional glimpse of God. Such a glimpse, or experience, of God occurs to Alesha in

The Brothers Karamazov:

Alesha stood, looked, and suddenly, as though his legs were cut from under him, threw himself on the earth.

He did not know why he embraced it, he did not try to account for the fact that he so irresistably felt like kissing it, kissing the whole of it. But he kissed the earth weeping, sobbing, covering it with his tears, and in ecstasy he swore to love it, to love it for all eternity. . . . It was as though threads from all these countless worlds of God had come together all at once in his soul, and his soul trembled in contact with other worlds . . . with every moment he feels clearly, almost tangibly, that something firm and unshakeable, like the heavenly dome above him, was entering his soul . . . "something visited my soul at that moment," he said later with firm belief in his words (Quoted in Peace 1975, p. 289).

Such an experience falls under the heading of "numinous," a state of being during which the individual feels as though he has come into contact with something divine. It is a transcendent experience in that it enables the individual to perceive those "threads" which tie everything together.

Such an experience is denied to an individual such as Stavrogin, an egoist of enormous proportions. As Holquist pointed out:

. . . throughout the novel he (Stavrogin) is characterized by the most intense striving, a quest that has as its goal an absolute ego. What he desires is a kind of parthenogenesis of self (Holquist 1977, p. 139).

The seemingly irrational acts committed by Stavrogin, e.g., biting the governor's ear, represent an attempt on his part to "astound, to perform a deed that will be so unexpected that it can have sprung only from a self free of all constraints imposed by social expectations" (Holquist 1977, p. 142). Stavrogin is determined to prove that he is a unique creature who is totally independent of others. He fails to realize that the self exists only in relationship to others--others as subjects and not objects. In denying the selfhood of others, Stavrogin ends up by denying himself and God as well.

In order to better understand Dostoevsky's ontology, it is necessary to take into account the nature of the relationship which exists between ontology and phenomenology: "Phenomenology is concerned . . . with the structure of consciousness, and ontology concerns the sorts of beings that such structures must commit us to on the assumption that this analysis is true" (Danto 1975, p. 41). Knowledge of the structure of consciousness provides the reader with insight into the nature of the being who possesses that particular consciousness. An analysis of consciousness, from an existential point of view, uncovers two types of being which are essential to an understanding of Dostoevsky's work:

1. Being-for-itself--This type of being is characteristic of beings "part of whose nature is that they are aware of themselves and cannot exist as such without such awareness" (Danto 1975, pp. 41-42).

2. Being-for-others--This type of being "depends upon something other than itself, namely, upon those things other than itself of which it is conscious" (Danto 1975, p. 42). This type of being entails an awareness that one cannot fully realize the implications inherent in the fact that one is a choosing subjectivity until, and unless, one becomes aware of the other as a choosing subjectivity.

The two kinds of being are frequently intertwined: "I exist for myself at the level of self-consciousness just and only just when I become aware of existing for others" (Danto 1975, p. 115). Consciousness of myself is connected with consciousness of others. This would entail an awareness of the other being conscious of me. In order for the individual to be seriously aware of himself "as a subject presupposes an awareness of others' awareness of me as an object" (Danto 1975, p. 115). I become

a person only when I acknowledge the personhood of others. In interacting with others, the individual becomes aware of himself as a person, i.e., a choosing subjectivity.

Being-for-itself, if not complemented by being-for-others, gives rise to a diffuse and fragmented sense of self. If an individual does not exist for others, then he does not exist for himself. To be conscious only of oneself is tantamount to transforming oneself into an object which one can never fully understand. Objectification of self is diametrically opposed to that type of consciousness in which one is aware of oneself as a choosing subjectivity which is responsible for its choices. Objectification of self gives rise to a serious problem having to do with the individual's inability to know: ". . . that what I was aware of was myself, more intimately related to me than the other objects which swim before awareness; this would be like a certain form of schizophrenia" (Danto 1975, p. 55). Schizoid states are characterized by a split between the affective and the cognitive. Such a split gives rise to a disordered, or malfunctioning, will.

In Crime and Punishment, Dostoevsky presented us with a portrait of an individual, Raskolnikov, who is totally locked up within himself. After having committed two murders, he is able to redeem himself but only after he has acknowledged the existence of others. It is his acceptance of Sonia's compassion which enables Raskolnikov to save himself. Throughout his writings, it is apparent that Dostoevsky firmly believed that man, in order to save himself, must accept the fact that the Other is not merely an object among other objects. He must recognize that the Other is a choosing subjectivity in the same way that he is a choosing subjectivity. Stavrogin is doomed because he attempts to create himself

in a vacuum, totally removed from the influence of others. Because he cannot accept the "reality" of others, he hurts those around him and ends up by committing suicide.

Quite early in his career, Dostoevsky came out in favor of a unique brand of realism in which emphasis is placed on recognition of the other-as-subject. In responding to the other in such a way, the individual is able to transcend himself. The realism to which Dostoevsky adhered represented a mode of thought in which emphasis was placed upon "will" and "faith." It constitutes a transcendence of the subject.

Realism in this sense means a peculiar attitude of will, . . . which . . . implies a particular sort of cognition. In so far as the will-to-good is aware of its own existence, it discovers in itself this essential power of cognition: we call it Faith (Ivanov 1971, pp. 26-28).

The recognition of the other-as-subject entails an act of commitment on the part of the will to the subjectivity of the other. The will has faith in the other, i.e., believes in the other-as-subject even though such a belief cannot be empirically validated.

. . . faith is believing or not believing in something or someone by an act of will inspired by personal experience, and not by the intimidation of "objective" facts. . . . If faith in God was to be accepted it could be done . . . through an existential demonstration motivated by the non-discursive reasoning of the "heart" (Zbilut 1973, p. 77).

"Heart," or the affective, is an active component of the self which reaches out in search of knowledge. It is motivated by the desire to know, by a "spiritual fire." The knowledge it is seeking is of a kind not normally associated with reason. It is searching after knowledge of God. It is "an active principle of acquiring knowledge in terms of a desire or urge" (Zbilut 1973, p. 30).

The question arises as to how the cognitive, the affective and the will interact, insofar as Dostoevsky was concerned. The following passage from Sandoz's book on Dostoevsky will help to clarify the exact nature of this relationship: ". . . when man encounters 'ultimate reality' through an experience of transcendent being, the distinction between the metaphysical and the religious may become meaningless" (Sandoz 1971, p. 52). In his letter to his brother, Dostoevsky made reference to "the spiritual fire." It is this spiritual fire which compels man toward this experience of transcendent reality in which the distinction between the metaphysical, or reason, and religious, or affective, disappears. "Spiritual fire" is Dostoevsky's term for the will. It is the will which commits the self to the other-as-subject. In so doing, the will is responsible for the individual moving outside of himself. This movement outward constitutes transcendence. In moving outside of himself, the individual is able to perceive the relationship which exists between all things. In other words, it makes the individual aware of God because God is the Being from whom all else originates. He is the source of harmony and order. To perceive God is to erase all boundaries and distinctions and to become aware of the whole.

Ivanov made essentially the same point when he stated that the ultimate aim of realism was an "intuitive seeing through" (Ivanov 1971, p. 26). Intuition refers to an unmediated flash of wisdom, a perfect moment when time stops and the pattern of the universe is revealed. Ivanov stated that the act of will which was responsible for this novel perspective on the world was inextricably related to that which he referred to as faith. Faith constitutes a special kind of commitment which "is impervious to complete rational or logical justification"

(Edie 1963, p. 9). It is an action whereby the will commits the self to a belief in God, a belief which is inseparable from a belief in the other as a choosing subjectivity. Faith is, above all else, "a sign of the good health of the will" (Ivanov 1971, p. 28).

At this juncture, it is necessary to point out the difference which exists between religious "reality," a reality which entails a belief in the existence of God and soul, and humanistic "reality," a reality which entails a belief in, and love of, one's fellow man. Religious knowledge is revealed knowledge. The mind does not conceive, or construct, this particular type of knowledge. This particular type of knowledge is delivered to man by the numinous: "The religious elements . . . are theoretically revealed by the numinous and, then, are either accepted or rejected by man. (After the acceptance of faith, the mind . . . may help elucidate the revealed, religious truths) (Zbilut 1973, p. 92). Humanistic beliefs, on the other hand, are initially conceived of by the mind as abstractions. If these abstractions are accepted by the self, they are transformed into behaviors.

Humanistic beliefs, as opposed to religious beliefs, are firmly rooted in a rational base. Initially, Dostoevsky equated the elucidation of religious beliefs with the elucidation of humanistic beliefs. He failed to understand that in the one case (religious) elucidation occurs after the beliefs have been accepted whereas in the other case (humanistic) elucidation precedes acceptance.

It was not until the publication of The Brothers Karamazov that Dostoevsky managed to clarify his thinking concerning religious and humanistic beliefs.

Finally aware of the opposition between humanism and religion with respect to reason, he (Dostoevsky) went on to show that humanism, as well as religion, could not be given rational justifications, since they were both ultimately matters of choice by faith (Zbilut 1973, p. 73).

Dostoevsky arrived at the conclusion that reason was unable to endow the individual's life with meaning. For example, religious truth cannot be equated with objective belief. Religious truth is "subjective passion" (Olson 1962, p. 99). What Olson is describing is the position taken by the Christian existentialists. It is also Dostoevsky's position. Dostoevsky's position vis-a-vis religion and mankind is an existential one. Dostoevsky viewed man as a choosing subjectivity whose belief in God was grounded in passion rather than reason.

It is important to note, at this juncture, that religious beliefs are not necessarily diametrically opposed to humanistic ones. In point of fact, the two beliefs are often inextricably intertwined. It is not uncommon to find that a belief in the existence of a benevolent deity leads to a belief in, and love of, one's fellow men. Dostoevsky, for example, combined, in his person, the two beliefs. Not only did he believe in the existence of God, he also believed love of God was synonymous with love of man. Both beliefs, as has been pointed out, cannot be justified rationally. Both entail a leap to faith--a transcendence of the precepts of critical reason and empirical belief. This is not to say that reason has no part to play insofar as these beliefs are concerned. Reason is a tool which helps to elucidate the beliefs which one has committed oneself to. In addition, as has been pointed out, humanistic beliefs are initially conceived of as abstractions. However, reason itself cannot bring about a commitment in these beliefs. Commitment entails the introduction of the affective--the subjectivity

which transcends the boundaries of reason. Ideally, the cognitive and affective complement one another. The combination of humanistic and religious beliefs would be a prime example of such a complementary relationship. These two kinds of beliefs, whose origins differ in ways which have already been pointed out, can interact in an effective manner only if these two aspects of the individual (cognitive and affective) work together. When the two are opposed to one another, or when one dominates at the expense of the other, tragedy results. An example of such an imbalance is to be found in Dostoevsky's Notes From Underground, a work in which the reader is confronted with an individual who is unable to transform his intellectual insights into existential realities. Such an individual is unable to bridge the gap which separates thought from action.

Existential thinkers have often been divided into two categories: (1) the religious oriented and, (2) the non-religious, or atheistic. Such a division is, to a large extent, an artificial one which fails to take into account what the two categories have in common:

. . . we should not emphasize the difference between religious and non-religious existentialists to such an extent that we ignore their common effort to move toward a practice of presence that is open to all men who are not, as Marcel puts it, "encumbered with themselves" and therefore temporarily incapable of presence (Harper 1972, p. 115).

Presence, as has been pointed out, refers to an openness to reality as manifested in the other-as-subject. In addition, from a Christian point of view, it involves an openness to God. Both groups stress the importance of openness. An individual who is incapable of presence is one who is totally wrapped up in himself and out of touch with others.

An individual who is characterized by presence is one who is open to others and who behaves in a spontaneous and non-artificial manner. Such an individual embraces the world with his entire being. Tikhon, during his discussion with Stavrogin, emphasized the similarities which existed between the atheist and the believer.

"... complete atheism is more respectable than worldly indifference," Tikhon answered, with visible gaiety and good-nature.

"Oho, that's how you get round it!"

"A complete atheist stands on the last rung but one before absolute faith (he may or may not step higher), but an indifferent man has no longer any faith at all, nothing but an ugly fear, and that only on rare occasions, if he is a sentimental man" (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 33).

Summary

Dostoevsky believed that true knowledge, i.e., knowledge pertaining to the soul, God, and love, is a form of revealed truth which is transmitted directly to the affective. However, since man is, by definition, a limited creature, he must resort to reason in order to elucidate that which has been revealed to the affective. Such elucidation occurs after the will has decided for, or against, those truths which have been revealed to the affective. An affirmative action on the part of the will, i.e., acceptance of revealed truth, entails commitment not merely to God but to the other. It is only through commitment to the other, a commitment grounded in love, that the individual is able to strengthen those beliefs to which he has committed himself. The main tenets of Dostoevsky's philosophy can be summarized in the following manner:

1. God is the essence which precedes existence. He is the Ultimate Reality from which all else, including man, emanates. No

being can exist without Him Who Is. Wherever He is not, there is a void.

2. Man is the only one of God's creatures who is characterized by the burden of freedom. Man can either actively seek out God, or he can deny Him. The choice is man's. In "The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" Section of The Brothers Karamazov, Dostoevsky affirms the inviolability of human freedom and the autonomy of the individual person under God and attacks those, such as the Grand Inquisitor, who would strip man of his freedom by making his choices for him.

3. The will, which is the agent of commitment, bases its decision on information received via the affective and the cognitive. The affective, according to Dostoevsky, is somewhat more important than the cognitive. This is attributable to the fact that religious truth is revealed truth, i.e., nonmediated truth which is transmitted directly to the affective, or "heart." The will can accept or reject revealed truth. If it accepts it, the cognitive is activated in order to help elucidate that which has been revealed.

4. A belief in God is inextricably intertwined with a love of one's fellow man. It is through acceptance of the other as subject that one is able to move closer to God. This is due to the fact that relationships with others enables the individual to transcend, or move outside of, himself. In so doing, he comes closer to God.

5. Since man is, by definition, an imperfect creature, it is impossible for him to establish a perfect union with God in the here-and-now. This is attributable to the fact of man's egoism which hinders, or prevents, him from being able to transcend himself to the

extent that such a union would entail. The best man can hope for is the occasional glimpse of God, i.e., the occasional intuitive flash of wisdom which enables the individual to discern the pattern of the universe.

6. Mar will be reunited with God in the afterlife.

CHAPTER IV

STAVROGIN

This chapter is divided into two sections, the first of which details, in a chronological manner, the major events of Stavrogin's life. This overview lays the foundation for the analysis of Stavrogin's life which is the focus of the second section of this chapter.

Overview of Stavrogin's Life

Up until the age of eight, Stavrogin has been brought up entirely under his mother's supervision. His father, who displayed little interest in the child, had moved out some time previously. The relation that existed between the mother and child is described in the following way:

The boy knew that his mother was very fond of him, but he was hardly very fond of her. She did not talk to him a lot, rarely interfered with him, but somehow he was always morbidly aware that she was watching him (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 53).

At the age of eight Stavrogin became a pupil of Stephan Verkhovensky, a somewhat pompous but well-intentioned individual who had been supported by Mrs. Stavrogin for some years. Stephan was able to secure Stavrogin's devotion because "he was a child himself" (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 53).

Insofar as Stephan was concerned, Stavrogin was more than merely a pupil; he was, in addition, Stephan's friend. He treated Stavrogin as a friend and was continually confiding in him:

He used often to wake his ten- or eleven-year-old friend at night for the sole purpose of pouring out his wounded feelings to him, or to tell him some family secret, without realizing that that was something he should not do. They flung themselves into each other's arms and cried (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 53).

The affect of this kind of relationship on the child was considerable:

I think it is true to say that the teacher was responsible for upsetting his pupil's nerves to some extent. When at the age of sixteen Nicholas was taken to the lycee, he looked sickly and pale and was strangely quiet and wistful. . . . One must also assume that if the two friends had went and flung themselves into each other's arms, it was not always because of some domestic misunderstandings. Mr. Verkhovensky succeeded in touching some of the deepest chords in his little friend's heart and in evoking in him the first and still vague sensation of that eternal and sacred longing which many chosen spirits, having once tasted and experienced it, will never afterwards exchange for some cheap feeling of satisfaction. (There are even such lovers of sensation to whom this longing is dearer than the most complete satisfaction, if such a thing were at all possible.) Be that as it may, it was certainly a good thing that the tutor and his pupil were at last separated, though perhaps a little late (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 54).

During those times when Stavrogin returned from the lycee in Petersburg, usually during the holidays, he appeared to be somewhat shy and retiring. He maintained a certain distance between himself and Stephan, even though he appeared to retain a certain affection for him.

Upon graduating from the lycee, he bowed to his mother's wishes and applied for a commission in the army. Within a relatively brief period of time he joined a calvary regiment of the Horse Guards. Mrs. Stavrogin lavished enormous sums of money on her son in the hope that he would achieve the success in high society that she had never been able to do. Her hopes were soon dashed.

Word reached Mrs. Stavrogin that her son had given himself over to a life of total dissipation. He behaved towards others in a brutal manner and was supposed to have been involved in a rather sordid affair with a lady of good society whom, according to rumor, he publicly insulted shortly after the affair had come to an end. Shortly after these rumors reached her, Mrs. Stavrogin learned that her son had been involved in two duels and that he had killed one opponent and maimed the other. As a result of these duels, Stavrogin was court-martialled. He was reduced to the ranks and transferred to one of the line regiments.

In 1863 he "somehow managed to distinguish himself" (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 55). Within a relatively brief period of time, he had managed to regain his commission. Shortly thereafter, he returned to Petersburg. It was some time before Mrs. Stavrogin learned what he was doing, but eventually she discovered that he was living with the dregs of Petersburg society. What transpired during this period of time is not described in the novel as originally published. In order to find out what happened to Stavrogin during this period of time, it is necessary to refer to Stavrogin's Confession. Due to censorship problems, this section, which was intended to appear after Chapter VIII of Part II, did not appear in print until 1922.

The Confession section starts off with Stavrogin going off to see Tikhon, the holy man, in order to see whether or not he can rid Stavrogin of the hallucinations to which he is subject. These hallucinations take the form of a malicious being who is both mocking and "rational" (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 28). During the ensuing conversation, Stavrogin reveals that he has brought something for Tikhon to read.

Stavrogin states that he plans to circulate this document widely after Tikhon has looked at it.

In this document, or confession, Stavrogin talks about his life in Petersburg. He starts off by stating that he was engaged in two affairs simultaneously--one with a lady and the other with her maid. He intended to amuse himself by having the two women meet each other at his lodgings. At this time, Stavrogin possessed two lodgings, one of which was rented from a clerk and his wife. This couple had a young daughter by the name of Matryosha. Due to the fact that both parents worked, Stavrogin frequently found himself left alone with the girl.

One day Stavrogin was unable to find on his table a penknife "which I did not need in the least, and which lay there for no particular reason" (Dostoevsky 1972, pp. 41-42). He informed the landlady of his loss. The landlady immediately proceeded to thrash her daughter. Just before this occurred, however, Stavrogin found the penknife on his bed, where it had probably fallen from the table. Stavrogin decided not to tell anyone so that the young girl would be punished.

Stavrogin explained his behavior in a rather lengthy passage which deserves to be quoted in full:

Every unusually disgraceful, utterly degrading, dastardly, and above all, ridiculous situation, in which I ever happened to be in my life, always roused in me, side by side with extreme anger, an incredible delight. I felt exactly this in moments of committing crimes and in moments when life was in danger. If I stole, I would feel, while committing the theft, a rapture from the consciousness of the depth of my vileness. It was not the vileness that I loved (here my mind was perfectly sane), but I enjoyed rapture from the tormenting consciousness of the baseness. In the same way each time when,

standing at the barrier, I waited for my opponent to fire, I experienced just the same disgraceful and wild sensation; and once I did so with extraordinary vividness. I confess that I often myself looked out for it, because it is to me the strongest of sensations of the kind. When I received a slap in the face . . . it was there too, in spite of my terrible anger. But if the anger is checked by it, then the delight surpasses anything that can be imagined (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 44).

He went on to say that this delight in perversity never totally overwhelmed him; he was always in control of it. He was always totally conscious of what was happening to, and around, him. In fact, this consciousness, or awareness, constituted the determining factor insofar as the degree of pleasure extracted from these acts was concerned.

Stavrogin went on to say that he chose to be what he is. His crimes were not the result of irresistible impulses; he was always aware of what he was doing: "And so let it be understood that I do not claim irresponsibility for my crimes, either on account of either environment or of disease" (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 45).

After an absence of three days, Stavrogin returned to the lodgings where Matryosha resided and, although not all the specific details are given, proceeded to violate her. Her reaction to what had just transpired was so intense that it is impossible to assume that she had not been raped:

I think that all that happened must have seemed to her, in the end, infinitely horrible, a deadly horror. . . . For indeed it appeared to her in the end that she had committed an immense crime, and was guilty of a mortal sin. "She had killed God" (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 50).

In addition to the above, there are several references in the Notebooks to The Possessed to the effect that Stavrogin has raped a young girl, one of which reads: "The Prince (Stavrogin-G.T.) confesses his villainy involving the child (he raped her) to Shatov. He has written

a confession, wants to have it printed, shows it to Shatov, asking him for advice" (Quoted in Guerard 1976, p. 290). In addition, as Guerard points out, it is clear from the Confession that Tikhon is convinced that Stavrogin has violated the young girl (Guerard 1976, p. 280).

Since this crime has a profound affect on Stavrogin, it is important to determine whether or not it actually occurred or was merely a product of Stavrogin's imagination. The evidence given above indicates that a rape actually took place.

Upon awakening the following morning Stavrogin experienced a slight twinge of fear. He was afraid that the girl had told her mother what had transpired the previous day. Upon arriving at her house, he discovered that she had not told anyone about what had happened. That night, however, Stavrogin experienced an intense fear which he was unable to account for. Mixed in with this fear was a murderous hatred of the girl. Towards morning, this hatred was swept away by another, and more intense, reaction of fear.

Several days later, Stavrogin decided to return to his lodgings in order to see Matryosha, who had been ill for several days and was bed-ridden, alone. She, shortly after Stavrogin arrived, jumped out of her bed and shook her fist at him in a threatening manner. On her face there was an expression of total despair. Stavrogin attempted to console her but she backed off whenever he attempted to approach her. Stavrogin re... ..at down. ...thereafter, Matryosha dashed into a "tiny box-room, which was like a hen-roost and was next door to the water closet" (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 56). When this occurred, Stavrogin stated that a curious idea shot through his mind. Although he did not say so, it is possible that this idea had to do

with the realization that Matryosha was about to commit suicide. His lack of surprise upon discovering her corpse would tend to support this hypothesis. After having sat nationless for almost an hour, he got up, peering through a crack in the door of the tiny room, saw that Matryosha had hanged herself. Stavrogin assumed full responsibility for her suicide. "I was obviously in full possession of my mental faculties and I hold myself responsible for everything" (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 45).

Later that day, while visiting friends, Stavrogin castigated himself for his past behavior: "I remember being conscious that I was simply a low and despicable coward for my joy at having escaped and that I should never be an honest man" (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 59). Up to this point in time, the 1922 translation of S. S. Kotelliansky and Virginia Woolf which was reprinted in 1972 has been referred to. However, a later translation by Avram Yarmolinsky contains an important passage which is not contained in the Koteliansky-Woolf translation. It comes immediately after the passage quoted above and reads as follows:

And one more thing: I was reminded of the Jewish proverb: "one's own may be bad, but it does not smell." For although at heart I felt that I was a scoundrel, I was not ashamed of it and, in general, was not much distressed. On that occasion, sitting at tea and chatting with the crew, for the first time in my life I clearly formulated the following for myself: I have neither the feeling nor the knowledge of good and evil, but good and evil really do not exist (and this pleased me) and are but a prejudice; I can be free of all prejudices, but at the very moment when I achieve freedom I shall perish (Dostoevsky 1963, p. 712).

Stavrogin, shortly thereafter, stated that he was sick with life and that he had, upon occasion, contemplated suicide. His disgust with life had given rise to a great deal of hostility which he

determined to vent on himself. He set out to destroy himself. Instead of shooting himself, however, he decided to marry Marya Lebiadkin, a cripple who was hovering on the edge of madness: "The idea of the marriage of Stavrogin with that lowest of creatures excited my nerves. Anything more monstrous it was impossible to imagine" (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 60). Shortly after the marriage, Stavrogin returned to the country in order to visit his mother. It was while he was visiting her that he committed a series of acts which led many people to look upon him as being mad. In order to understand what happened next it is necessary to leave the Confession temporarily and return to the novel proper. The Confession resumes with Stavrogin's departure from his home town.

The narrator of the novel, a citizen of the small provincial town where Stavrogin's mother resided and a friend of Stephan Verkhovensky, upon seeing Stavrogin for the first time, was struck by the fact that his face was both beautiful and hideous simultaneously. He mentioned the fact that some of the citizens of the town had mentioned that Stavrogin's face reminded them of a mask. The narrator then proceeded to describe the "mad" acts which Stavrogin committed.

While visiting the local club, he suddenly walked over to a certain Gagnov, an individual who frequently uttered the aphorism "No, sir, they won't lead me by the nose" (Dostoevsky 1965) and began to lead him around the room by his nose. The narrator mentioned the fact that while this was going on Stavrogin looked abstracted, "as though he were not in his right mind" (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 58).

Shortly thereafter, while attending a party, Stavrogin embraced his host's wife and kissed her passionately several times.

When he was called in by the governor to explain his behavior he responded by reaching over and biting the governor on the ear. The governor had him locked up in a special cell. While imprisoned, Stavrogin was overcome by what the narrator referred to as an "acute attack of brain fever" (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 64). The doctors who attended him believed that Stavrogin had been delirious, or insane, for some time. Stavrogin, after two months in bed, seemed to have fully recovered and left town. He spent the next three years traveling. In order to find out what happened during this period of time, it is necessary to return to the Confession.

One day, while staying at a hotel in a small town in Germany, Stavrogin dreamt of a "Golden Age." He dreamt of a race of happy, innocent individuals who inhabited a corner of Greece. The dream filled Stavrogin with an overwhelming feeling of happiness. Suddenly, his feelings of happiness were interrupted when a dot of light in the room was transformed into a tiny red spider which immediately reminded him of a spider he had seen on the day Matryosha killed herself. A vision of Matryosha, with her hand raised in a threatening gesture, appeared before him. Since that day, Stavrogin had called forth that vision almost every day:

I saw Matryosha, grown haggard and with feverish eyes, precisely as she had looked at the moment when she stood on the threshold of my room, and shaking her head, had lifted her tiny fist against me . . . what is intolerable to me is only this image, namely, the little girl on the threshold with her little fist lifted threatening me, only the way she looked then, only that moment, neither before nor after, only that shaking of the head. This threatening gesture of hers no longer seemed ridiculous to me, but terrifying. Pity for her has stabbed me, a maddening pity, and I would have given my body to be torn to pieces if that would have erased what had happened. What I regret is not the crime, not her

death. I'm not sorry for her, what I cannot bear is that one instant, I can't, I can't, because I see her that way every day, and I know for a certainty that I am doomed. It is precisely that which I have not been able to bear since then, and I couldn't bear it before either, but I didn't know it. Since then I see the vision almost every day. It does not appear to me of itself, yet I summon it of my own accord, but I cannot help summoning it, although I cannot live with it (Dostoevsky 1963, p. 717).

Even though he believed that the memory of Matryosha would eventually drive him mad, he continued to recall it. He believed that he could dismiss it if he so chose but, as he put it, "I never wanted to do it; I myself do not want to, and never shall" (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 67). Stavrogin continued to believe that he was in complete control of the world he inhabited.

Sometime later, while staying in Switzerland, Stavrogin felt a desire to commit a crime, i.e., bigamy. However, a girl he met dissuaded him.

The Confession ends with Stavrogin declaring that he intended to distribute copies of his Confession far and wide. He wanted people to know what he had done. He wanted everyone to look at him. As the narrator pointed out at the beginning of the chapter concerning Stavrogin's visit to Tikhon and his confession: "The fundamental idea of the document is a terrible undisguised craving for self-punishment, the need for the cross, for immolation in the eyes of all" (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 39).

Dostoevsky points out the paradoxical nature of Stavrogin's behavior. Up to this point in the novel, Stavrogin had stated, time and time again, that he was in total control of himself at all times. However, as the narrator pointed out: "The author (Stavrogin-author

of the Confession-G. Toews) declares that he could not help writing it, that he was compelled . . ." (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 39). Stavrogin was a man who declared, almost simultaneously, that he was, and was not, in control of his life.

Tikhon called into question Stavrogin's avowed motives for writing the Confession. He did not believe that Stavrogin was genuinely contrite. He believed that Stavrogin wanted to publish the document solely in order to offend the public.

Tikhon stated that if Stavrogin was genuinely contrite he should, instead of publishing his Confession, go into retreat for a period of several years. Stavrogin refused and dashed out of the room.

The previous pages contain almost all of the information which is needed in order to construct a coherent explanation of Stavrogin's behavior. In order to complete this section, only a few additional incidents will be mentioned.

In one episode, Mrs. Stavrogin came across her son while he appeared to be in a trance-like state:

Mrs. Stavrogin, who had been terribly worried during the last few days . . . took the risk of going to see Nicholas herself, though it was not the usual time. . . . She knocked quietly as before and, again receiving no answer, opened the door herself. Seeing that Nicholas was sitting unusually motionless, she cautiously walked up to the sofa with a beating heart. . . . His face was pale and stern, but it looked completely frozen and immobile; his brows were slightly drawn together and frowning; he certainly looked like a lifeless wax figure. She stood over him for about three minutes, hardly daring to breathe, and suddenly she was seized with panic; she tiptoed out of the room, stopped for a minute at the doorway, hurriedly made the sign of the cross over him, and went away unobserved, with a new heavy feeling and with a new anguish (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 235).

Mrs. Stavrogin's gesture conjures up the spectre of daemonic possession. This would tie in with Stavrogin's confession to Tikhon that he was not absolutely sure that his so-called hallucinations were not "really the devil" (Dostoevsky 1972, p. 30). The very title would confirm the centrality of the idea of possession. The questions which have to be addressed are: Does the devil reside within the individual or is he, or it, some kind of external force? Are we the creators of the demons which haunt us? Are these hallucinations of evil nothing more than manifestations of certain aspects of our personality which we would rather not acknowledge? These are the questions which Dostoevsky poses.

Shortly after Mrs. Stavrogin had left the room, Stavrogin roused himself and set out to visit Kirilov and Shatov, two individuals who, for a long time, had looked upon Stavrogin as their teacher and friend. Stavrogin has, simultaneously, preached a Slavophil nationalist Christianity to Shatov and atheistic materialism to Kirilov. This is brought out in a statement Shatov makes to Stavrogin:

In America I lay three months on straw beside a wretched fellow, and I learnt from him that at the very time you were planting the idea of God and country in my heart, that at that very time, perhaps during those very days, you had been envenoming the heart of that poor fellow, of that maniac Kirilov. You filled him with lies and slanders and brought him to the verge of insanity. God look at him now-he's your creation (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 253).

The conversations that took place during these two meetings revealed that Stavrogin no longer believed in the ideas he preached to these two individuals, assuming he ever did. As he told Shatov: "I assure you that this repetition of my old ideas makes an extremely unpleasant

impression on me. Won't you stop" (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 255). Shatov asked Stavrogin if it is true that he debauched children while he was living in Petersburg. Stavrogin responded in the following manner: "' . . . but I didn't molest children,' said Stavrogin, but only after a pause that lasted much too long. He went pale in the face and his eyes flashed" (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 260). Dostoevsky seems to be implying that there is at least a grain of truth contained in Shatov's accusation.

Shatov also accused Stavrogin of being unable to make the distinction between good and evil. He attributes this failing on Stavrogin's part to "morbid hysteria":

I don't know why evil is bad and good is beautiful either . . . but I do know why the feeling for the distinction between them becomes blurred and is lost in such gentlemen as the Stavrogins. Do you know why you got married to that woman in so infamous and despicable a fashion? Just because the infamy and absurdity of such a marriage reached the pitch of genius! Oh, you never walk at the edge of the abyss; but precipitate yourself over it boldly, head downwards. You got married because of your passion for cruelty, because of your passion for remorse, because of your moral turpitude. It was a case of morbid hysteria. The challenge to common sense was too tempting to be resisted! (Dostoevsky 1965, pp. 260-261).

Not only is Stavrogin renounced by Shatov, he is, in addition, renounced by two women who have played an important part in his life, i.e., his demented wife and Lisa. His wife, Mary, who had at one time looked upon him as a beautiful prince, now refers to him as a pretender. Sometime later, Lisa, a woman whom Stavrogin had met during the course of his travels and whose mother is a friend of Stavrogin's mother, refused to have anything more to do with him.

Let me return such noble frankness by being frank myself. I don't want to be a compassionate hospital nurse for you. Perhaps I will really end up as a hospital nurse if I don't

find a way of dying conveniently this very day; but even if I do become a nurse, I won't be your nurse; though, of course, you need one more than any legless or armless man. I always imagined that you would take me to some place where there was a huge, wicked spider as big as a man, and we should spend the rest of our lives, looking at it and being afraid of it. That's what our love would be wasted on (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 522).

Lisa had no desire to spend the rest of her life looking after a moral cripple.

At the end of the novel, Stavrogin committed suicide. Shortly before he had decided to end his life, he had written a letter to Dasha, Shatov's sister. Dasha was one of the few people whom Stavrogin respected and to whom he seemed bound to tell the truth. In this letter he stated that he felt responsible for the death of his wife, who was killed by a convict, and Lisa, who was killed during the course of a riot. He felt that he had failed them when they needed him and, in so doing, contributed, directly or indirectly, to their deaths. He went on to acknowledge his spiritual impotence--his inability to direct his strength into positive and rewarding channels. His desires, such as they were, were too weak to motivate him. He stated:

I know that I ought to kill myself, to brush myself off the earth, like some loathsome insect; but I am afraid of showing magnanimity.

I know that it will be another delusion again, a delusion in an infinite sequence of delusions. What is the use of deluding oneself merely in order to play at magnanimity? Indignation and shame I can never feel, therefore not despair, either (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 667).

Stavrogin committed suicide because he had transcended all human emotions, up to and including despair. He killed himself because he had ceased to be human.

On the table next to where he was dangling, Stavrogin had left a scrap of paper with the words "No one is to blame, I did it myself"

(Dostoevsky 1965, p. 669). The doctors, after the post-mortem, came to the conclusion that the suicide was definitely not the act of an insane man.

Analysis of Stavrogin

Gibson, in his study of Dostoevsky's religious thought, defines the "problem" which is Stavrogin in the following manner: "Because he spurns limitation and cannot escape it, he must suffer and, what is more, he can achieve nothing--achievement depends on the contraction of will to a definite object" (Gibson 1973, p. 129).

This "spurning of limitation" can be traced back to Stavrogin's relationship with Stephan:

The tutor communicated all the moral uncertainty and instability of his own character to his unfortunate pupil, without providing anything positive to counteract their unsettling effects; the result was to leave an aching emptiness at the heart of Stavrogin's being (Frank 1969, p. 668).

This "aching emptiness" gave rise to an "eternal, sacred longing" (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 55)--a longing for an absolute. Stavrogin, however, did not look outside of himself for an absolute to which he could cling. Stephan, the individual who, through his behavior, gave rise to Stavrogin's longing for an absolute, at one and the same time, filled Stavrogin with a sense of uncertainty concerning the external world. The relationship between teacher and pupil gave rise to a distorted perception of the world, insofar as Stavrogin was concerned. The world was transformed into a threatening place where anything could happen at anytime. The result of this was that Stavrogin ended up recoiling from the external world and attempted to find a comforting

absolute to which he could commit himself within the confines of the self: "His quest is a spiritual experimentation totally preoccupied with itself, totally enclosed within the ego, and hence incapable of that self-surrender that it is presumably seeking" (Frank 1969, p. 669). Holquist makes the same point when he states: ". . . throughout the novel he is characterized by the most intense striving, the quest that has as its goal an absolute ego" (Holquist 1977, p. 139).

Stavrogin attempted to elevate his will to the level of an absolute. This would account for such apparently irrational acts as: (1) leading a fellow club member around by the nose, (2) kissing another man's wife in the presence of that very same man, and (3) biting the ear of the governor of the province. Stavrogin committed these acts in order to prove that his was indeed an untrammelled will, a will which admitted to no restrictions: "Stavrogin seeks to astound, to perform a deed that will be so unexpected that it can have sprung only from a self free of all constraints imposed by social restrictions" (Holquist 1977, p. 142). What Stavrogin failed to fully comprehend was that in attempting to be "everything," i.e., omnipotent, he was denying the fact of human limitations. Hence, he "is a sufferer" (Gibson 1973, p. 129). This would help to explain why Stavrogin experienced an attack of brain fever shortly after the ear-biting incident. As Gibson points out, the term "brain fever" is "Dostoevsky's usual way of describing nervous prostration" (Gibson 1973, p. 129). Finite man cannot transform himself into an omnipotent creature who is totally free from all moral constraints. Any, and all, attempts to achieve this kind of impossible transformation are bound to give rise to tragedy: ". . . he (Stavrogin) transcends humanity only in

idea. In actual life, for one man to be exhaustively universal is impossible, and the result must be tragedy" (Gibson 1973, p. 129). Stavrogin refused to accept the fact that the will, as pointed out by Peterson and Schrag, is finite and limited.

There is only one area, as Gibson points out, in which there is no limited to the "all-man"--the man who refuses to accept the fact of limitation. That area is the imagination. "It is possible for the totally uncommitted man with all his strength and for him only, to develop out of himself different and incompatible possibilities and to try them out on other people" (Gibson 1973, p. 132). Stavrogin "experiments" with Kirilov, Shatov, and Peter Verkhovensky. Into Verkhovensky he implants the idea of revolution. He wins Shatov over to the cause of Man-God. Stavrogin does not act upon his own imaginings. He never commits himself to any idea. What he does do is to take the ideas which he has played with and implant them in the minds of others. Having converted these others, he proceeds to refute them. He never acknowledges, or accepts, the fact that his "experiments" have wreaked havoc on the lives of others.

It is important to note the similarities, as well as the differences, which existed between Stephan, the teacher, and Stavrogin, the teacher. Stephan, who was himself very childlike, was unable to recognize that his young charge, Stavrogin, was an extremely vulnerable and impressionable child. He seemed to look upon Stavrogin as being little more than a receptacle, a "thing" into which he could pour all of his doubts and misgivings. Instead of a healthy student-teacher relationship in which the rights of both individuals are respected, the reader, in the case of Stephan and Stavrogin, was confronted with a one-sided

relationship in which one individual, albeit inadvertently, ended up almost destroying another simply because he did not treat this other with the respect due another human being.

Stavrogin regarded his pupils (Shatov, Kirilov and Peter) as things. In this he resembled Stephan. He converted his pupils to certain ideas and then proceeded to disillusion them. He tried out ideas on them in the same way scientists try out experimental drugs on mice:

He (Stavrogin) is impelled by a demonic force to exert his influence on others, to implant in them ideas, to start movements. And he is driven on by an irrepressible urge to dominate and manipulate the lives of others, to torture and destroy. However, this strong urge itself deteriorates eventually into mere coldly calculating and experimenting curiosity (Reinhardt 1969, p. 68).

Stavrogin's "coldly calculating and experimenting curiosity" stood in sharp contrast to Stephan's devouring emotionalism. It was, to a large extent, a reaction to Stephan's emotionalism. As a child, Stavrogin was confronted with a world which was anything but comforting. As Guntrip, in his discussion of severe schizoid states, points out: "The world is a frightening emptiness when it does not respond and meet the infant's needs, and a frightening persecutor when it actively and hurtfully impinges" (Guntrip 1976, p. 68). To the young Stavrogin, the world was a horrible place in which happiness is conspicuous by its absence. Given this view of the world, it is almost inevitable that the individual would attempt to escape, i.e., to return "to a vaguely remembered earlier safe place, even though in fact he can only withdraw into isolation within himself" (Guntrip 1976, p. 68). Stavrogin's dream of a Golden Age, a dream inhabited by a race of happy, innocent individuals

who reside in a corner of Greece, represented his attempt to recapture the innocence that he felt he once knew. When he attempted to recapture the happiness aroused in him by this dream, however, he was disturbed by the vision of a spider. This vision indicates "that he has irrevocably destroyed the possibility of innocence than mankind, and he as a child, once knew" (Friedman 1970, pp. 178-179). There is no safe place to which Stavrogin could withdraw. His dream was simply that, a dream.

Stavrogin's reaction to Stephan is very close to what Laing, in his existential study of madness, refers to as the fear of engulfment:

In this (engulfment) the individual dreads relatedness as such, with anyone or anything or, indeed, even with himself, because his uncertainty about the stability of his autonomy lays him open to the dread lest in any relationship he will lose his autonomy and identity (Laing 1967, p. 44).

An individual suffering from this particular affliction equates love and affection with destruction of self. For him to allow himself to be loved by another would be tantamount to committing suicide. In order to "save" himself, this particular type of individual resorts to the maneuver of isolation. Either one is alone or else one is engulfed by the other. These are the only two choices this particular type of individual can perceive: ". . . instead of the polarities of separateness and relatedness based on individual autonomy, there is the antithesis between complete loss of being by absorption into the other person (engulfment) and complete isolation" (Laing 1967, p. 44). There is no third way. Such an individual is unable to acknowledge that it is possible for two individuals to establish a relationship

which would be anything other than destructive of self.

There is no . . . possibility of a dialectical relationship between two persons, both sure of their own ground and, on this very basis, able to "lose" themselves in each other. Such merging of being can only occur in an "authentic" way only when the individuals are sure of themselves (Laing 1967, p. 44).

Stavrogin, however, is anything but sure of himself. He lacks what Laing refers to as "a firm sense of one's own autonomous identity" (Laing 1967, p. 44). Stavrogin is an example of an ontologically insecure person, i.e., one who looks upon himself as being more unreal than real, more dead than alive. As pointed out in the Definition of Terms section, Stavrogin's mother never provided him with the emotional sustenance required by a young child. The situation was exacerbated when he was placed in the care of Stephan, a man who exposed the young child to a continuous outpouring of his "wounded feelings" (Dostoevsky 1965, p. 53).

Stavrogin ended up by withdrawing and, in so doing, denied not merely the other, but himself as well for, as Danto points out, "the concept of myself, having being as a person for myself, entails an understanding of my existing for others" (Danto 1975, p. 115).

Stavrogin, like the individual described by Laing, equated affection with destruction of self. Such an attitude is understandable since the individual he was devoted to as a child, Stephan, almost destroyed him with "affection." From Stavrogin's point of view, hostility is an emotion which was, by definition, infinitely preferable to love. Stavrogin's world was one which was turned upside down, a world in which hate was good and love was destructive.

The withdrawal from life that characterized Stavrogin gave rise to a state of acute boredom: "It (boredom) is a state signifying

withdrawal from life. . . . The bored man sees no reason to move" (Harper 1968, p. 21). Only occasionally did Stavrogin arouse himself from his state of inertia. When he did arouse himself, however, he did so solely in order to strike out at a world he feared and despised: ". . . his inertia is not to be thought of as permanent. He can pull himself together, at least to the extent of taking a malicious swipe at the world" (Harper 1969, p. 21). Guntrip, in commenting on manic behavior, provides the reader with an insight into the rationale underlying Stavrogin's sudden behavioral changes (from boredom to hostility).

It (manic activity, i.e., over-activity) is a desperate attempt to force the whole psyche out of a state of devitalized passivity, surrender of the will to live, and regression. The harder the struggle to defeat the passive regressed ego, the more incapable of rest and relaxation the patient becomes (Guntrip 1976, p. 154).

Stavrogin behaves in an aggressive and destructive manner in a desperate attempt to preserve his fragile ego from the encroachments of a world which he looks upon as being extremely hostile. He fears that if he gives himself over entirely to a state of inertia his already weakened ego will be totally engulfed by the external world.

Stavrogin engaged in extreme acts such as the violation of the young girl in a desperate attempt to wrest himself from the ennui which he felt was slowly but surely destroying him. This alternating between extreme apathy and feverish activity, as May pointed out, is the manifestation of a disordered will. These bursts of feverish activity, which are manifestations of what Harper refers to as "motiveless freedom" (Harper 1968), p. 22) were, in the case of Stavrogin, destructive in nature. He violated a young girl and drove her to suicide. He humiliated the governor and several other individuals and, in

marrying Mary, he hastened her destruction:

When boredom takes the form of numbness, when the bored man becomes unfeeling, cold, indifferent to the welfare of others, he is potentially dangerous to society. He is dangerous to himself as well, for his sense of motive and his self-control may degenerate rapidly . . . until he becomes depressed or demoralized (Harper 1968, p. 22).

Toward the end of the novel, Stavrogin had become so demoralized that he felt the only option to him was suicide.

It is important to bear in mind at all times one important point. In regard to Stavrogin, the past, in the form of the relationship which had existed between himself and Stephan, had exercised an inordinate amount of control over his behavior. However, this does not mean that Stavrogin's behavior was determined solely by what had occurred in the past. It would be erroneous to assume that the adult Stavrogin behaved as he did solely because of the events which had occurred in his childhood. "A" does not invariably give rise to "B." There is always the element of choice. The past dominated Stavrogin to the extent that it did because he, to a large extent, allowed it to. His behavior was something over which he was capable of exercising at least a minimal amount of control. However, in choosing not to let the barriers which he had erected between himself and others down, he ended up by destroying himself.

Summary

The relationship which existed between Stavrogin and his tutor gave rise to a longing, on Stavrogin's part, for an absolute which would endow his existence with meaning. Unwilling to look outside of himself in a world which he regarded as hostile, he withdrew and attempted to locate the absolute within himself. He elevated his

will to the level of an absolute. In so doing, he failed to realize that the will could not stand up under the burden he had placed upon it. A healthy will is one which is aware of its limitations. A healthy will is one which plays an active part "in the stream of temporalized and spatialized experience" (Schrag 1969, p. 100). Stavrogin's will was disordered because he refused to accept its limitations or acknowledge the fact that in cutting it off from the external world, the world of others, he was destroying it. Stavrogin's inability to elevate the will to the level of an absolute gave rise to a perpetual oscillation between states of extreme apathy and extreme activity. In the end, he committed suicide because he had become completely demoralized.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING

The latter section of Chapter IV consisted of an analysis of Stavrogin's life. This concluding section suggests ways in which the relationship between the will and the learning process, which was badly distorted in the case of Stavrogin, can be strengthened. In so doing, reference will be made to Dostoevsky's epistemology and the relationship which exists between it and the learning process. The last part of this section consists of a brief summary and conclusion to the entire study.

Dostoevsky was firmly convinced that, "Man is authentically a self only by virtue of his moral life" (Reinhardt 1969, p. 42). Man is a creature characterized by freedom. As such, he is continually confronted with the dilemma of choosing between good and evil. In choosing evil, such as Stavrogin does, the individual forsakes his freedom and gives himself over to his passions. He becomes a slave. Those who choose evil are invariably isolated individuals because one of the essential ways in which one becomes aware of, and chooses, the path of good is through interaction with others. Positive interaction with others gives rise to an awareness of the existence of God. Stavrogin chose evil, at least in part, because his early interaction with Stephan, which was totally negative, turned him away from others and back onto himself. Stavrogin became a

totally isolated individual who attempted to uncover some absolute within the confines of self. His quest was doomed to failure. In portraying the relationship which existed between Stephan and Stavrogin, Dostoevsky demonstrated the traumatic affect which a student-teacher relationship can have on an individual. Whether or not such a relationship is constructive is dependent upon the way in which the two individuals involved view each other. In the case of Stephan-Stavrogin, the teacher viewed the student as an object and, in so doing, helped to bring about his eventual destruction. The Stephan-Stavrogin relationship is an excellent example of what the teacher-student relationship should not be. In examining such a relationship it is possible to determine what constitutes a constructive relationship. In the following pages the outlines of a positive teacher-student relationship are delineated. Such a relationship is diametrically opposed to the one described by Dostoevsky in The Possessed.

The Learning Process and Dostoevsky's Epistemology

. . . (the educator) does not merely consider individual functions of his pupil, as one intending to teach him only to know or to be capable of certain things; but his concern is always with the pupil as a whole, both in the actuality in which he lives before you now and in his possibilities which he can become (Buber 1961, p. 132).

Dostoevsky's epistemology aligns him with those individuals referred to as Christian existentialists. This particular section is concerned with the way in which this particular philosophical stance views the learning process.

From a Christian existential point of view, the individual is more than merely a mind.

. . . any education dealing with the child as with a pure mind or a disembodied intellect, despising or ignoring sense and sensation, punishing imagination as a mere power of deception, . . . is a distortion of the Christian idea of education (Maritain 1957, p. 174).

The individual is a free, responsible, aspiring and striving subjectivity who is in a perpetual state of becoming. As Buber pointed out, the educator must be constantly concerned with what an individual can become, i.e., must be aware of the limitless possibilities of self. This approach is diametrically opposed to one in which the individual is regarded as an essentially static "thing" into whose head the teacher pours knowledge.

The existentialist is acutely aware of the fact that man exists in relationship. This is why, from an educational point of view, nothing is more important than the relationship which exists between the teacher and his students. This is a point which is strongly emphasized by individuals like Buber:

He (Buber) holds that the educational relationship is a peculiar kind of personal relationship in which the teacher and pupil stand in personal communion and dialogue. This unique relationship between the educator and the pupil makes up the basis of the phenomenon of education (Mundackal 1977, p. 213).

Teacher and pupil are engaged in a dialogue, the aim of which is self-realization for both. Given the demands placed upon him, it is essential that the teacher be an individual who, while nurturing "with love and pain" (Hill 1973, p. 281) the emerging self within each individual student, sees to it that he does not encroach upon the student to the point at which he would be overwhelmed. The teacher must be characterized by a balance between the affective and the cognitive if he is to function effectively. The student

will suffer if he is exposed to a teacher who is characterized by an imbalance in one direction or another. Stephan, for example, was a teacher who succumbed to an excess of subjectivity. He almost buried Stavrogin beneath the weight of his problems. Diametrically opposed to a teacher such as Stephan, is one who errors on the side of objectivity:

. . . there are many teachers who have responded to modern pressures for a scientific-academic curriculum by setting their sights on good results in examinations and assuming neutrality towards moral and social side effects. Such excess of objectivity also produces crippled persons (Hill 1973, p. 281).

The Christian existentialists place such a great deal of emphasis on the relationship which exists between student and teacher because, from their point of view, the relationship to another human being is a metaphor for the relationship of the individual to God. In engaging in a relationship characterized by mutual self realization, the individual is drawn on to even "higher levels of mutual self realization and union with the absolute Thou (God)" (Mundackal 1977, p. 212).

The Christian existentialist favors the Socratic approach to teaching, an approach characterized by intimate and personal relationship in which both parties accept the other-as-subject and respond to him, or her, accordingly. Knowledge and wisdom are to be gained through mutual interaction. The educator, from this perspective, must never engage in indoctrination. The Christian existentialists realize that one cannot be forced to choose the path of good. This is a choice which must be freely made.

One of the primary functions of education is to make the individual aware of the fact that he is a unique, choosing subjectivity

who must assume responsibility for his actions. Christian existentialists also stress the fact that man must be made aware of the anguish and suffering which are an integral aspect of human life. The student cannot be expected to choose wisely if he is exposed to an artificial and unrealistic view of life, i.e., a view which glosses over anything which might be considered unpleasant.

Life is to be understood only through living it. Therefore, emphasis is placed on the experiences of the individual. "In Marcel's terms, the dilemma of being is not to be solved in the manner of an ordinary scientific problem, but as a mystery to be understood only through living--a mystery never fully disclosed" (Kneller 1958, p. 67).

From an existential point of view, the primary concern of the school should be moral education, i.e., with developing "not only the capacity for but also the inclination toward moral choice" (O'Neill 1969, p. 71). In other words, the educational system should concern itself with the development of individuals who are capable of responding to moral questions as they emerge in an enlightened and responsible manner. The emphasis should be placed on making choices and assuming responsibility for them.

In order to achieve this particular goal, it is essential that educational institutions not resort to authoritarian controls insofar as their students are concerned:

Moral content cannot be separated from the moral procedures that are used to establish and maintain classroom discipline. The development of free choice is incompatible with arbitrary or externalized control. Autonomy is not derived through a system characterized by habituation to unquestioning obedience (O'Neill 1969, p. 75).

A didactic approach is inappropriate when addressing oneself to the question of moral choice: "The danger with vicarious morality is . . . that while waiting for Moses to lead them into the promised land, the children may forget how to walk" (O'Neill 1969, p. 76). All existentialists, Christian or otherwise, hold to the belief that moral principles can only be acquired through direct personal experience: ". . . the foundation of morality lies within the individual himself; it is to our own inner experience that we must turn if we wish to validate our beliefs and actions" (Kneller 1958, p. 78). The teacher cannot dictate morality to his students. He cannot expect the student to unquestionably accept those values which he, the teacher, has determined are most important for him.

Only those values which the individual has freely adopted will be meaningful to him. For this reason, a great deal of emphasis is placed on personal autonomy:

For the existentialists, autonomy is not a fact to be learned but a process to be mastered. A system of moral education based upon the unreflective assimilation of the conclusions of others unfortunately provides no basis for deriving one's own conclusions (O'Neill 1969, p. 77).

The student must realize that he, and he alone, must make those choices which will determine what he is. To simply slavishly emulate the beliefs of others is tantamount to denying one's self. The teacher's primary function is to question the student's beliefs by making him aware of alternatives, of options. In so doing, he forces the student to examine his beliefs and the way in which he arrived at them. The teacher must see to it that the student never becomes complacent. He is there to raise questions which will force his students to think. It is important to question even if there are no answers, definitive

or otherwise, to the questions asked:

The understanding of teaching as the asking of questions to which no one knows the answer will no doubt seem outrageously bizarre. It certainly runs counter to all conventional conceptions of teaching and learning. Moreover, it places the teacher under heavy obligations of imagination and insight. . . . But difficulty must be measured against yield, namely, the possible awakening of the student to his awareness of choice, freedom, and responsibility in his own selfhood (Morris 1966, p. 137).

To question is to confront. To confront is to force the individual to delve into himself in quest of answers. In the process, he becomes aware of himself as a choosing subjectivity who is, above all else, free.

From an existential point of view, education is synonymous with life:

Education is more than the possession of knowledge. Knowledge without understanding is lifeless. Education is the constant pursuit to understand what is coherent and vital in and to life. It is true that many educational philosophers have considered education to be life itself, that education is experiencing the wholeness of life (Peterson 1970, p. 43).

Man, as has been pointed out, is a creature of feeling as well as intellect, and in order to truly know something he must be able to perceive the relation which exists between it and himself. What is of crucial importance is not the mere accumulation of knowledge but rather what the individual does with that knowledge. The function of knowledge is to free man, i.e., to help him to understand himself and the world around him. From this point of view, subject matter is more than merely an end itself, or a tool which the individual manipulates in order to prepare himself for a career. It is a means for the understanding and improvement of self. In order for this goal to be realized education must make the individual aware of the infinite

possibilities of his freedom as well as the fact that he must assume responsibility for what he chooses to become.

Existentialists place a great deal of emphasis on the study of the humanities because it is through a study of the humanities that man comes to terms with human anguish, anxiety, death and the problem of freedom. However, this does not mean that other areas of knowledge are neglected. All areas of study are, by definition, interrelated. For example, in order to fully appreciate a subject such as literature, it is necessary to be aware of what is happening in fields such as philosophy, sociology, psychology, and physics. Although physics and literature, at first glance, would seem to have little in common, the fact remains that recent advances in physics have profoundly altered man's way of perceiving reality and, in so doing, have forced writers to look at, and interpret, the world in a way which differs from the way in which earlier generations interpreted it. For example, as Bryant points out in his discussion of the theory of relativity: "It suggests an unprecedented freedom and openness in both physical reality and, by analogy, human reality" (Bryant 1970, p. 30). In transforming areas of study into discrete areas of specialization which purport to be totally self-sufficient, man ends up by distorting the nature of the world he inhabits. The individual must be made aware of the opportunities open to him and, in conjunction with this, the fact that he is free to choose from among those possibilities. This goal can be achieved only if the artificial barriers which exist between the various fields of knowledge are demolished.

A teacher, from an existential point of view, is one who is:
 "... authenticating his existence at every moment of his life, who

has developed a consistent scale of values and is committed to it. Without imposing himself he must make his children think about the problems of life" (Seetharamu 1978, p. 87). The student and the teacher should interact in an atmosphere of freedom and love. Ideally, the student-teacher relationship is one which is characterized by openness and reciprocity. The primary responsibility of a teacher in this kind of relationship is to help the student achieve the goal of self-realization. Vaclav Cerny, in commenting on his discussion of Dostoevsky's The Possessed, presents us with a portrait of the ideal teacher:

. . . those teachers who were helpful, really helpful, were only the dangerous and discomfiting ones who taught me to see the questions rather than to adopt the answers and who put tools into my hand with which to come to grips with the difficulties myself. They awakened a thirst in me, but they refused to quench it (Cerny 1975, p. 68).

Such a teacher considers his primary goal to consist of making the student aware of his freedom: ". . . they taught me my freedom, which they did not intend to snare in their own" (Cerny 1975, p. 70).

Summary and Conclusions

During the course of this study, the author attempted to clarify the nature of the relationship which existed between the learning process and the will. In order to accomplish this goal, emphasis was placed on the study of the moral development of a character in a novel by Dostoevsky, i.e., Stavrogin in The Possessed. The learning process, in the context of this study, referred to the interaction which takes place when two individuals freely enter into a relationship in order to examine those ideas which have a bearing on their existence. The will referred to that aspect of the personality which was responsible

for committing the individual to that relationship between two individuals which is at the heart of the learning process. Learning will not take place unless one acknowledges the existence of the other-as-subject. Education implies relationship: "This unique relationship between the educator and the pupil makes up the basis of the phenomenon of education" (Mundackal 1977, p. 213). This "unique relationship" entailed both the student and the teacher realizing, or actualizing, themselves through that act of faith which entails acceptance of the subjectivity of the other, an acceptance which cannot be empirically validated.

Stavrogin, in isolating himself from the other, distorted the true nature of both the learning process and the will. In attempting to transform the will into an absolute, he failed to realize that the will, in order to function effectively, must, in addition to maintaining a balance between the affective and the cognitive, recognize and accept its limitations. In addition, it must realize that healthy functioning entails interacting with the world which one inhabits. Stavrogin negated the learning process by refusing to respond to anything outside of himself. In isolating himself from the rest of the world Stavrogin ended by destroying himself.

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