Chapter 6
Stepping Across: Aristocratic Elitism Versus Democratic Faith

6.1 To be Utopian

"[F]or to be utopian," explains Paulo Freire, "is not to be merely idealistic or impractical but rather to engage in denunciation and annunciation" (1985: 57). The majority of this book has been spent denouncing and announcing, criticizing existing educational praxis, and where possible offering alternatives. "Utopian" has not meant idealistic or impractical, though the word is often construed in just such a way. The world is the way it is because of the dialectic between individual agency and structural arrangements. We denounce where and when we see this world, its structures, and individuals within it dehumanizing people. We announce with correctives and alternatives, with possible dreams. Unlike Don Quixote, we do not dream the impossible dream. If our dreams had no chance of being attained, we could not dream them, we would not be able to hope for and work toward them.

Critical pedagogy is idealistic in the best sense of the word. We envision a world we want to live in, and we take steps toward the attainment of that world. Our path takes us through the everyday classroom and into the wider world beyond. It is a path we cannot walk alone. Unfortunately, the dominant ideology encourages solo journeys. At every turn, we are encouraged to care only about ourselves and those closest to us, to dismiss bad behavior as inevitable and part of the human condition. Critical pedagogy is idealistic but this does not mean we delude ourselves. "The future is a problem, a possibility, and not inexorable," Freire reminds us (1996: 137). Ours is a world that can be made better if not perfected. Conflict and dehumanization can be lessened if not eradicated. A better tomorrow is possible but never probable unless we constantly work toward its attainment with others.

The misplaced stress on individual victory and failure works against the notions of solidarity and cooperation. Such emphasis conditions our worldviews and our visions of the future. We live in a world and teach in classrooms that are often messed up. Every good deed seems outweighed by bad ones. Random acts of kindness pale in comparison to the wanton destruction and dehumanization about us. There really is a lot to complain about and unfortunately our cultural emphasis on individuality offers us remedies of these grievances that only exacerbate the problem.

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It is in this context that Nietzsche and his appeal arise yet again. Nietzsche champions an extremely individualistic aristocratic elitism that speaks to the dehumanizing conditions surrounding us. Given the times in which we live, his is an intoxicating vision delivered in seductive prose. I want to state at the outset that for me reading Nietzsche has always been much fun, a kind of guilty pleasure, and his words never cease to be thought provoking and haunting. When you pick up a newspaper and read about some atrocity—an infant that gets his head bashed in at pre-school, college students lined up against a schoolyard wall and shot, the Virginia Tech massacre, American soldiers raping and killing Iraqis and Afghanis and being maimed and killed in turn—it's easy to shake your head and say, "Look at these assholes." It's easy to say to yourself, "There are good people in the world and bad," "Some people are just better than others and some are worse." Nietzsche's order of rank and the quest for self-perfection in the form of an ubermensch (superman) become ever more appealing.

Nietzsche's ideas are attractive to those burdened with the negative freedom Erich Fromm identified. But Nietzsche needs to be viewed as a product of his sociohistorical existence, just like the rest of us. I see the cures he proffers as bad as the ills he attempts to redress. But I also see and understand his continuing draw. In this chapter, I'd like to ask you to explore Nietzsche's pull with me. We'll consider the character structures possible in our present reality and how works of Dostoyevsky set in the modernizing St. Petersburg of the 19th century presaged these character structures. We will denounce and then announce in the quest to make our everyday classrooms and lives more humane and humanizing.

Nietzsche was a flawed human being. In the words of the Prince of Denmark, words that could apply to all of us to one degree or another, "he was a man, take him for all in all." His love for women—namely Lou Salome—went unrequited and proved a source of much frustration and despair in his personal life. Nietzsche longed for recognition and approval, and what renown he did cultivate in his lifetime was never enough and only fed his desire for more. He condemned organized religion, democracy, socialism, and communism. Yet Nietzsche came to be embraced by some of the very groups he despised and wrote against in his lifetime with everyone from Nazis to postmodern feminist scholars embracing him.

6.2 Salvaging Nietzsche

Nietzsche means different things to different people. Steven E. Ascheim writes that in the century following his derangement and death, "feminists feminized him, Jews Judaized him, and volkisch circles nationalized him" (Ascheims, 1994: 172). How can we account for Nietzsche's appeal to these and others, groups he vehemently opposed during his existence? Lesley Chamberlain posits "the core attraction of Nietzsche at the end of a century [the 20th] ravaged by ideology is that he provides no positive doctrines nor answers, and even made a fetish out of doing so, or not doing" (1996: 5). "Nietzscheanism, like its masters, was never monochromic," explains Aschheim, positing that the "Nietzschean impulse" lacked "a clearly demarcated

ideology backed by a central political apparatus," "required no formal commitment and possessed no authorized dogma," and as such enjoyed a "capacity to selectively influence and be reconstructed by various ideological and political constructs [that] facilitated [its] entry into an astonishing range of institutions" (Ascheim, 1994: 7 & 14).

An exploration of Nietzsche's misogyny and feminist theorists attempts to salvage him illustrates Ascheim and Chamberlain's points. In Nietzsche's writings, women possess the natural attributes of "cunning, seductiveness, naiveté of egoism, and ineducability and inner wildness. . ." (1989: s239). Nietzsche warns against "the sick females, who have unrivaled resources for dominating, oppressing, tyrannizing" (1956: 260). Women are of lesser rank than males in Nietzsche's thinking. "Comparing men and women on the whole," he surmises, "one may say: woman would not have the genius for finery if she did not have an instinct for a *secondary* role" (1989: s145). "Is it not better," Nietzsche asks, "to end up in the hands of a murderer then in the dreams of a woman in heat?" (1954: 166). Nietzsche opines that men be educated for war and women "for the recreation of the warrior; all else is folly" (1954: 178). The warrior dislikes sweet fruit and therefore likes women because "even the sweetest woman is bitter" (1954: 178). Nietzsche feels all a girl wants is "to be taken and accepted as a possession. . .to be absorbed into the concept of possession" (1974: s363). In a letter to a friend shortly after Lou Salome rebuffed his advances Nietzsche refers to her as a "sterile, dirty, evil-smelling she-ape with false breasts—a calamity!" (cited in Cate, 2005: 413). "You are going to women?" Nietzsche has an elderly female character ask in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, then "do not forget the whip!" (1954: 179).

Though Nietzsche often railed against women in his writings, he was a gentleman and a gentle man in real life. Still, we cannot ignore what he wrote. Despite lines and passages like the ones quoted above, many contemporary feminist and other writers seem on a mission to rescue Nietzsche from his own words. Chamberlain refers to a "Nietzsche reinterpretation industry" (1996: 5). The rescue mission works by interpreting his works in such a way that straightforward textual interpretation is contradicted.

Many scholars invoke a variety of the worst sorts of postmodern intellectual tools to ferret out the Nietzsche they seek. Luce Irigaray attempts to mirror Nietzsche's styles back to him through a "simulacrum" in her try to "romanticize the philosophers" and prove that Nietzsche's writings support women and feminist writings (in Oliver & Pearsall, 1998: 87 & 98). Jacques Derrida employs a "graphics of the hymen"—give me a break!—to bolster his contention that women are the "non-truth of truth," whatever that means, that we can never really say with certainty what Nietzsche meant about women (in Oliver & Pearsall, 1998: 7 & 53). Tasmin Lorraine utilizes "identity positions" to sort through the "dreadful fragments and accidents" of Nietzsche's texts to find "the flowers and aromas I need to conjure up the image dearest to me. . .[to] create a strong image of woman in keeping with my own taste for the future" (in Oliver & Pearsall, 1998: 120 & 127).

Sarah Kofman employs Nietzsche's own "camera obscura" to argue that his metaphors of higher and lower are perspectival, not hierarchical. Kofman argues (in

Oliver & Pearsall, 1998: 36 & 40) that Nietzsche's aristocratic elitism can be applied to women as well as men, though even if possible I don't see how it makes such any more desirable. Sounding much like a battered spouse who makes excuses for her abuser husband, Kofman wonders if "[t]he maxims and arrows Nietzsche directs toward women: Is not their very severity. . .symptomatic of a deep love for women, all of whom had abandoned him. . .?" (in Oliver & Pearsall, 1998: 47). By this logic O.J. really was enamored with Nicole. Walter Kaufman admits that "Nietzsche's writings contain many all-too-human judgments—especially about women—but these are philosophically irrelevant" (1968: 89). I have to disagree.

As one who believes we can learn something from everyone, even if that is only how *not* to behave toward others, I am not ready to dismiss Nietzsche as a straight-out misogynist or card-carrying member of the Little Rascals' He-Man Woman's Haters Club. Nor am I convinced, and I must admit, nor do I fully understand or want to take the time to understand, the arguments cited above "proving" Nietzsche is liberating for women. That said, I agree that Nietzsche has provided ideas that have proved useful to feminism, critical pedagogy, and postmodernism. For example, as we saw earlier, Nietzsche criticized objectivity and truth, claiming all truth perspectival with objectivity in the sense of perspectiveless truth impossible. Further, Nietzsche illuminated the ways in which truths and values are formulated in particular situations to benefit particular groups of people (Oliver & Pearsall, 1998: 3). Nietzsche's private life is so at odds with much of what he wrote that one might question the truck he put in his own philosophy. Unfortunately, for Nietzsche and others, people judge us and what we say and do. One of my favorite Kurt Vonnegut quotes holds that "we are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful what we pretend to be." Nietzsche said a lot in his lifetime and a good deal of it is available to us in written form today. Though his words at times belie the man, it is the words that have lived and been passed down to us.

6.3 The Jester as Ubermensch

Nietzsche is long dead but his ideas are still alive and sometimes dangerous. Let me be clear that I do not mean his doctrines as taken and perverted by others like the Nazis or culled from notes he never intended published. I mean the straightforward ideas available to us from his extant publications. In Chapter 1.14, we looked at Nietzsche's genealogy of morals and the slave revolt in morals, of the master morality and slave mentality. As entertaining as these may be as stories, Nietzsche was a product of his times—though ahead of them in many ways both important and alarming—and his genesis of morals speaks to a pervasive aristocratic elitism that suffuses his works. Like the Sirens attempting to lure Ulysses and his crew to their demise on the rocks, Nietzsche's doctrines beckon the disillusioned and disenchanted, those among us harboring a vague or full-blown sense of unease about our lives and these times in which we live, and offers a path of (ostensible) individual fulfillment.

Nietzsche detested democracy, perhaps in part because the democracy of his day—as ours—was relegated to the political sphere. He equated democracy with weakness, with leveling tendencies that ran counter to his aristocratic elitism and understood that his ideal could not survive in a democratic clime. But at the same time Nietzsche disliked socialism and communism with their explicit democratization of the economic sphere, so his disdain of democracy did not stem from equating it with the democracy of his times. I warn here specifically of Nietzsche's ubermensch or overman or superman.

In his prologue to the first part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the eponymous prophet emerges from his cave following a 10-year hermitage to descend his mountain. Arriving in a town named the Motley Cow, he finds the inhabitants gathered in the marketplace to view a tightrope walker's display. Zarathustra starts to lecture them, pontificating on the "ubermensch" and the shortcomings of the "last man." The crowd jeers him, much to Zarathustra's chagrin, and focus their attention on the unfolding spectacle above. The tightrope walker has started across his line. When he reaches the middle of his route, a jester appears on the rope behind him, taunting him and then leaping over him. The tightrope walker, "seeing his rival win, lost his head and the rope, tossed away his pole, and plunged into the depth even faster, a whirlpool of arms and legs" (Nietzsche, 1954: 131).

Landing next to Zarathustra, the mortally wounded tightrope walker has no choice but to speak with the prophet before he dies. Zarathustra is heartened by the example of the tightrope walker, whom he views as having embodied the ideals necessary for the attainment of his higher type of human being. He gathers up the dead body and is confronted by the jester. The jester warns Zarathustra that prophets are "hated by the good and the just.... You are hated by the believers of the true faith, and they call you the danger of the multitude" (Nietzsche, 1954: 133). Just as quickly as he appears, the jester disappears, leaving Zarathustra to cart off the remains of the tightrope walker.

Nietzsche's ubermensch is "the meaning of the earth" (1954: 125). He is the transcendence of humanity as currently constituted. Peter Berkowitz explains that for Nietzsche, the ubermensch "is the end or goal of man, the species' specific perfection" (1995: 137). Zarathustra likens humanity to "a polluted stream." Opining that it would take "a sea to be able to receive a polluted stream without becoming unclean," Zarathustra offers the ubermensch as this ocean. Zarathustra likens modern man in relation to the future ubermensch as an "ape to man" and a "laughingstock or a painful embarrassment." (Nietzsche, 1954: 124). Zarathustra promises that "[m]an is something that shall be overcome" (Ibid.).

The prophet likens man to "a rope tied between beast and overman—a rope over an abyss" (Nietzsche, 1954: 126). Traversing the rope and attaining overman or ubermensch status is not guaranteed for every individual. Many who try will fail, perishing along the way. The journey promises only a "dangerous across, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous shuddering and stopping" (Ibid.). Traversing the rope requires courting peril and possible loss of life, leading Zarathustra to praise the risk-taker, he who is both "an *overture* and a *going under*" (Nietzsche, 1954: 127).

Bearing witness to his death, Zarathustra believes the tightrope walker represents an attempted step in the direction of the ubermensch. After breaking the news to the dying man that "there is no devil and no hell. Your soul will be dead even before your body," the prophet then praises him for having "made danger your vocation.... Now you perish of your vocation: for that I will bury you with my own hands" (Nietzsche, 1954: 132). Zarathustra finds the tightrope walker's life praiseworthy, Berkowitz posits, because he "dared to leave his tower and, heedless of the consequences, attempted to cross over," because "the tightrope walker evokes the death-defying adventures...that Zarathustra sees as necessary to the discipline of the superman" (1995: 144).

But Zarathustra is incorrect in his appraisal of the tightrope walker. Despite his effort, the acrobat Zarathustra lauds never gets beyond being a *last man* who stands in the way of the ubermensch's realization. The last man is, in Nietzsche's and Zarathustra's estimation, "the most despicable man," and part of the reason he is despicable is because he "is no longer able to despise himself" (Nietzsche, 1954: 129). Nietzsche biographer Curtis Cate describes "the last or latest man [as] a Nietzschean euphemism for the contemporary human being" (2005: 405). The last man mirrors a triumphant nihilism. The last man reflects the leveling tendencies Nietzsche felt were poisoning humanity, leading to a state where there is "no shepherd and one herd! Everybody wants the same, everybody is the same" (1954: 130).

The marketplace crowd, jeering Zarathustra, demand of him, "Give us this last man, O Zarathustra...turn us into these last men! Then we shall make you a gift of the overman!" (Ibid.). The irony that Nietzsche sought to convey through Zarathustra is that the crowd in the marketplace already themselves represent these last men. Furthermore, it is not within the power of anyone, much less last men, to "make a gift" of the overman to anyone. In Berkowitz's estimation, "The last men form a society of sad sacks who believe that they exemplify the supreme achievements of the human spirit. Perfectly pleased with themselves, the last men regard themselves as second to none" (1995: 143).

Why is Zarathustra incorrect in his estimation of the tightrope walker? Because *the jester* represents the overman. The jester "jumps out" onto the rope behind the tightrope walker, following him "with quick steps." The jester yells at the tightrope walker, "Forward lamefoot!.... You block the way for one better than yourself" (Nietzsche, 1954: 131). The jester's path on the rope—"a rope tied between beast and overman—a rope over an abyss" (1954: 126)—is *blocked* by the tightrope walker. The jester does not push the tightrope walker out of his way or off the rope. Instead, he "uttered a devilish cry and jumped over the man who stood in his way" (Nietzsche, 1954: 131). The tightrope walker, "seeing his rival win," loses "his head and his rope" and plunges to his death (Nietzsche, 1954: 131). When the jester confronts Zarathustra as the prophet carries the tightrope walker's body off, he warns Zarathustra that the townsfolk hate him [Zarathustra] and that he should "go away from this town, or tomorrow I shall leap over you, one living over one dead" (Nietzsche, 1954: 133).

Zarathustra is frustrated in his attempt to teach the masses of the marketplace the overman. "There they stand," he laments, "...there they laugh" (Nietzsche,

1954: 128). Through Zarathustra Nietzsche makes clear that the masses are not capable of recognizing the ubermensch or the possibility of his existence. They can no longer differentiate between "mediocrity and excellence" (Berkowitz, 1995: 139). Thus the jester appears to them not as ubermensch, but as "a fellow in motley clothes, looking like a jester" (Nietzsche, 1954: 125). Under the rule of these last men, "whoever feels different goes voluntarily into a madhouse" (Nietzsche, 1954: 130). The jester alone stands out to the masses, conspicuous in his apparent frivolity. " 'Formerly, all the world was mad,' say the most refined [of the last men], and they blink" (Nietzsche, 1954: 130). (These last men blink a lot). Now only the jester appears mad to the crowd because he is the ubermensch standing apart from all others and the crowd is unable to perceive this. The townsfolk do not watch the jester complete his traversal of the tightrope. Instead they focus on the tightrope walker as he plunges to his demise. Nietzsche is clear that the masses are incapable of viewing, much less comprehending, the machinations of an ubermensch.

Nietzsche's Zarathustra does not recognize the jester as ubermensch. Nor, for that matter, did any of the secondary sources I consulted. Yet Zarathustra does recognize his mission of enlightening the masses as misguided, feeling he must attempt to "speak not to the people but to companions," to "lure many away from the herd," to edify the select few (Nietzsche, 1954: 135). And neither does Zarathustra embody the ubermensch. As he laments of himself, "A seer, a willer, a creator, a future himself and a bridge to the future—and alas, also, as it were, a cripple at this bridge: all this is Zarathustra" (Nietzsche, 1954: 251). Zarathustra heralds the ubermensch, but the prophet himself is not one.

Berkowitz argues that Zarathustra comes to recognize himself not as ubermensch but as "higher man," "the victim of overreaching, whose ambition exceeds his grasp and whose critical faculties surpass his creative powers" capable only of "discerning vulgarity, hypocrisy, and wretched contentment in the contemporary manifestations of culture, politics, and religion" (1995: 211). Zarathustra is guilty of overreaching. He descends from his mountain on a self-appointed quest to teach the ubermensch. Zarathustra is disappointed with the reception he finds and condescending: "They do not understand me; I am not the mouth for these ears" (Nietzsche, 1954: 128). Nietzsche's prophet is unable to create ubermensch or convince the masses of the need for such, but he is able to scorn and pour vituperation on the last men, proving that his "critical faculties surpass his creative powers" (Berkowitz, 1995: 211). Zarathustra sees the "vulgarity, hypocrisy, and wretched contentment" of the masses and he lectures them against their own complacence, " 'We have invented happiness,' say the last men, and they blink" (Nietzsche, 1954: 130). As a "higher man," Zarathustra may be able to recognize the deficiencies of the last men, but he himself cannot attain ubermensch status. "You may indeed all be higher men," Zarathustra tells the coterie he has gathered back at his cave for the donkey festival in Part IV of the book, "but for me you are not high and strong enough" (Nietzsche, 1954: 394).

Nietzsche's Zarathustra is a would-be teacher but he is no teacher we would want in any of our classrooms. Zarathustra's is the antithesis of a critical pedagogy. He despises the masses for what he sees as their ignorance, their weakness and inability to recognize his wisdom and accept his counsel. Though he holds himself above the

people, Zarathustra is also filled with self-loathing because he feels he can never be the ubermensch he speaks of. He recognizes that his critical faculties surpass his creative abilities.

Kids I work with ask me if retarded people know they're retarded. My kids think this would be terrible, to know you're majorly different and to know people know you're majorly different. Zarathustra occupies such a position because though he holds himself above the people, he disdains the loathes himself as well because he knows he can never be ubermensch. In his own mind, he recognizes the necessity and desirability of this new human being, but it is a model he will never approximate. Zarathustra comes down from his mountain on a self-proclaimed mission to deliver the people his truth, which he sees as *the* truth. His relations with would-be students is antagonistic and condescending. Zarathustra's utopia is a vision not of a better world for people tomorrow, but of a world much like his own for a select few.

6.4 Nietzsche's Will to Power

Zarathustra delivers a speech (*The Three Metamorphosis)* in which he introduces a dialectic, a transformation and transcendence from camel to lion to child (1954: 138–139). The camel represents "the spirit that would bear much," that dares to ask, "What is difficult?" and "burdened, speeds into the desert." Within this "loneliest desert," the "spirit becomes a lion who would conquer his freedom and be master in his own desert." The lion seeks out and battles "his last master. . .and his last god. . .the great dragon" which is named "Thou shalt" and is adorned with many shiny scales representing the values of society. Through battle and perseverance, through the exertion of the will, through challenging the "thou shalt" dragon with his own "I will," the lion may prevail. The lion is capable of "creation of freedom for oneself of new creation," though not of any creation of new values in itself. The final metamorphosis, from lion to child, is necessary for the self-creation of new values. "The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred 'Yes'." Zarathustra sees himself stuck in the camel stage, yearning for transformation to lion and then child but incapable of such metamorphosis. "As yet I have not been strong enough for the final overbearing, prankish bearing of the lion. . .but one day I shall yet find the strength and the lion's voice" he hopes (Nietzsche, 1954: 274).

In the *Three Metamorphosis*, Nietzsche delivers a parable outlining his dialectic of self-transcendence. Themes that accompanied the jester again become apparent. Self-transcendence is viewed as an arduous, even dangerous, solitary task. Berkowitz opines that "Zarathustra's parable seems to rest on the presupposition that the knowledge most worth possessing is intrinsically odious and nauseating" (1995: 153). The spirit as camel is "not merely prepared for the worst but actively seeking it" (Ibid.). The camel goes off into its desert alone, where in its incarnation as lion, it finds "its ability to exist is consumed in an urgent need to rebel" (Safranski, 2002: 277).

Not everyone will attempt the transformation to ubermensch. Most will remain spectators in the town of Motley Cow's marketplace with their eyes glued on the tightrope walker, oblivious to the jester and his passage. Of those who attempt the transformation, many will fail, for Nietzsche promises that "the sake of power risks life. . .it is hazard and danger and casting dice for death" (1954: 227). Those who are successful won't find great happiness but that "the will to knowledge can be a pleasure that bears and endures even the unbearable nature of what is known" (Safranski, 2002: 278). Emerging as child, as ubermensch, the individual will live his own life by his own rules and values, much like the long-lost nobles of Nietzsche's genealogy or McCarthy's judge Holden.

"One hardly dares speak any more of the will to power: it was different in Athens," Nietzsche writes in notes never intended for publication (1954: 75). Walter Kaufmann remarks "it occurred to Nietzsche that the basic drive that prompted the development of Greek culture might well have been the will to power" (1974: 192). Nietzsche gazed back fondly on the Greeks and their will to power and considered Greek culture "the acme of humanity" (Ibid.). Cate notes that Nietzsche's concept of the will to power is "the most radically upsetting, 'subversive' and controversial of all his contributions to contemporary thinking" (2005: 420). What does Nietzsche mean by a will to power? Why does he feel it has disappeared? How might it be recaptured? Furthermore, how does an individual's will to power mesh with a society of other individuals?

"The will to power is conceived of as the will to overcome oneself," explains Walter Kaufmann (1974: 200). Rudiger Safranski concurs, "The will to power is first and foremost the will to power over oneself" (2002: 281). "You still want to create the world before which you can kneel: that is your ultimate hope and intoxication," says Zarathustra (Nietzsche, 1954: 225). The will to power is found "in the inorganic and organic world," in nature; It is "the unexhausted procreative will of life" (Safranski, 2002: 225; Nietzsche, 1954: 226). Berkowitz posits that the child represents the culmination of the three metamorphosis because "the child rises to divinity insofar as he possesses a purified, uncorrupted will that makes its own activities the object of its exertions and insofar as by commanding himself he commands the whole of which he is a part" (1995: 159). The "crux" of Nietzsche's conception of the will to power, argues Safranski, is "the principle of self-transcendence" (2002: 281).

As we have seen in the discussion of his genealogy and again here, there is a rank ordering in Nietzsche's thought of higher and lower types (Berkowitz, 1995: 119). For Nietzsche the ubermensch represents the apogee of human development. Those who strive for ubermensch status but die trying to achieve it (like the tightrope walker) are still better for their efforts than those who never make the attempt. Then there are those like Zarathustra presaging the coming of this higher type, prophets, and teachers who stand above "the herd." Yet Nietzsche reminds us that even in the masses can be seen a once active will to power. Remember, according to Nietzsche, Judeo-Christian morality originally represented an active exertion of the will to power (albeit a slave revolt in morals). Nietzsche condemns it because he feels it dampens the modern individual's ability to overcome himself and achieve ubermensch status, "simply because it has triumphed so completely" (1956: 168).

Nietzsche in his notes labels "the herd instinct" as "a power that has now become sovereign" (1968: 33).

Many Nietzsche scholars would have us believe that the will to power as practiced by the ubermensch is not power exerted over others but over one's self alone. "The powerful, as Nietzsche points out expressly, have no need to prove their might either to themselves or to others by oppressing or hurting others," notes Kaufmann (1974: 194). Recall that the jester in Zarathustra's prologue does not push the tightrope walker from the heights. Instead, the jester, seeing the tightrope walker as an impediment to his own progress, places *himself* in extraordinary danger by "jump[ing] over the man who stood in his way" (Nietzsche, 1954: 131). If the powerful "do hurt others," posits Kaufmann, "they do so incidentally in the process of using their power creatively; they hurt others 'without thinking of it' " (1974: 194). Recall further that the jester's re-alighting the rope after his vault does not jar the tightrope walker from his footing. Instead, the tightrope walker, "seeing his rival win, lost his head" and plunges to his demise (Nietzsche, 1954: 131). Nietzsche's point is that the tightrope walker's own failure as a human being leads to his end, not any action against him by the jester.

For Nietzsche, the will to power is the "will to life." In modern societies like Nietzsche's and our own it is suppressed. Nevertheless, a few individuals—like the jester—possess it and dare to live it out. Teachers and prophets like Zarathustra do not have it in them but recognize its existence in a select few and seek to set the stage for the rise of these ubermensch. "*I teach you the overman*," says Zarathustra. "Man is something that shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him?" (Nietzsche, 1954: 124). The Nietzschean striving for the ubermensch is a solitary endeavor that doesn't promise to make your life any better. In fact, despite what Kaufmann and other scholars argue, it is bound to make life for those around you miserable.

The Nietzschian dialectic—camel to lion to child culminating in the realization of the ubermensch—is driven by individual agency, by self-overcoming, by the will to power. How does the ubermensch stand in relation to the rest of society? In the case of the jester, the tightrope walker was a mere obstacle in his path, an obstacle the jester leapt over and left behind, heedless of whatever fate befell the other. Safranski notes correctly that "Nietzsche was incapable of reconciling the ideas of self-enhancement and solidarity, or at least allowing them to coexist" (2002: 297). Indeed, for Nietzsche, "the meaning of the world was not the happiness and prosperity of the greatest possible number but individual manifestations of success in life" (Ibid.).

Ofelia Schutte opines that "Nietzsche was a strongly anti-democratic thinker" (1995: 287). Chamberlain agrees that "Nietzsche's instincts were profoundly undemocratic in almost every respect" (1996: 41). Karl Lowith explains that Nietzsche was critical of both "bourgeois democracy" and "radical socialism" because in his estimation "both movements together reduced man to a member of a herd" (1964: 266). "According to Nietzsche's genealogy," opines Berkowitz, "the rule of law, liberal protections for the individual, and democratic justice and equality are tools of oppression.... Vicious weapons in an all-too-successful war waged

by the weak many against the strong few" (1995: 79). Thus Nietzsche opposed German Nationalism, socialism, anti-Semitism and even a nascent feminist movement (Ansell-Pearson in Patton, 1993: 29). Nietzsche feels the last man "makes everything small," carrying out a leveling process, reducing humanity to a herd, and then "hops" around on this earth, "ineradicable as the flea beetle" (1954: 129). It would appear that democratic liberalism and feminism were goals farthest from Nietzsche's mind and theory.

Still, Nietzsche's thought and ideas have had a continuing appeal for many proponents of democracy and feminism, people who supposedly care about solidarity and cooperation. How can this be? What is it these scholars and teachers have found in Nietzsche? Steven Aschheim puzzles, "What possible meaning could the expression *Nietzschean socialism* possess?" (1994: 165). Clearly and I'd say correctly, as Safranski assesses Nietzsche: "Above all, he sought to preserve the difference between himself and the many others" (2002: 298).

Walter Kaufmann, on the other hand, does not find Nietzsche and progressives irreconcilable. Granting that Nietzsche "evidently disapproves of contemporary democracies," Kaufmann proffers that "he seems more sympathetic toward that truer democracy of the future" (1974: 187). Kaufmann bolsters his assertion with quotes from *The Wanderer and His Shadow* wherein Nietzsche writes of "a victory of democracy" that wishes to "create and guarantee independence for as many as possible, independence of opinions, way of life, and business" (cited in Kaufmann, 1974: 187). A.K. Rogers (1912: 50) also sees Nietzsche's aristocratic elitist tendencies as amenable to democracy. Cooperation can lead to greater self-achievement, to fruition and realization of the ubermensch. Kaufmann chastises those who try to paint Nietzsche as "a liberal and a democrat, or a socialist," positing that Nietzsche's thought is "antipolitical" (1974: 412). Kaufmann describes "the theme of the antipolitical individual who seeks self-perfection far from the modern world" as "the leitmotif of Nietzsche's life and thought" (1974: 418). But to be "antipolitical" or "apolitical" *is* political. If you're not actively challenging the status quo, you're tacitly supporting it.

Other authors argue that Nietzsche is in fact not "antipolitical," that his ethics and politics cannot be separated as the former inform the later. Schutte notes that "The aim of Nietzsche's politics is to make the world correspond to an ethical view in which the control of all values is placed in the hands of a 'superior type' of human being" (1995: 288). Berkowitz offers a reading of Nietzsche where the ethical and political lives are segmented, where "one might confine boldness and originality to the realm of thought and private affairs while functioning in society as a law-abiding citizen" (1995: 146). In other words, one could be both ubermensch and decent citizen of a particular society in the world. "This, however," Berkowitz admits, "is not Zarathustra's way" (Ibid.). Schutte notes that "[e]litism is an *a priori* assumption of Nietzsche's political vision as well as of his moral theory" (1995: 288).

The Nietzschean realization of the ubermensch divorces itself from democratic politics. For Nietzsche, people are not equal and we shouldn't fool ourselves otherwise. Zarathustra makes it very clear that he does not want to be confused with "tarantulas"—"preachers of equality." "For, to me justice speaks thus: 'Men are not

equal.' Nor shall they become equal!" (Nietzsche, 1954: 211 & 213). In a letter to his sister, Nietzsche explained that "Above all, I distinguish between *strong* and *weak* human beings—those whose vocation is to rule from those who are called upon to serve, to obey. . ." (cited in Cate, 2005: 432).

In Zarathustra's words, the last men are "superfluous" (Nietzsche, 1954: 183). Zarathustra "counsel[s] the superfluous," "Would that he had never been born!" (Ibid.). "All-too-many live, and all-too-long they hang on their branches," fumes the prophet. "Would that a storm came to shake all this worm-eaten rot to the earth" (1954: 185). Zarathustra longs for "preachers of quick death" who would encourage the last men to get out of the way and die in order to make room for the ubermensch of the future (Ibid.). In his notes, Nietzsche wrote of shaping "the man of the future through breeding and, on the other hand, the annihilation of millions of failures. . ." (1968: 506). In his *Genealogy*, Nietzsche says that "[t]o sacrifice humanity as a mass to the welfare of a single stronger human species would indeed constitute progress" (1956: 210). Make no mistake about it: the road to ubermensch status will be littered with those "last men," "failures" who stood in the way.

The appeal of the ubermensch remains strong, and apologies are still made for it. Justifications seek to water down Nietzsche's vision. Berkowitz presents one view holding that the ubermensch would and could remain apolitical. "From Zarathustra's perspective, the dreams of universal brotherhood and. . .community alike entrap the rare individual in stultifying prisons produced and maintained by forces external to his will" (Berkowitz, 1995: 148). Kaufman feels that the "question of salvation" (i.e., of attaining ubermensch status) is a "question for the single one" involved (1974: 166). Safranski advances the position that an ubermensch could be created by design—eugenics, as Nietzsche advocated—or as a personal project, involving only the individual, "for anyone who is creative and knows the whole spectrum of the human capacity for thought, fantasy, and imagination" (2002: 271).

There is no room in critical pedagogy for a Nietzschean ubermensch. This longed-for overman or superman is everything democracy and care are not. The would-be ubermensch is involved in an extremely individual, personal quest, where the values of care, the values of "attentiveness, responsibility, nurturance, compassion, [and] meeting others' needs" (Tronto, 1993) are irreconcilable. Because human beings are social animals, the ubermensch is an unrealizable dream that can only lead to the nihilism Nietzsche hated. Berkowitz notes that "the metamorphosis from man to superman dictates the overcoming of human beings' existence as social and political animals and thereby renders the care for and the organization of political society trivial pursuits" (1995: 151). An ethics and politics of care would never relegate the care and organization of society as "trivial pursuits." We cannot "overcome" our existence as social and political animals, not should we want to. The ubermensch "stands opposed to all forms of social and political life"; Self-overcoming and self-perfection requires that Nietzsche's overman completely dissolve "the bonds that tie him not only to the larger political community but to family and friends" (Berkowitz, 1995: 150 & 151).

The ubermensch is hostile to and destructive of other human beings. Nietzsche explains that the "last men" must and necessarily *will* exist for the ubermensch

to climb over, much as the jester bounded over the tightrope walker (1954: 331). Nietzsche posits in his notes that "A high culture can only stand upon a broad base, upon a strong and healthy consolidated mediocrity" (1968: 462). The ubermensch is cold, cruel, and sadistic. "To behold suffering gives pleasure," offers Nietzsche, "But to cause suffering affords an even greater pleasure" (1956: 198). A politically active ubermensch will be in a position to visit great suffering and pain on those beneath her.

Nietzsche recognized slavery as a necessity in ancient Greece and his own modern world. "Nietzsche defends slavery in ancient Greece as necessary for the self-creation of the powerful few," explains Schutte. Nietzsche "praised the Greeks for their dependence on slavery, arguing that slavery is required for the flourishing of art and culture" (Schutte, 1995: 287). Nietzsche was clear that ubermensch could not flourish in the Western world because of the "democratic bias against anything that dominates or wishes to dominate" (1956: 211). Attempting to rationalize Nietzsche's contention that a form of slavery was necessary for the future ubermensch to flourish, Mark Warren explains that "Nietzsche considered the economic needs of modern societies to be the same as ancient ones, and this implied that modern society could do without slaves only at the price of cultural mediocrity" (1985: 206). Nietzsche "thought it fortunate that Western culture had provided the material for a slave class necessary to the development of a higher culture" (Warren, 1985: 207). The ubermensch are concerned solely with self-improvement. This self-improvement depends on the maintenance of a lesser class from which the ubermensch can be distinguished and upon which they can raise themselves to the lofty heights.

If you're a teacher, you work with students and staff everyday of whom you can say, "This one is *better* than that one." You may mean a better teacher or a harder working student or even a better human being. Earlier in this book I expressed my disgust with a child who purposefully stepped on mice. Obviously, I think less of this child than others, than the ones who stopped her from crushing further any more mice. The trap lies in overlooking the structural and institutional (including familial) relationships that produced a child who'd gleefully squash mice. I'm not a gambling man, but I'm willing to bet there's a big difference in the ways this mouse-killer was raised versus the students who stopped her.

The allure and trap of Nietzsche's ubermensch lies in writing off people as inherently better or worse than others because of something intrinsic to them or their will power or their "will to power." There are good people in bad situations and bad people in good situations and before I'm willing to ascribe "goodness" or "badness" to one's nature, I'd need to see institutions restructured that encouraged greater goodness by making it more desirable and easier for individuals to pursue such. Bringing out the best in ourselves and others is a social endeavor. Preparing the way for the ubermensch, exerting the will to power, and transcending from camel to lion to child, these are tasks for the individual. In Nietzsche's utopian vision, other people only get in the way and hold us back from being more. For Nietzsche, others are a sign of the weakness and moral turpitude of the age.

6.5 Dostoyevsky and Extraordinary Man Theory

Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment* first appeared in monthly installments in a Russian literary journal in 1866. Seventeen years later the world was introduced to Nietzsche's ubermensch in 1883's four-part publication of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. It's hard to believe that Nietzsche did not read Dostoyevsky until *after* he wrote *Zarathustra*, but he didn't (Kaufmann, 1974). The similarities between Nietzsche's ubermensch and Dostoyevsky's extraordinary man theory are uncanny. I believe the similarities are there because both address a fundamental problem starting to be recognized, a problem rooted in the nascent freedom of the respective author's modernizing worlds. Hence both Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche speak of "stepping across" to something more. I write of these similarities and this problem of freedom because I feel they are more pronounced in our own day and worth our consideration.

In *Crime and Punishment* the twenty-three year old student Raskolnikov murders two women and later attempts to justify his crime as a test of his Extraordinary Man Theory. The theory holds that humanity is split into two groups, a majority of ordinary people and a few extraordinary ones. In Raskolnikov's words, "by the law of their nature, human beings i*n general* may be divided into two categories: a lower one (that of the ordinary), that is to say raw material which serves exclusively to bring into being more like itself, and another group of people who possess a gift or talent for saying *something* new" (1991: 313). The noble Svidrigailov describes Raskolnikov's theory to the student's sister, Dunya. Explaining that "people are divided. . .into raw material and extraordinary individuals, that's to say, the sort of individuals for whom, because of their exalted position, there is no law. . ." (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 566). Ordinary people, lords of the present, obey laws and authority, serving a conservative function in society. Extraordinary people, lords of the future, have the right to say new things, think new thoughts and break laws that constrain their originality. The Extraordinary Man, Raskolnikov explains to police detective Porfiry Petrovich, has a right "to allow his conscience to step across certain. . .obstacles, and then only if the execution of his idea (which may occasionally be the salvation of all mankind) requires it" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 312). Sound familiar?

When he murders a pawnbroker and her niece, Raskolnikov has not completely formulated his theory. Later he will contemplate and dismiss a number of justifications for his act, including that the murders were for the betterment of mankind. But what is clear is that extraordinary man as he does because—like Nietzsche's nobles and ubermensch—he so chooses, not necessarily because higher aspirations or lofty aims guide him. Extraordinary man's actions, like the noble's or ubermensch's, are an assertion of his will, of his individuality, of what separates him from the rest of the human herd.

Before murdering the women, Raskolnikov wonders if he has what it takes to be an extraordinary man. "[W]hat I needed to know," he confides to love-interest Sonya, "was whether I was a louse, like everyone else, or a man. Whether I could take the step across. . .whether I could dare. . ." (Dostoyevsky, 2002: 485).

Raskolnikov tells Sonya that "power is given only to those who dare to lower themselves and pick it up. Only one thing matters, one thing: to be able to dare!" (1991: 486). Murder is only another "obstacle" for the extraordinary man to dare to step across (1991: 312). Raskolnikov expresses admiration for Sonya, noting that, as a prostitute, "You've done the same thing, after all, haven't you? You've stepped across. . .found it in yourself to step across" (1991: 389). Raskolnikov believes that power exists for the extraordinary man with the courage to take it. "I wanted to make the dare, and so I killed someone," he explains (2002: 487). Dostoyevsky's protagonist dares, steps over with his crime, and is immediately overwhelmed by his guilt, his punishment.

According to his theory, if Raskolnikov were an extraordinary man, he'd be able to commit the murder and not dwell on it. But Raskolnikov suffers greatly throughout the novel, at times coming close to giving himself away. Through the course of the book, he is forced to confront the fact that he is not an extraordinary man, much like Zarathustra recognizes he is no ubermensch. Instead of discrediting his entire theory, Raskolnikov persists in believing that the failure was strictly personal on his part. Raskolnikov remains convinced that extraordinary men exist, though he is not one.

Nevertheless the police detective, Porfiry, throughout *Crime and Punishment*, recognizes a potential extraordinariness to Raskolnikov, albeit not the same qualities championed by the ex-student. "I, at any rate, consider you as a man of the most noble character, sir, with even the beginnings of true greatness of soul," the cop tells Raskolnikov, "though I don't agree with you in all your convictions. . ." (1991: 522).

Porfiry is a lover of his Russia and her people. He sees great changes coming to his country and embraces them. His studies of psychology and his adherence to the new laws signal a very "Western" outlook. Porfiry feels great men must come forward to lead his country. Meeting Raskolnikov for the first time, Porfiry feels an immediate liking for the young man: "When I made your acquaintance, I felt an attachment to you" (1991: 522). Porfiry suspects Raskolnikov has committed the murders, his instincts as a police lieutenant tell him it is so, but he utilizes Russia's new law reforms to allow Raskolnikov to come to terms with his act. Instead of arresting him right away, Porfiry leaves Raskolnikov free to contemplate his deed and wrestle with his own personal torment. Porfiry's hope is that Raskolnikov will accept responsibility for his crime and begin his ascent to extraordinariness.

Raskolnikov's Extraordinary Man Theory is intensely individualistic. Though Porfiry recognizes the need for leaders and extraordinary men and women, he doesn't view these few as antagonistic to the many. In fact he sees them as necessary to strengthen and modernize the country and its people. Porfiry views Raskolnikov's Extraordinary Man theory as a youthful extravagance. Indeed, he feels that if Raskolnikov could get over such ideas he could possibly go on to be one of the great men of Russia. "I think you're one of the kind," he confides to Raskolnikov, "who even if his intestine were being cut out would stand looking at his torturers with a smile—as long as he'd found a God, or a faith" (1991: 532). Porfiry's faith is in a great future for his country and he believes the student Raskolnikov capable of embracing that faith.

Raskolnikov does find the faith of Porfiry and he finds it through and with others, not over their dead bodies or despite them. Raskolnikov's redemption and faith are found in his embracing Sonya and through her humanity as a whole. Even the doomed Svidrigailov sees Raskolnikov's potential, mentioning to Dunya that her brother will "accomplish a lot of good works yet, and all this will be wiped from the slate... He may yet be a great man" (1991: 567). Porfiry's alluding to his latent greatness prompts Raskolnikov at one point to accuse the police lieutenant of playing prophet.

Representing modernity and new ideas in Russia, Porfiry sees punishment as a chance for rehabilitation. Therefore he gives Raskolnikov time to come to grips with his crime, to recognize that he is not above other men and women, and to commit himself to humanity by first accepting responsibility for his actions. Porfiry never wavers in his determination concerning Raskolnikov's potential. "I say, don't turn your nose up at life!" the police inspector admonishes a young man with years of prison time ahead of him. "You've still a great deal ahead of you" (1991: 531).

"Pain and suffering are inevitable for persons of broad awareness and depth of heart," Raskolnikov explains to a friend. "The truly great are, in my view, always bound to feel a great sense of sadness during their time upon earth" (1991: 317). Throughout *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov is torn by a great sense of sadness, of remorse and indecision. Pain and suffering are his. By the end of the novel, Raskolnikov has shown himself to be one of great awareness and depth of heart. He may not be the Extraordinary Man of his theory, but as Porfiry intuited, Raskolnikov is an extraordinary man.

What factors lead Raskolnikov to want to be an extraordinary man in the first place? He hasn't spent 10 years in a cave like Nietzsche's prophet. Raskolnikov is a poor ex-student with troubles. He fears he is letting his family down. His girlfriend has recently died. His money woes include nonpayment of rent to his landlady. Raskolnikov is unhappy with who he is and wants to be something else. He looks to historical figures like Napoleon and Lycurgus as heroes, "the law-makers and guiding spirits of mankind," but heroes whose societies did not recognize as such (1991: 312). Raskolnikov feels extraordinary men "are destroyers, or have a tendency that way, depending on their abilities"; they seek "the destruction of the present reality in the name of one that is better" though "the masses are almost never prepared to acknowledge them this right, they flog them and hound them (more or less)..." (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 313). Raskolnikov is convinced extraordinary men are so ahead of their times that they can only be misjudged, with their societies usually regarding them as criminals. Extraordinary man marches to his own drums and "for the sake of his idea," and when necessary, "to step over a dead body, over a pool of blood, then he is able within his own conscience..." to do so (1991: 313). Raskolnikov's embrace of the Extraordinary Man Theory is an attempt to rise above suffering humanity, of which he is all too well aware he is a part. "*You can't get along without us*," Porfiry reminds him, although the young murderer certainly tries (2002: 533). And it is humanity, in the form of his prostitute girlfriend Sonya, that will finally save Raskolnikov.

6.6 Svidrigailov as Extraordinary Man

In Section 6.3, I argued that the jester is an ubermensch. As far as I know, this is not a reading Nietzsche encouraged or would have agreed with. In much the same way I will argue here that a character from *Crime and Punishment* is the embodiment of Extraordinary Man Theory, although again Dostoyevsky never makes this explicit nor would I expect him to necessarily agree.

Arkady Ivanovich Svidrigailov is the epitome of Raskolnikov's Extraordinary Man Theory though Raskolnikov never seems to make the connection. Indeed, by the end of the novel, Raskolnikov views his sister's would-be suitor as "the most empty and worthless villain in all the world" (1991: 545). Still, the signs are undeniable. Raskolnikov, theorist of the Extraordinary Man, is drawn to Svidrigailov in whom "was concealed some hidden power that held sway over him" (1991: 535). Svidrigailov is too busy *being* an extraordinary man to ever consider himself one or conceive of such.

As an extraordinary man, Svidrigailov can commit heinous acts without compunction. "I'm a lecherous and idle man," he matter-of-factly tells Raskolnikov with no hint of irony (1991: 347). When Raskolnikov confronts him about the rape of a mute 13-year old who later hangs herself, Svidrigailov dismisses the issue as another of so many "banal little stories" (1991: 547). There are reasons to believe Svidrigailov responsible for the deaths of his manservant and wife, not least of which are the visits the departed pay him in his dreams. Further complicating the character, Svidrigailov is capable of decent acts, providing for Sonya's family once her stepmother dies.

Svidrigailov acts to satisfy his sensual desires. If a moment's impulse compels him to an act others will judge good he does so, but he doesn't act from some deontic justification. He acts because it pleases him at that time to do so. Svidrigailov views himself as above humanity and does not accept the sanction or validity of laws which are meant for everyone but himself. Raskolnikov, torn with doubt, confesses to Sonya at one point, "the very fact that I'd started to search my conscience and ask myself whether I had any right to assume power over someone else like that meant that I didn't..." (1991: 487). Svidrigailov doesn't stop to consider such matters because he is too busy fulfilling *his* needs as extraordinary man. He is without scruples and does not see why they matter to a man such as he. "Oh, I'm not really interested in what anyone thinks of me," he says to Raskolnikov (1991: 340).

Svidrigailov's fate illustrates the bankruptcy of Raskolnikov's theory. Svidrigailov has lived his life apart from humanity as an extraordinary man but another—a woman—brings about his downfall. Where Sonya accepts Raskolnikov, warts and all, Dunya completely rejects Svidrigailov. This forces the extraordinary man to realize that he is not above the fray. At one point in the novel Dostoyevsky has Svidrigailov admit to Raskolnikov, "I sometimes wish I were something . . . but I'm nothing, I have no specialty! Sometimes I get very bored" (1991: 542). Though Svidrigailov is ostensibly alluding to a calling, his sense of emptiness arises from more than the lack of a job.

Following Dunya's final rejection, Svidrigailov realizes how bereft he is. Bereft because he has effectively estranged himself from humanity in the mistaken belief that he was somehow above humanity. Svidrigailov has ignored the clues—namely his dreams—that he is a part of the human race. Dostoyevsky's message appears to be that no man can set himself apart from the species. Svidrigailov is not as self-sufficient as he thought himself to be.

Confronted with the realization that he needs humanity but humanity, in the form of Dunya, rejects him, Svidrigailov is broken. Indeed, he "*can't get along without us*," but he has painted himself into a hole. His only choice as extraordinary man is to commit suicide. Raskolnikov hears of Svidrigailov's death but doesn't see it as discrediting or even related to his theory.

6.7 The Burden of Freedom

Nietzsche's ubermensch, Raskolnikov's Extraordinary Man Theory, Vanguardism of the Left or Right, talented tenths, wanting to stand out and above, to lead, to know yourself different and unique and thereby greater than others, in short, aristocratic elitism, why does this tendency have such appeal and resonate as it does? With the advance of industrialization and capitalist theory and economic relations has come the triumph of bourgeois freedom. Bourgeois freedom is a freedom of abstract individuals where we stand alone, apart from others who face us as potential foes. We are "more independent, self-reliant, and critical," yet "more isolated, alone and afraid" at the same time (Fromm, 1994: 104). We find ourselves "threatened by powerful suprapersonal forces, capital and the market," powers rooted in human beings and our relationships but confronting us as otherworldly things over which we have little or no control (Fromm, 1994: 63). Our freedom is a burden, one many of us would readily jettison or surrender to another who promises us security, stability, and certainty.

What's wrong with the freedom we experience today in modern civilizations? People in contemporary Western societies are indeed free, but that freedom is tricky. Discussing the differences between political emancipation and the emancipation of humanity, Karl Marx noted that political emancipation, "the reduction of man. . .to a member of civil society, to an egoistic, independent individual, and. . .to a citizen, a juridical person" is a step in the right direction, but not a step far enough (1983: 100). Human emancipation eludes humanity at the same time that men and women are free.

Erich Fromm differentiates between positive and negative freedom. Negative freedom is freedom *from*, synonymous with bourgeois freedom. Freedom from is epitomized in the Western conception of democratic–capitalist freedom, an onerous freedom we suffer that can lead people to, in the words of Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor, "find some one quickly to whom he can hand over that gift of freedom of which the ill-fated creature is born" (1929: 312). We are overwhelmed with a negative freedom that leaves us politically equal but individually alone and separate.

Negative freedom is seen in Dostoyevsky's Underground Man character, who remembers his life as "gloomy, untidy, and barbarously solitary. I had no friends, and even avoided speaking to people, retreating further and further into my corner" (1972: 47).

In Western societies and others forced to accept the Western developmental model, people are free individuals and we think ourselves such. No one tells us what to do, what to think, or who to vote for. However "modern political democracy, if it restricts itself to the purely political sphere, cannot sufficiently counteract the results of the. . .insignificance of the individual" (Fromm, 2000: 272). Ours is an abridged freedom and it carries a price. "The process of individualism is one of growing strength and integration of [a person's] individual personality," explains Fromm, "but it is at the same time a process in which the original identity with others is lost and in which the [person] becomes more separate from them" (1941: 30). The individualism that comes with our freedom brings with it a sense of loneliness, of isolation and purposelessness.

Consider the protagonist of Jean-Paul Sartre's short story, *The Childhood of a Leader*. On his journey from youth to adulthood, Lucien Fleurier wrestles with an existential angst centering on his existence and the absurdity of such. As he grows up, Lucien looks for answers and relief in a variety of sources including family, suicidal ideation, sexual experimentation, Freudian psychoanalysis, mentors, and friends. These all prove transitory and fail to relieve his anxiety. Lucien is left feeling alone and empty. "'To be alone,' he cried, wringing his hands, 'to have no one to advise me, to tell me if I'm on the right path'" (Sartre, 1948: 110).

Lucien finds relief in anti-Semitism and fascism. Hating Jews gives him a sense of identity. "I am Lucien! Somebody who can't stand Jews," he tells himself (Sartre, 1948: 142). Lucien wins respect and admiration from his peers for his anti-Semitism in interwar France. He insults guests at a party held at his friend Guigard's home. Instead of angering Guigard and making Lucien look like an idiot, Guigard remarks to him at school the following day that "my parents say you were right and you couldn't have done otherwise because of your convictions" (Sartre, 1948: 140).

In Lucien's mind, his anti-Semitism is bigger than he is. He tells Guigard "it's stronger than I am" and he tells himself that it is "sacred" (Sartre, 1948: 140 & 142). For an authoritarian personality such as Lucien's, hatred of Jews is a symptom of the burden of freedom. His virulent racism serves as a catalyst for Lucien's burgeoning megalomania. At the end of the story, he prepares to assume a role of leadership in life. "He had believed that he existed by chance for a long time. . .[but] His place in the sun was marked. . .long before his father's marriage: if he had come into the world it was to occupy that place. . ." (Sartre, 1948: 143). Assured of his place and meaning in life, Lucien decides to command men and women and grow a mustache—a nod to Hitler methinks?

The free person, alone and knowing she's alone, scared, feels he has no choice but "to fall back, to give up his freedom. . .to try to overcome his aloneness by eliminating the gap that has arisen between his individual self and the world" (Fromm, 1994: 139). Erich Fromm posits that the individual has at her disposal "mechanisms of escape" from the burden of freedom. Chief of these mechanisms is the

authoritarianism Lucien embraced. Authoritarianism is "the tendency to give up the independence of one's own individual self and to fuse with somebody or something outside of oneself in order to acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking" (Fromm, 1994: 140). In *Notes from Underground*, Underground Man tries to fuse himself with Liza the prostitute as Sartre's Lucien fused himself with fascism.

Authoritarianism can be exercised by becoming an authority over others or surrendering oneself to an authority. In the Grand Inquisitor chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*, Ivan recounts a tale to his brother about Christ's return to earth and subsequent arrest by the Church. "[T]oday," the Grand Inquisitor tells Christ, "people are more persuaded than ever that they have perfect freedom yet they have brought their freedom to us and laid it humbly at our feet" (1929: 308). Echoing Nietzsche, the Grand Inquisitor lists "miracle, mystery and authority" as the powers capable of pacifying humanity's "fearful burden of free choice" (Dostoyevsky, 1929: 313). For Dostoyevsky's Inquisitor, freedom is a curse for the masses. What the people really want is "to find someone to worship" (1929: 311). People seek an authority figure that can "endure the freedom which they have found so dreadful and to rule over them" (1929: 311). Authoritarianism is an effort on the part of the individual to bridge a "gap that has arisen between his individual self and the world" (Fromm, 1994: 139).

The individual drawn to authoritarianism exhibits "the tendency to give up the independence of one's own self with somebody or something outside of oneself in order to acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking" (Fromm, 2000: 140). Comfort for the authoritarian personality—be she Lucien, Underground Man, the Grand Inquisitor or the people of whom the Grand Inquisitor speaks—comes in the form of masochistic and sadistic strivings.

Masochism manifests itself in feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, and individual insignificance (Fromm, 1994: 141). The Underground Man exemplifies impotence: "Not only couldn't I make myself anything: neither good nor bad, neither a scoundrel nor an honest man, neither a hero nor an insect" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 16). His inferiority and insignificance shine through in admissions such as "nobody else was like me and I wasn't like anybody else. 'I am one person and they are everybody'" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 48–49). His insignificance is rammed down his throat when a military officer manhandles him, physically moving Underground Man from out of his path on the St. Petersburg streets. "I could have forgiven him for striking me," Underground Man remembers, "But I couldn't forgive that moving me from place to place without even seeing me" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 52). Raskolnikov is another Dostoyevsky character tormented by his powerlessness, with his "teasing monologues about his own impotence and lack of decision" (1991: 36).

The masochistic person blames fate for his problems. "The feature common to all authoritarian thinking," explains Fromm, "is the conviction that life is determined by forces outside of one man's self, his interest, his wishes" (1994: 169). Underground Man's travails with a tooth ache provide a case in point. He feels that his teeth will continue to hurt until "if something wills it, they will stop aching, and if it doesn't, they will go on aching for another three months" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 24). Underground Man categorizes toothaches as another "practical joke of

an unidentified jester," in a word, fate (Ibid.). To the circumstances surrounding his crime, Raskolnikov imputes "a certain strangeness and mystery, as if it involved the working of certain peculiar influences and coincidences" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 99). After overhearing a conversation between a student and an officer in which the student lays out a plot to murder the very same pawnbroker Raskolnikov intends to, the protagonist of *Crime and Punishment* cannot shake a feeling "as though here some form of predestination, of augury had been at work" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 102). Masochistic strivings are a variant of the fatalism Freire described earlier on. As such masochistic strivings are a form of domestication, fitting the individual to the way the world is and not the way the world could be.

The masochistic personality type will submit to another in order to feel a part of something. "If the individual finds cultural patterns that satisfy these masochistic strivings (like the submission under the 'leader' in Fascist ideology)," notes Fromm, "he gains some security by finding himself united with millions of others..." (1941: 152). The masochistic personality is the epitome of Nietzsche's contemptuous herd and last men. This personality seeks "the values of complete submission" and a "craving for community of worship" that the Grand Inquisitor bespeaks (Dostoyevsky, 1929: 312 & 317). Sartre's Lucien finds a sense of self through belonging when he embraces racism and amuses his new friends with racist jokes: "Everybody began to laugh and a sort of exaltation came over Lucien" (1948: 134). Fromm's work on negative freedom and authoritarianism concerned the German people who believed themselves free and voted an Adolph Hitler into office. These are extreme examples. The masochistic personality can find relief in a religious movement, political party, or in a relationship with another person. We are social animals, so not every Baptist or Barak Obama supporter or woman who loves a man is evidence of the masochistic personality type, but we all know religious and political fanatics and individuals who are stuck in unhealthy relationships that exhibit this tendency.

The goal of masochistic strivings is "to get rid of the individual self, to lose oneself; in other words, to get rid of the burden of freedom" (Fromm, 1994: 151). Those who embrace masochism as a mechanism of escape are doomed to a "tormenting conflict," with the masochist seeking "to get rid of the individual self with all its shortcomings, conflicts, and unbearable aloneness, but they only succeed in removing the most noticeable pain or they even lead to greater suffering" (Fromm, 1994: 151 & 153).

Masochistic strivings often exist alongside sadistic strivings within the same person. Underground Man, Svidrigailov, and Raskolnikov all exemplify this blending. Fromm posits that the sadistic tendency manifests itself in many ways, including "the wish to make others suffer or to see them suffer. This suffering can be physical, but more often it is mental suffering" (1994: 143). Underground Man recounts his days as a civil servant, "I was a bad civil servant. I was rude, and I enjoyed being rude... When people used to come to the desk where I sat, asking for information, I snarled at them, and was hugely delighted when I succeeded in hurting somebody's feelings" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 15). No, he didn't work at the DMV. The Underground Man's sadistic tendencies are further exemplified by his withholding of wages from his servant (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 109). *Crime and Punishment*'s

Svidrigailov desires Dunya, but as her mother explains in a letter to Raskolnikov, Svidrigailov's early "madcap had long had a hankering after Dunya, but had been concealing it beneath a façade of rudeness and contempt towards her" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 64).

The aim of the sadist "is to hurt actively, to humiliate, embarrass others, or to see them in embarrassing and humiliating situations" (Fromm, 1994: 143). Raskolnikov torments the prostitute Sonya, asking her, "You don't earn every day I hope?" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 380). Nice guy that he is, Raskolnikov suggests to Sonya that the future holds a life of prostitution for her little step-sister as well (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 380). Why does Raskolnikov devil the woman he loves? "[I]t was her tears I wanted, I wanted to see her fright, to watch her heart ache and torment itself!" he confesses (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 601).

Underground Man says equally nasty things to the prostitute Liza. On the morning following their first night together, he tells her, "...even though you are young and attractive and pretty now, with feelings and sensitivity; well, do you know, as soon as I woke just now, I was revolted to find myself here with you!" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 96). Just the words a girl wants to hear, right? Consider his musings on his sadistic pillow talk: "For some time I had been feeling that I must have harrowed her soul and crushed her heart, and the more convinced I grew of it, the more I wanted to attain my end as quickly and as powerfully as possible" (1972: 100). "Do you know that you can deliberately torture somebody out of love?" Underground Man asks his readers (1972: 93). "The sadist needs the person over whom he rules," Fromm reminds us, "he needs him very badly, since his own feeling of strength is rooted in the fact that he is the master over someone" (1994: 144). "Without power and tyranny over somebody I can't live," confesses Underground Man (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 118).

The sadist, explains Fromm, bribes the object of his sadism "with material things, with praise, assurances of love, the display of wit and brilliance, or by showing concern" (1994: 145). Svidrigailov offers Dunya material goods, "holding out various rewards to her and telling her...that he would give up everything and move with her to another estate or possibly even abroad" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 65). He voices his concern to Raskolnikov that Dunya is marrying another for the sake of her family (1991: 347). Svidrigailov shows up in the novel offering to give Dunya 10,000 rubles (1991: 348). He suggests he can save Dunya's brother if she consents to be with him: "Yes...one word from you, and he is saved! I...I will save him" (1991: 568).

Likewise, Underground Man seeks to assert his power over Liza. "I have reached the stage," he confides, "when I sometimes think how that the whole of love consists in the right...to tyrannize over the beloved" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 119). A desire for power and tyranny over the loved one is a not uncommon feature of love in modern society. This "lust for power is not rooted in strength but in weakness," says Fromm. "It is the expression of the inability of the individual self to stand alone and live. It is the desperate attempt to gain secondary strength where genuine strength is lacking" (1994: 160). "In the end one loves one's desire and not what is desired," opines Nietzsche (1989: 93). Do Svidrigailov and Underground Man truly love Sonya and Liza or do they love the idea of being loved and being in love?

6.8 Dostoyevsky's Portents

Henry Giroux explains that "domination is subjectively experienced through its internalization and sedimentation in the very needs of the personality" (in Freire, 1985: xix). In several of Dostoyevsky's characters, we see authoritarian character structure at work, both the sadistic and masochistic variants. Dostoyevsky lived and set his novels in a Russia that had only recently started along the path to modernization and westernization. Underground Man and characters from *Crime and Punishment*—notably Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov—are portents, the human reflections of a new mode of life and production just beginning to take hold in Dostoyevsky's St. Petersburg.

The authoritarian character "admires authority and tends to submit to it, but at the same time he wants to be an authority himself and have others submit to him" (Fromm, 1994: 162). The Authoritarian Character also combines "a tendency to defy authority and to resent any kind of influence from 'above' " (Fromm, 1994: 167). This explains another seemingly contradictory attitude at work in a character like Underground Man: on the one hand he holds certain segments of his society in high esteem; on the other he detests these very segments. For example, he expresses a "great respect for medicine and for doctors," yet at the same time scorns "all those venerable elders, those silver-haired, fragrant old men," the "extremely wise and experienced advisers and head-shakers" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 15–17).

"For the authoritarian character there exist, so to speak, two sexes: the powerful ones and the powerless ones" writes Fromm (1994: 166). This dichotomy is seen in both *Notes From Underground* and *Crime and Punishment*. Underground Man identifies "men like that, men of action, doers" and men like "us. . .men who think and therefore don't do anything" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 20). He is "green with envy" of these spontaneous men, yet he also has contempt for them. "They are stupid" these "people with strong nerves, who don't understand certain refinements of pleasure." (1972: 21–22). For the Authoritarian Character, "the world is composed of people with power and those without it, of superior ones and inferior ones" (Fromm, 1994: 171).

Authoritarian philosophy "is rooted in extreme desperation, in the complete lack of faith, and it leads to nihilism, to the denial of life" (Fromm, 1994: 171). Ilya Petrovitch, another police official (but no relation to Porfiry the detective), asks Raskolnikov if he is a nihilist, explaining that "you know, there's an awful lot of nihilists around these days; well, I mean, it's understandable; what kind of times are these, I ask you?" (1991: 606). Though not a form of nihilism, Raskolnikov's Extraordinary Man theory is rooted in desperation. As Svidrigailov explains, Raskolnikov's fraught existence is marked by "hunger, cramped living quarters, ragged clothing, a vivid awareness of the splendor of his social position, and of the situation of his mother and sister" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 566).

The Authoritarian Character disdains those he perceives as weak. "[P]owerless people or institutions automatically arouse his contempt," Fromm notes. "The very sight of a powerless person makes him want to attack, dominate, humiliate. . ." (1994: 167). When first meeting Liza in the brothel, Underground Man recalls,

"Something foul seemed to sting me; I went straight to her. . ." (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 85). Her "naïve expectation" drives him into a rage (1972: 112). Toward the end of the novella, when Liza comes to visit him in his squalor and finds him berating his servant, Underground Man is "vaguely aware that I should make her pay dearly for all this." (1972: 112). For the Authoritarian Character, "lack of power is always an unmistakable sign of guilt and inferiority" (Fromm, 1994: 170). "He suffered greatly," Svidrigailov says of Raskolnikov, "and is still suffering, from the notion that while he was able to construct a theory, he wasn't able to do the stepping across without reflection, and so consequently is not a man of genius" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 566).

The sadistic personality type requires another person to rule over "since his own feeling of strength is rooted in the fact that he is the master over someone" (Fromm, 1994: 144). Sadism also represents an escape attempt from "the isolation and weakness of one's own self" (Fromm, 2000: 156). Sartre's Lucien becomes a sadistic figure preparing to further dominate others. The sadistic personality also shares a fatalistic life view, seeing life ruled by fate and destiny. Thus Lucien's conviction at the end of Sartre's story that fate has delivered him to his position of dominance. Or Raskolnikov's certainty that extraordinary men are the result of "a process that so far remains a mystery to us," "a law of some kind" as "all this cannot be the result of chance" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 315–316).

Sadism is alive and well in the everyday classroom. Students are sadistic to other students, and there are teachers who can be sadistic to students as well. My experience has been that some adults, frustrated with their professional or personal lives, take out there disappointment and aggression on others. Unfortunately, the children in their classrooms make convenient victims. Such sadism teaches students by its existence that it is acceptable, that the power differential between teacher and student justifies it.

6.9 Love and Dostoyevsky's Characters

For Fromm, the full answer to the problem of freedom "lies in the achievement of interpersonal union, of fusion with another person, in *love*" (2000: 17). "The deepest need of man," he writes, ". . . is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness" (2000: 9). Mechanisms of escape like the masochistic and sadistic strivings are attempts to transcend the isolation and lonesomeness inherent in modern freedom. "Man can only go forward. . .by finding a new harmony, a human one" (Fromm, 2000: 7). Love is the answer to the problem of freedom.

Underground Man and Svidrigailov do not find love and hence never progress to positive freedom. They fail to transcend the vicious cycle of separation and forced solitude. "Being separate means being cut off. . .." Fromm reminds us, "Separateness is the source of intense anxiety" (2000: 8). Borrowing from Fromm's parlance, these two characters are only able to achieve *symbiotic union*. Symbiotic union is an "immature form of love"; immature in that it is not a fully developed human capacity. The active form of symbiotic union is domination, sadism; the

passive form is submission, masochism (2000: 17). "Isolation, separation, loneliness reduces relations among men to a struggle for superiority or inferiority," notes George Lukacs (1962: 151). Unable to achieve union with others, Underground Man and Svidrigailov cannot realize their full human potential.

Fromm sees a dissolution of love in Western society. For most individuals, love does not represent a complete realization of the self with another, but an attempt to assuage the "terrors and horrors of existence." Fromm decries the "socially patterned pathology of love," a "herd mentality" he espies in Western society's concept of love. In Western capitalist society, relations between human beings "are essentially those of alienated automatons," where everyone tries to conform to a point such that nonconformity *is* conformity, with the result that "everybody remains utterly alone, pervaded by the deep sense of insecurity, anxiety and guilt which always results when human separateness cannot be overcome" (2000: 84).

This socially patterned pathology of love is seen clearly in both Underground Man and Svidrigailov. "Their aim is to be loved, not to love," Fromm could have been writing of either Dostoyevsky character. "There is usually a good deal of vanity in this type of man, more or less hidden grandiose ideas" (2000: 88). One of Underground Man's "hidden grandiose ideas" is a fantasy involving Liza seeking her salvation in him. In his fantasy,

> I save Liza by the mere fact that she comes to me and I talk to her. . .I develop her, educate her. . . Finally I notice that she loves me, loves me passionately. . .. Finally, covered with confusion, beautiful, trembling and sobbing, she throws herself at my feet and declares that I am her savior and she loves me better than anything else in the world (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 106–107).

Underground Man's fantasy reveals his vanity, his sadistic strivings, and his fundamental need to be loved and mesh with another. It is a need that will go unmet because he can only view love in terms of domination and submission. "Even in my underground dreams," he confesses, "I did not picture love otherwise than as a struggle, always beginning with hatred and ending with moral subjugation" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 119). Underground Man has an inkling of what love can do. He recognizes that love, for a woman "comprises all resurrection, all salvation from whatever sort of ruin, and all regeneration. . ." (Ibid.). But Underground Man cannot—will not—love Liza: ". . .I could no longer fall in love, because, I repeat, with me to love meant to tyrannize and hold the upper hand morally" (Ibid.). His inability to love is not a recent development; it is a part of his character structure as a resident of the burgeoning metropolis of St. Petersburg where "we are all in a greater or lesser degree crippled" by authoritarian character structures (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 122).

Underground Man arouses both our pity and our contempt. In him we see the "tormenting conflict" of Fromm's mechanisms of escape at work. When Liza visits, he breaks down, chastising her, himself, his poverty, and the way he treats his servant. Liza pities him, understanding, as Underground Man himself does, "that part of it that a woman always understands first, if she sincerely loves, and that was that I myself was unhappy" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 117). Liza comforts Underground Man, embracing him as he cries. "How I hated her and how strongly I was attracted to

her at that moment!" (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 118). But Underground Man has to screw things up: he insults Liza, drives her from him, adds insult to injury by pressing money into her hand on her departure. When he finds she has tossed his "crumpled blue five-ruble note" on the table, he rushes out into the street to find her, kiss her feet, and beg her forgiveness (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 121). But Liza is gone and it is too late for the Underground Man.

Fromm wrote of individuals "who say things which antagonize those whom they love or on whom they are dependent.... With such people, it almost seems as if they were following advice given them by an enemy to behave in such a way as to be most detrimental to themselves" (1994: 142). "Knavery so easily goes with sentiment," concurs Underground Man (Dostoyevsky, 1972: 93). His knavery costs him his love and his possibility of realizing positive freedom. His sadistic and masochistic behaviors are symptoms of his authoritarian character structure. Underground Man could be the poster boy for Fromm's authoritarian character. "Just try giving us, for example, as much independence as possible," invites Underground Man, recalling the words of the Grand Inquisitor, "untie the hands of any one of us, loosen our bonds, and we.... I assure you we should all immediately beg to go back under discipline" (1972: 122).

Svidrigailov is another example of a Dostoyevsky character that is only capable of a socially patterned pathology of love. In Fromm's concept of *idolatrous love*, the idolater idolizes the loved person because he is "alienated from his own powers as he projects them onto the loved one" (1991: 92). Svidrigailov idolizes Dunya, telling Raskolnikov "your sister possesses so many virtues," whereas he is a lazy lecher (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 347). Idolatrous love is characterized by "the intensity and suddenness of the love experience" at the beginning of the relationship (Fromm, 2000: 92). Svidrigailov never admits it, but there are indications that he poisoned his wife in order to get her out of the way that he might have Dunya. He follows the girl and her mother to St. Petersburg. His love for Dunya is both sudden and intense.

Idolatrous love is often considered the "great love" but actually "demonstrates the hunger and despair of the idolater" (Fromm, 2000: 92). Svidrigailov's attempts at securing Dunya's love would fail to rescue him even if he succeeded in possessing her. In his overtures to Dunya, Svidrigailov seeks the comfort of symbiotic union. He seeks to lose himself in Dunya, to merge with her person. "Whatever you tell me to do, I will do it!" he implores her. "I will do anything. I will do the impossible. Whatever you believe in, I will believe in it too. I'll do anything, anything!" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 568).

Svidrigailov has stood alone most of his life, setting himself apart from the rest of humanity. He arrives in St. Petersburg and has no human contact. "This is the third day I've been at large," he tells Raskolnikov when they first meet, "and I haven't declared myself to anyone" (1991: 341). The embodiment of Raskolnikov's Extraordinary Man theory, by the end of the novel Svidrigailov is revealed to be less self-sufficient than he presumes himself to be. No man can set himself apart from humanity; recall the words of police inspector Porfiry: "You can't get along without us." Of modern man Fromm writes, "He would become insane could he not liberate himself from this prison [of isolation and separateness] and reach out, unite

himself in some form or other with men, with the world outside" (2000: 8). Rejected by Dunya, Svidrigailov is unable to connect with the "world outside," he cannot "overcome his separateness" or "leave the prison of his aloneness" (Fromm, 2000: 8–9). He spends his last night of Earth plagued by nightmares and the thought that "perhaps she [Dunya] would have made a new man of me somehow" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 581). The following morning he blows his brains out.

In contrast to the symbiotic union of masochistic and sadistic relationships, love "is union under the condition of preserving one's integrity, one's individuality" (Fromm, 2000: 19). Svidrigailov and Underground Man seek a love whose attainment would mean the loss of the self in another. Fromm writes that love is "an active power" in human beings, a power that "unites" people and helps them overcome their isolation while at the same time allowing them to retain their "integrity." Unlike symbiotic union, "[i]n love the paradox occurs that two beings become one and yet remain two" (Fromm, 2000: 19).

Love is the answer to the problem of freedom. Love lets one "fuse with another person so as to transcend the prison of one's separateness" (2000: 27). Sonya is Raskolnikov's link to humanity: "he had felt that in her lay his only hope and salvation" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 490). He expresses this when he bows to her, kissing her feet, and explaining, "It wasn't you I was bowing to, but the whole of human suffering" (1991: 380). "We live as one, in harmony," Sonya explains (1991: 377). Petrovich expresses a bond with Raskolnikov, "a sense of humaneness" that goes beyond the individual and makes one "forever obliged to be aware of the citizen and the human being in myself" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 606). Fromm sees love as "the force which keeps the human race together, the clan, the family, society" (2000: 17). Once Raskolnikov finds love in Sonya, he is able to accept his punishment. He can bond with his fellow human beings. Where his fellow prisoners first treat him with disdain, Raskolnikov finds "he had actually begun to talk to them, and they had replied to him in kindly tones" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 629).

Love is act of revolutionary human consciousness. "In the act of loving, of giving myself," writes Fromm, ". . .I find myself, I discover myself, I discover us both, I discover man" (2000: 29). Fusing with another in love, "I know you, I know myself, I know everybody. . ." (2000: 28). Fusing with Sonya in a healthy love relationship, Raskolnikov is saved. Love leads him to a "gradual renewal, his gradual rebirth, his gradual transition from one world to another" (Dostoyevsky, 1991: 630). Sonya and Raskolnikov face a "renewed future, and complete recovery to a new life" (1991: 629). Dostoyevsky tells us that "What had revived them was love, the heart of the one containing an infinite source of life for the heart of the other" (ibid.).

6.10 Democracy on the Offensive

"The serious threat to our democracy," John Dewey points out, "is not the existence of foreign totalitarian states. It is the existence within our own personal attitudes and within our own institutions of conditions which have given a victory to external authority, discipline, uniformity and dependence upon The Leader in foreign

countries" (cited in Fromm, 2000: 3). In a similar vein, Erich Fromm counsels "it is our task to recognizer that the black miracle of Nazism was only the German version...of a universal contemporary potential" (1994: 327). We are born and socialized to roles our society's institutions and relationships make available to us. In the end, as Dewey notes, "the best test of any form of society is the ideal which it proposes for the forms of its life, and the degree in which it realizes this ideal" (1993: 65). Throughout this book, I have railed against "black miracles" and dehumanization in favor of greater democracy and positive freedom. But greater democracy and humanization won't evolve on their own; it is up to us to work together incessantly for their realization. What were burgeoning character traits seen in the fictional characters of Dostoyevsky and promoted in the philosophy of Nietzsche are today full-blown realities we can grow into or fight against. "A good democracy," says Freire, "warns, clarifies, teaches, and educates. It also defends itself from the actions of those who, by offending their human nature, deny and demean democracy" (1996: 156). The victory of freedom and humanization is a possibility, but for its realization "democracy must take the offensive" (Fromm, 1994: 274).

In the United States of America and her classrooms, we talk about democracy a lot. Noam Chomsky says that "the more there is a need to talk about the ideals of democracy, the less democratic the system usually is" (2000: 17). Not surprisingly our schools are rarely democratic spaces. And the democracy discussed in them almost always refers to a truncated form, the political form. Dewey notes that political democracy "is not the most inspiring of the different meanings of democracy," while Freire holds that "the democracy that is solely political denies itself" (1997: 173; 1996: 146). Democracy "is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicative experience" (Dewey, 1993: 110). Democracy is a way of life. As such it should inform every facet of our existence, from our personal relationships to our economic and social systems. "A social democracy," explains Dewey,

> signifies, most obviously, a state of social life where there is a wide and varied distribution of opportunities; where there is social mobility or scope for change of position and station; where there is free circulation of experiences and ideas, making for a wide recognition of common interests and purposes, and where utility of social and political organization to its members is so obvious as to enlist their warm and constant support in its behalf (1993: 122).

"To be realized," Dewey says of democracy, "it must affect all modes of human association, the family, the school, industry, religion" (1928: 143). A truly political democracy is not possible except where "democracy is social—where, if you please, it is moral" (Dewey, 1993: 121). Paulo Freire warns that we shouldn't dismiss democracy because it turns out so often to be a sham. Instead, "the fundamental point" is to perfect it (Freire, 1996: 137).

Dewey describes democracy as "a way of life controlled by a working faith in the possibilities of human nature" (1993: 242). The democratic faith "has always professed belief in the potentialities of every human being, and all the need for providing conditions that will enable these potentialities to come to realization" (Dewey, 1993: 208). But this faith needs to be enacted for it "becomes sentimental when it is not put systematically into practice everyday in all the relationships of

living" (Ibid.). Critical pedagogy is an attempt to realize democracy in the everyday classroom in our relationships with our students, other staff members, and subject matter.

Education is an indispensable ingredient in the realization of democracy. Democracy must be created and recreated, tweaked and enhanced. Education, as Dewey noted, is democracy's "mid-wife," helping it to develop (1993: 122). "Dehumanization," notes Freire, "is a concrete expression of alienation and domination; humanistic education is a utopian project of the dominated and oppressed" (1985: 113). Democracy is never a finished product. It cannot be static. Democracy is interested "in deliberate and systematic education" because democracy is "a form of social life in which interests are mutually interpenetrating, and where progress, or readjustment, is an important consideration" (Dewey, 1993: 110). Democracy survives, thrives, and spreads by constantly being recreated and renegotiated, adapting to the times and places where it is cultivated. Democracy depends on "social and emotional traits" that "do not grow spontaneously on bushes" but "have to be planted and nurtured" and "are dependent upon education" (Dewey, 1993: 122). Whether in schools or elsewhere, education must teach democracy by first and foremost modeling it. The social and emotional traits that make democracy realizable are militated against by many of the institutions and relationships our societies engender. Democracy "repudiates the principle of external authority" and "must find a substitute in voluntary disposition and interest" which "can be created only by education" (Dewey, 1993: 110).

John Dewey lived and worked in a time of unprecedented worldwide industrial expansion. Industrialization did not have to go down the way it did. It could have been reigned in and kept in check to make it more humane and capable of humanizing. Noting that "human acts have consequences on others," some perceived, planned for and desirable, others not, Dewey posits that "the machine age" led to the exponential growth of consequences and the number of people affected by them. These consequences continue to be largely felt but not foreseen. The public—people brought together by "the lasting, extensive and serious consequences of associated activity"—is "eclipsed" by modern life in this machine age, "diffused and scattered and too intricate in composition" (Dewey, 1954: 67 &137). Dewey recognized what was truly on the line in all this. "For it is humanity and the human spirit that are at stake," he wrote, "and not just what is sometimes called 'the individual,' since the latter is a value in potential humanity and not as something separate and atomic" (1993: 209).

Industrial democratic societies need education because "a society which is mobile, which is full of channels for the distribution of change occurring anywhere, must see to it that its members are educated to personal initiative and adaptability" (Dewey, 1993: 111). In a vast metropolitan country like the United States of America differences between people may be more recognizable than similarities. Dewey noted that "only education. . .can guarantee widespread community of interest and aim" (1993: 122). Instead of looking at one another as fellow human beings who want to be more, we too often view each other warily through lenses clouded by class, gender, race, and other perceived and real differences. Such differences

"are so very great in our complicated industrial civilization, that men will not see across and through the walls which separate them, unless they have been trained to do so" (Dewey, 1993: 122). Humanistic education through critical pedagogy is the training Dewey alludes to. Unfortunately, today in schools "the social spirit is not cultivated" and in fact "gradually atrophies for lack of use" (Dewey, 1993: 98). Education appeals to emotions today (e.g., fear, emulation, rivalry) that work against humanization and the realization of what Dewey referred to as the "great community" (Dewey, 1993: 99; 28: 166).

Schools and the everyday classroom should "*share* in the building of the social order of the future" (Dewey, 1993: 127). The dehumanization and limit situations we face today "cannot be corrected by merely negative means; they can be eliminated only by substitution of just and humane conditions" (Dewey, 1993: 128). The discussion of what "just and humane conditions" look like is a discussion that will take place throughout our societies, including within our schools. Our everyday classrooms must contribute to this dialogue by modeling these conditions. Students "could be helped to learn democracy through the *exercise* of democracy," writes Freire, "for that knowledge above all others, can only be assimilated experientially" (2005: 32). Further, "the best way to struggle for this ethic is to live it in our educative practice, in our relations with our students, in the way we deal with the contents of what we teach..." (Freire, 1998a: 24). Dewey says we must always work toward "extending the application of democratic methods, methods of consultation, persuasion, negotiation, cooperative intelligence in the task of making our own politics, industry, education—our culture generally—a servant and an evolving manifestation of democratic ideas" (1993: 205). Our critical pedagogies must enact our democratic methods while mirroring our democratic ideals.

As human beings we are aware that we are conditioned and not determined and that "to educate is essentially to form" (Freire, 1998a: 39). We are agents in our sociohistorical realities. "I like being human, being a person," says Freire, because "...My destiny is not a given but something that needs to be constructed and for which I must assume responsibility" (1998a: 54). We act because we know change is possible and hope to bring it about. We must constantly step across toward the greater democratization and humanization of our lives, relationships, and institutions. Hope refuses to die because "though I know things can get worse, I also know that I am able to intervene to improve them" (Freire, 1998a: 53). This understanding is why Freire considered hope an "ontological dimension of our human condition" (1998a: 58). We're not finished as individuals and as a species. "When you're finished you're dead," says Myles Horton (1990: 234).

But hope is more than an ontological component of individual human existence. Hope is also equally a phylogenic human necessity because we are social animals. In the everyday classroom steeped in critical pedagogy, hope is shared between teacher and student. This shared hope is an on-going construction project. Our mutual hope is the "hope that we can learn together, teach together, be curiously impatient together, produce something together, and resist together the obstacles that prevent the flowering of joy" (Freire, 1998a: 69).

Freire explains that as a species we face a reality that "happens to be this just as it could well be something else. And if we so-called progressive thinkers want it to be something else, we have to struggle" (1998a: 71). Dewey noted that "the battlefield is. . .accordingly here—within ourselves and our institutions" (in Fromm, 2000: 4). This has been a book about critical pedagogy and the everyday classroom, so it has focused on schools and formal education. Yet our struggle encompasses more than the traditional one-room country school house or the multistoried urban brick factory school. "The ideal is to fight against the system taking the two fronts," explains Freire, "the one internal to the schooling system and the one external to the schooling system" (Shor & Freire, 1990: 203). Freedom isn't free: it must be constantly fought for while the forces encroaching on it are staved off and eradicated.

When Fromm says that democracy must take the offensive he means that wherever and whenever possible our democratic faith must be enacted in democratic ways of life. Critical pedagogy is a form of democratic schooling. Our democratic faith fuels our hope for a better tomorrow for our students, our children, and ourselves. This hope makes possible and is itself the product of our utopian thinking, the critical denouncing, and prophetic announcing that together guides our democracy as it takes the offensive in the realizable quest for humanization.