Crime and Punishment Study Guide

Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky

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Introduction

When the first installment of *Crime and Punishment* appeared in the Journal *Russian Messenger* in January of 1866, its debt-ridden author, Fyodor Mikhallovich Dostoyevsky, had not yet finished writing the novel. However, even before the entire work had appeared in serial form, the novel was a public success. Early Russian readers and critics recognized that, artistically and socially, *Crime and Punishment* was one of the most important novels of its time, and it was widely discussed.

On the surface, *Crime and Punishment* is the story of a murder, set in the city of St. Petersburg, then the Russian capital. It is not, however, a murder mystery: we know the murderer's Identity from the very beginning. Moreover, although Dostoyevsky depicts the crime and the environment in which It takes place with great realism, he is more interested in the psychology of the murderer than in the external specifics of the crime.

Like many of the great nineteenth-century novelists, Dostoyevsky often uses a series of incredible coincidences to move the plot forward. Nonetheless, the story takes on a compelling life of its own. Dostoyevsky's use of parable and of dream sequences is also original and remarkable. Furthermore, Dostoyevsky creates a gallery of memorable characters, including the proud and tormented ex-student Raskolnikov and his two murder victims; the drunken civil servant Marmeladov and his daughter, the meek prostitute Sonya, whose love helps to redeem Raskolnikov; Raskolnikov's devoted sister, mother, and best friend (Dunya, pulkheria Aleksandrovna, and Razhumikhin); Dunya's scheming suitor Luzhin and the sinister Svidrigailov; and the canny police investigator, Portiry Petrovich. Finally, beyond its powerful plot and colorful characters, *Crime and Punishment* is marked by its insightful treatment of several major themes. Among other things, the book is an expose of social conditions in nineteenth-century Russia, a satirical analysis of liberal and radical politics, and a religious call for redemption through suffering. As an intensely dramatic study of the nature of good and evil, it is commonly considered the quintessential Russian novel.

Author Biography

When Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky wrote *Crime and Punishment* in the mid-1860s, he was already a well-known author. Nonetheless, he lived in near-poverty and was plagued by gambling debts. Born in Moscow in 1821, he was the second child in a family that eventually consisted of seven children. The family's life was unhappy: Dostoyevsky's father, a doctor, ruled the family with an iron hand; his mother, a meek woman, died when the boy was sixteen. Young Dostoyevsky developed a love of books and enthusiastically read Russian, French, and German novels. However, his father insisted that Dostoyevsky study engineering, and from 1838 to 1843 Dostoyevsky trained in this subject at the military engineering academy in St. Petersburg. During this time the elder Dostoyevsky was murdered by one of his serfs, an incident that had a profound impact on Fyodor.

In the mid-I840s Dostoyevsky embarked on a literary career, writing several short stories and novellas, including "The Double" (1846). The concept of the "double" - the notion that a person may have a divided personality, symbolized by a good or evil "twin" - surfaced in several of his later works, including *Crime and Punishment.* His early published works brought Dostoyevsky some recognition. In 1848 Dostoyevsky joined a group of radical intellectuals (known as the "Petrashevsky Circle" after their leader, Mikhail Petrashevsky). The group discussed literary and political ideas and advocated reforming the autocratic tsarist government. Dostoyevsky and several of his friends were arrested for treason, tried, and sentenced to death. Just as they were lined up in front of the ruing squad, a messenger arrived with news that the tsar had commuted the death sentence to a term of hard labor in Siberia. Dostoyevsky later alluded to this event in *Crime and Punishment* and in other books. (It is believed that the authorities intended a mock execution all along.) During his five years in prison, Dostoyevsky came to know many of the prisoners, the great majority of whom were ordinary criminals rather than political prisoners. Through his dealings with them, the writer developed an understanding of the criminal mentality and the Russian soul. His political views also changed. He rejected his earlier pro-Western liberal-socialist ideas and instead embraced a specifically Russian brand of Christianity. His prison experiences provided the material for his later book *The House of the Dead* (1861).

After his release from prison camp in 1854, Dostoyevsky had to spend several more years in Siberia as an army private. He returned to St. Petersburg in 1859 and resumed his literary career. In the early 1860s he traveled extensively in Western Europe. However, he was troubled by personal misfortune, including the death of his wife and his brother, with whom he edited a literary journal. He also was afflicted by epilepsy, a condition little understood at the time. Moreover, he was unable to control his compulsive gambling habit, and he found himself on the brink of poverty. His writing during this period was stimulated not only by an intense desire to express important Ideas but also by a need to earn money. In 1864 he wrote *Notes from Underground,* whose narrator is a self-confessed "sick... spiteful... unattractive man," an embittered character who resents society. Immediately after this book, Dostoyevsky started work on *Crime and Punishment* (1865-66), regarded as his first true masterpiece. Important

Russian critics hailed the work, and Dostoyevsky was acclaimed as one of Russia's most significant writers and thinkers. However, he still faced financial ruin, and the next year he wrote, in just one month, a novella called *The Gambler* in order to pay his debts. He subsequently married the stenographer to whom he had dictated the work, Anna Snitkina. She helped reform his life, and they lived abroad for several years. Foremost among his later novels are *The Idiot* (1869), *The Possessed* (also translated as *The Devils,* 1871), and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880). With *Crime and Punishment,* these books express the essence of Dostoyevsky' s social and moral philosophy and his insight into human character. In the last decade of his life, Dostoyevsky finally gained critical acclaim, social prestige, and financial security. He died in St. Petersburg in 1881.

Dostoyevsky's reputation and his influence remain strong to the present day. Virtually all his books have been translated into English and are in print. His insights into the complexities of human psychology anticipated the theories of Sigmund Freud and other early psychologists. (Indeed, Freud acknowledged Dostoyevsky's Importance in this field.) Later novelists as diverse as Robert Louis Stevenson, Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, and Iris Murdoch all drew inspiration from Dostoyevsky's themes and characters, while Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn carries on with Dostoyevsky's unique brand of Russian nationalism and Christianity. Filmmakers Ingmar Bergman and Woody Allen have also acknowledged a debt to Dostoyevsky in their views of human nature. Some scholars have gone so far as to claim that Dostoyevsky's view of the Russian character and politics prophesied the Russian Revolution and the terrible deprivations that Russia suffered under Soviet Communist rule in the twentieth century. With his contemporary Leo Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky is today regarded as one of the two greatest nineteenth-century Russian novelists and indeed as one of the most important novelists of any nation or period.

Plot Summary

Part I

As the novel *Crime and Punishment* begins, an impoverished student named Rodion Raskolnikov sets out to visit a pawnbroker in a poor section of St. Petersburg, the Russian capital. This visit serves as a trial run for a sinister mission: Raskolnikov plans to murder and rob the old woman. After the visit, Raskolnikov feels miserable, so he stops at a tavern for a drink. There he meets a drunk named Marmeladov who tells him how his daughter Sonya became a prostitute to support her family. Raskolnikov helps Marmeladov home, and he is touched by the pitiful scene of poverty he sees there. After leaving the family some money, he returns to his cramped room.

The next day, Raskolnikov receives a letter from his mother. She informs him that Raskolnikov's sister Dunya is set to marry a bachelor named Luzhin. Raskolnikov realizes that his mother and sister are counting on Luzhin to give Raskolnikov financial assistance after the wedding. As he sees it, Dunya is sacrificing herself for her brother, a sacrifice that reminds him of Sonya's prostitution. He berates himself for his passivity. Soon afterwards, he falls asleep, and he dreams of watching a peasant beat an overburdened horse to death. When he awakens, he articulates for the first time his plan to kill the pawnbroker with an axe. Hearing that the pawnbroker's sister would be away from their apartment the next evening, he realizes that the time to execute his plan has arrived. The murder itself does not unfold as intended. Lizaveta, the pawnbroker's sister, returns home unexpectedly, and Raskolnikov kills her too. Distraught, he finds only a few Items of value, and he is nearly discovered by two of the pawnbroker's clients who knock at the door. When they leave momentarily, Raskolnikov slips out of the apartment undetected.

Part II

During the next few days, Raskolnikov alternates between lucidity and delirium. He feels torn between an impulse to confess his crime and an impulse to resist arrest. He begins a game of cat-and-mouse with the examining magistrate, Porfiry Petrovich. Porfiry has read an article written by Raskolnikov in which Raskolnikov expounds the theory that a few select individuals may have the right to commit crimes if they think it necessary to attain special goals. Raskolnikov now explains his theory to Porfiry, beginning with the idea that there are two categories of people in the world-the masses and the elite.

The first group, that is the material, are, generally speaking, by nature staid and conservative, they live in obedience and like It. In my opinion they ought to obey because that is their destiny, and there is nothing at all degrading to them in It The second group are all law-breakers and transgressors, or are inclined that way, in the measure of their capacities The aims of these people are, of course, relative and very diverse, for the most part they require, in widely different contexts, the destruction of

what exists in the name of better things But If It is necessary for one of them, for the fulfillment of his ideas, to inarch over corpses, or wade through blood, then in my opinion he may in all conscience authorize himself to wade through blood-in proportion, however, to his idea and the degree of its importance-mark that. It is in that sense only that I speak in my article of their right to commit crime (From Crime and Punishment, translated by Jessie Coulson, Norton, 1989).

Porfiry wonders whether Raskolnikov might consider himself to be an "extraordinary man," and if so, whether the murder of the pawnbroker could be connected with his cynical theory. Porfiry hints that he suspects Raskolnikov of the murder, but he avoids making definitive accusations at first, thus keeping Raskolnikov on edge.

While this covert duel between Raskolnikov and Porfiry Petrovich continues, Dostoyevsky develops several subplots. Marmeladov is run over by a carriage, and when Raskolnikov takes the dying man home, he sees Sonya. Struck by her image of humble self-sacrifice, he feels drawn to her. In the meantime, Raskolnikov's sister Dunya breaks off her engagement to Luzhin, who has become insufferably demanding. Yet she now must contend with a new pursuer, her former employer Svidrigailov. Svidrigailov is rumored to have abused young women and to have beaten his wife. He had made advances to Dunya when she worked for him, and his scandalous behavior had unjustly given her a bad reputation. Now he turns up again.

Wracked by continuing anxiety, Raskolnikov makes two important visits to Sonya's apartment. In the first visit, he alternates between antagonizing her and seeking her sympathy. He wonders how she could go on living despite her humiliating profession. It occurs to him that the answer may lie in religion. He asks Sonya to read aloud the Gospel account of the raising of Lazarus. This story of a dead man restored to life perhaps suggests to Raskolnikov that he too may someday be able to return to normal life. He tells Sonya that on his next visit he will disclose to her the murderer's identity.

During his second visit, Raskolnikov reveals to Sonya his awful crime. The moment of confession takes place without words. In a scene that uncannily recalls the original murder of the pawnbroker and Lizaveta, Raskolnikov looks into Sonya's eyes, and she reacts with the same terror he had seen on Lizaveta's face. In an instant, she perceives his guilt. Instead of turning away with horror, though, she embraces him and shows that she understands how much he suffers. Her selfless acceptance of his suffering gives Raskolnikov new strength. He tells her that he committed the murder to find out whether he was someone special, someone with the right to step over conventional codes of behavior. He now asks her what to do. She tells him to go to the crossroads, kiss the earth, and make a public confession. God will then send him new life. Yet Raskolnikov is not ready to surrender, and he leaves her apartment in a renewed state of indecision.

Unbeknownst to Raskolnikov and Sonya, Svidrigailov had been eavesdropping on their last conversation, and he attempts to use Raskolnikov' s confession as a tool to win Dunya's affections. Luring her to his apartment, Svidrigailov tells Dunya that he knows of Raskolnikov's crime, and he indicates that he will save Raskolnikov if Dunya gives herself to him. She tries to leave the room, but he has locked the door. She takes a

revolver out of her pocket, and while he taunts her to shoot him, she pulls the trigger twice. The first bullet misses, and then the gun misfires. Although Svidrigailov gives her the opportunity to shoot again, Dunya throws the gun down. Svidrigailov hopes that she will now surrender to him, but she tells him that she will never love him, and he lets her go. Disheartened by her rejection, Svidrigailov spends a fitful night in a cheap hotel. A series of dreams reveals to him the extent of his internal corruption. In the morning, he leaves the hotel and shoots himself in front of an astonished watchman.

On that same day, Raskolnikov resolves to turn himself in to the police. He makes a final visit to Sonya and departs for the police station. Crossing a public square, he recalls Sonya's words about confessing to the world. He falls to his knees and kisses the ground. The mockery of the bystanders, however, quells his impulse to make a public confession, so he moves on to the police station. There he learns that Svidrigailov has committed suicide. He begins to leave the station, perhaps feeling the lure of suicide himself. Outside the building, however, he sees Sonya looking at him in anguish. He reenters the station and declares in a loud voice: "It was I who killed the old woman and her sister Lizaveta.. .."

Epilogue

The novel's epilogue focuses on Raskolnikov's experiences as a convict in Siberia. Raskolnikov initially feels a deep sense of alienation from his fellow prisoners. During Lent and Easter, he falls ill, and he has a strange dream in which everyone in the world becomes infected with a disease that causes each person to believe that he or she is the sole bearer of truth. The deluded people kill each other, and the world heads toward total collapse. After recuperating from his illness, Raskolnikov walks to a riverbank and gazes at the landscape. Sonya appears at his side. Suddenly, Raskolnikov is seized with an entirely new sensation of love and compassion. Both he and Sonya realize that something profound has occurred within his soul. Love has raised him from the dead, and he will become a new man. Dostoyevsky concludes his novel by stating that the story of Raskolnikov's regeneration might be the subject of a new tale, but that the present one has ended.

Part 1: Chapter 1

Part 1: Chapter 1 Summary

The story begins on a hot July evening in St. Petersburg, when the anxious young student Raskolnikov goes out for a walk. He dreads meeting the landlady from whom he rents a shabby little closet of a room, since he owes her money. His finances have taken a turn for the worse lately, leaving him perpetually worried and hungry. Nervous and unstable, he wanders the streets in a daze, constantly talking to himself. His shabby, out of style clothes make him feel awkward and conspicuous. His thoughts turn to a bizarre, mysterious notion that has recently come to him. This is so horrible he cannot refer to it directly; rather, he speaks of it through hints and allusions. Whatever the idea may be, he assures himself it is only a "hideous dream" and not a serious proposition.

Even so, he goes ahead with the rehearsal of his plan. He walks to a certain address, climbs four flights of the stairs and rings the bell. A sickly old woman with a sharp, unkind face comes to the door. She regards him with silent mistrust until he reminds her he is a customer with an item to pawn. She lets him in and they haggle over the price of his item, his father's silver watch. He reluctantly accepts a low sum, wanting the deal to go smoothly so that he may continue his survey of her apartment. While she goes to place his watch in her trunk full of pawned items, he makes note of many little details, like the location of her keys, the trunk. He studies the rooms for signs of other inhabitants and household's daily routine. Upon leaving, he tells her he will soon return with another item. Yet as he descends the stairs he grows more embarrassed and ill at ease with his plan, finally seeing it as "so foul, so horrible' that he rejects it utterly. Very agitated, he goes into a bar and sits down with some local men. The whole idea now seems ridiculous to him.

Part 1: Chapter 1 Analysis

The reader slowly learns that Raskolnikov has already entertained the plan of killing the rich old pawnbroker for several weeks. While his plan is never directly stated, Raskolnikov's thoughts and behavior give enough clues for us to guess what he is contemplating. Yet he still regards this idea as a proposal to consider, not a serious plan upon which to act. The prospect of making it a reality is both profoundly disturbing and exciting to him.

The first chapter contains many of the key ideas and clues to Raskolnikov's character. His disdain for the ordinary masses of people is evident in his reaction to the dirty streets. The inner dialogue, nervous habits and quick mood swings show him as a highly intelligent, but unstable and insecure person.

The major Russian novelists are known for their ability to depict the intricate psychological states of their characters. Dostoevsky's original idea for *Crime and Punishment* was to show how a penniless young man could become so misled and confused by the ideas of his day that he would turn to violent crime. Raskolnikov may not be typical, but Dostoevsky created him to show a possible, even likely effect that the ideas and conditions of his day might have upon an intelligent but unstable mind.

The story was originally begun planned as a first person point of view, letting the main character tell his story (that is, "I killed the old woman"). Such a viewpoint would let the reader experience all of the main character's thoughts directly. Then Dostoevsky changed the narrative point of view to third person omniscient, so that the voice telling the story is not one of the characters themselves, but appears to be a neutral, independent observer who sees and knows all their thoughts. Some commentators feel that Dostoevsky has in fact, united the third person and first person narrative voices. Even though the novel is told in third person, it is so detailed and psychologically rich that it still feels as if we are always within rascal's consciousness. We experience all of his thoughts, moods, nightmares, and his nightmares and his impressions.

Part 1: Chapter 2

Part 1: Chapter 2 Summary

At the bar, Raskolnikov meets Mr. Marmaladov, a civil servant (that is, a government employee) and an obvious alcoholic. The drunken man tells his pathetic life story; he lost his job and started drinking, thus forcing his wife to work and his daughter Sonia into prostitution. Nearly ruined, Marmaladov recovered his old job, and for a while his future looked bright. His wife bought him new clothes and showered him with affection, care, and good dinners. He dreamed of rescuing his daughter. But then his character failed, and he began to steal from his family so he could drink again. , At this point, he has lost his job again and fears going home. He asks Raskolnikov to imagine what it is like to have nowhere at all to turn for help. Raskolnikov accompanies Marmaladov home and meets his unfortunate family.

Part 1: Chapter 2 Analysis

This meeting with Mr. Marmaladov is a chance happening, but it will later affect Raskolnikov deeply, as he becomes drawn into the affairs of the Marmaladov family.

The student and the civil servant already have certain things in common; both badly need money, and both depend on others, often women, to obtain it. Raskolnikov has his designs on the pawnbroker and Mr. Marmaladov borrows from his own impoverished daughter. Marmaladov asks his new friend to imagine having' nowhere to turn', foreshadowing that soon, Raskolnikov will face a similar emergency.

Part 1: Chapter 3

Part 1: Chapter 3 Summary

Sleeping on the sofa in his tiny student room, Raskolnikov is awakened by his housekeeper Natasya. She lets him know that his landlady is sending the police after him to collect his unpaid rent. She also brings a letter from his mother, which has lots of recent family news. The letter contains a complicated tale concerning Raskolnikov's sister Dunya and the family for whom she had been working. Dunya had to leave her job with the wealthy Svidrigaylov family because the man of the house made advances at her. The mans' wife wrongfully blamed Dunya and threw her out of the house, then spread harmful gossip that damaged the reputation of Dunya and her family. Yet Svidrigaylov soon confessed that Dunya had behaved honorably, rejecting his advances and severely reproaching him for disrespecting his wife. News of Dunya's faultless conduct spread through the whole town; her good reputation was restored and even heightened. She even received a marriage proposal from a certain Mr. Luzhin, a wealthy middle-aged lawyer. Dunya accepted him because she thought Luzhin could help Raskolnikov with money and a future career. Luzhin told the family he preferred to marry a poor woman, since a poor woman would benefit the most from his money. Now Raskolnikov's mother, sister and her new fiancé are bound for St. Petersburg. Thanks to the engagement, the family's credit has been restored, enabling Raskolnikov's mother to send more money. The letter first brings tears to Raskolnikov's eyes, but as he proceeds, those tears change to an evil, bitter smile. He goes out again, to walk and to ponder the news.

Part 1: Chapter 3 Analysis

Raskolnikov is tormented by what seems to be entirely good news, causing suspense and curiosity in the reader. The family's closeness appears in this letter; Dunya is ready to marry for her brother's welfare, while his mother sends her generous love and support. They are evidently not rich. The civil servant Luzhin appears to be a responsible and steady person who will greatly improve the family's position and security. His motivations for marrying Dunya appear generous, but Raskolnikov suspects that the lawyer's desire to marry a poor woman is not born of generosity but of a desire to hold power over her.

The motif of poverty runs throughout the novel. Most character's daily routines consist in the fight for survival. Even the author's narrative techniques are shaped by this theme. Just as poverty keeps us focused on the present and seems to have no escape, the novel creates that same atmosphere. The story's action is nearly always in the present as the characters move from problem to problem, living from day to day.

Part 1: Chapter 4

Part 1: Chapter 4 Summary

Raskolnikov vows to stop his sister's marriage, since he objects to her marrying for practical or financial reasons. Suspicious of Luzhin, he is sure that his sister does not really love this 'kind hearted businessman' and is sure that she is marrying him to help the family, especially her destitute brother. He considers marrying for money as identical to Sonia's prostitution: both women are donating themselves for the 'good' of the family, and both are keeping up appearances. To stop this disaster he decides he has to act immediately, but does not know how, and does not know where to turn. Then, he remembers the pawnbroker. Raskolnikov sits down to think. As he ponders, a young prostitute wanders by. He wonders how many girls meet the same sad fate while a callous and uncaring society looks the other way. People seem to regard it as an inevitable problem that happens to a 'certain percentage.'

Raskolnikov goes to see a classmate, Razumikhin, who is a good natured, friendly hardworking student. Razumikhin is also in a similar situation as Raskolnikov, very poor and alone. Yet Razumikhin has a knack for saving money and earning it: he can go for days without food, live without heat, and find all sorts of extra work.

Part 1: Chapter 4 Analysis

Raskolnikov decides he must immediately find enough money to save his sister from this marriage. Desperate, he begins to take his plan of killing the old pawnbroker as practical rather than theoretical. This opposition between theoretically considering an act and really committing it is key theme in the first part of the book. Many things which seem simple to do, or morally acceptable when considered theoretically are quite the opposite when actually carried out.

Concerning his sister's decision, Raskolnikov sees it as similar to prostitution. While the sex trade is considered socially disgraceful and prohibited, marrying for money, stability and social position is widely considered as the moral foundation of society. Yet Raskolnikov sees them as similar because in both cases, a person makes a personal compromise in order to have a stable income or situation. The prostitute may be more desperate, but Raskolnikov sees the difference as a matter of degree, and not of quality. Raskolnikov points out that we often mask the personal and human tragedy behind statistics. If we tell ourselves that such an unfortunate person falls into a 'certain percentage' that inevitably occurs, we do not ask how we can assist the individual nor do we ask how we can prevent the social problem.

Part 1: Chapter 5

Part 1: Chapter 5 Summary

Raskolnikov sets out to visit Razumikhin to ask for help finding work, (teaching or translating) but his other plan haunts him and makes him nervous, feverish and disoriented. He steps into a cafe for vodka and pastry, and then falls asleep by the road. He has a vivid, terrible dream in which he is a child again with his father. He sees a crowd watching a peasant violently abuse a horse that is too old and thin to pull its cartful of passengers. While the horse tries frantically to pull the load, wheezing and straining, more people pile on the cart. The others beat it with heavy pieces of wood and iron. Raskolnikov watches in tears and begs them to stop, but people ignore him. Slowly they beat the animal to death, while someone suggests that an ax will finish the job "at once." Raskolnikov runs to the horse, sobbing, and kisses her until his father drags him away. On waking, he asks himself if he will really take a hatchet, smash the old woman's head and "slither about in warm, sticky blood." He shudders at the thought and prays aloud to be free of this horrid obsession. Suddenly he feels at peace, as if the idea has left him. Liberated from his mad idea, he goes calmly towards home. However, he makes a fatal detour, passing the Hay Market, where a chance encounter changes his destiny. He spies the pawnbroker's half-sister Lisaveta and eavesdrops on her conversation. Thus, he discovers that at exactly 7 pm the next evening, Lisaveta will return to the market, leaving her rich old sister very alone. Hearing this, Raskolnikov seems to lose all sense of free will. For him, everything is suddenly and forever settled.

Part 1: Chapter 5 Analysis

The old horse in the dream symbolizes the old woman, a tired old creature who will be brutally killed by an ax. The bloody and cruel killing of the horse brings out Raskolnikov's feelings of empathy, so that he rejects his terrible plan upon waking. The peace and relief that follow this decision are cut short.

The coincidental encounter with Lisaveta presents him with a unique opportunity and a terrible temptation. His new resolve to abandon his plan quickly fails when he happens upon this crucial piece of information allowing him to carry out the crime. His sudden sense that the murder is predestined points to the weakness of his will. He constantly changes his mind about the action before he commits it.

Coincidences abound in the novel; we will see how characters just happen to live next door to each other, or how someone just happens to show up at exactly the right time. At first, it appears the author is using superficial tricks to make his story work and advance the plot, but later one sees that coincidence has a far stronger meaning.

Part 1: Chapter 6

Part 1: Chapter 6 Summary

In this chapter, through conversations and reminiscences, much background information is given. Raskolnikov remembers when a fellow student first gave him the pawnbroker's address. Upon meeting the old woman, who his disliked instantly, a strange idea had begun to hatch in his brain. That had been six weeks earlier. Since then, he has heard many stories about the pawnbroker. The abusive old woman makes her half-sister Lisaveta work like a slave, yet plans to leave all her money to a monastery when she dies, instead of her sister. Generally, she is regarded as a worthless, vile person.

One day before the planned murder, Raskolnikov is sitting in a bar and overhears some students speculating about murdering the old woman. One of them tries to justify such an act, saying that the old crone is useless, abusive, and harmful to everyone she contacts. Besides, she will be dead soon anyway. Many hundreds of young and promising people could be helped with the pawnbroker's money, families could be saved from poverty, hospitals could be built with her fortune, he adds. Someone asks the student if he would kill her himself, but he says no, that it was just a philosophical question. Disturbed by hearing his own thoughts in other people's conversations, he goes home and falls into a heavy sleep.

The next day he wakes up moody, anxious and disturbed. He refuses all food stays in bed, where he escapes into beautiful, exotic dreams. Suddenly a chiming clock snaps him back to harsh reality, as the bell strikes six o'clock. Only one hour remains for all his preparations. He quickly sets to work, with little time to think. He makes a sling to carry the ax under his coat. Then, needing an item to pawn, he disguises a block of wood as a silver cigarette case. He ties it tightly, making it hard to unwrap. As time runs out, he rushes and panics a little, and has no time to reflect. The more final his preparations become, the more absurd they appear to him. He cannot really believe he will go through with the crime, but he puts off thinking about it. His acts still seem unreal, like a rehearsal or a fantasy, and automatic, as if he is propelled by a supernatural force. Running late, Raskolnikov takes a short cut to the House. He climbs to the fourth floor, noticing that only one door is open on the stairwell, an apartment where two painters are working. At old woman's locked door, his heart starts beating more and more violently. He rings the bell patiently and calmly, as if on ordinary business.

Part 1: Chapter 6 Analysis

Reluctant to reflect on his actions and pressed for time, Raskolnikov focuses on small practical questions. All the pragmatic little details of murdering someone (the weapon, the timing, a pretext for entry) distract him so much that he does not see the larger picture. Dostoevsky reminds us of the dangers of fixating on certain actions, without ever asking if our ultimate aim is worthwhile, or right.

The students in the bar put forth one of the main justifications for killing the old woman in this chapter. The point out that is that she does no good in the world, only harm, whereas one could redistribute her money for great, generous, charitable causes. This is a utilitarian argument, one that Dostoevsky strongly critiques.

Utilitarianism holds that the ethically good action is the one bringing the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people. Therefore, the right political or legal action can be determined by calculating what is right (the first utilitarians thought it possible to calculate pleasure according to its duration, intensity, convenience, etc). Utilitarianism sounds convincing at first. Yet this superficial appeal is exactly what Dostoevsky critiques, showing that it fails on certain ethical questions. For example, utilitarianism could make it acceptable, even morally desirable, to kill the useless, unpleasant old woman in order to spread her wealth among many deserving cases. In asking why this is indeed a crime, Dostoevsky poses a philosophical question with deep moral and political implications. His implied answer is that human society is far more than the sum of many independent, self-serving individuals. Being human involves recognizing other humans and treating them as ends in themselves, not as a means to our own satisfaction.

Part 1: Chapter 7

Part 1: Chapter 7 Summary

The old woman, mistrustful and defensive, opens her door. Raskolnikov pushes his way in and presents the cigarette case. To hide his fear, he pretends to be angry with her. She has to work to untie the well-wrapped package, giving him a moment to reach for the hatchet. As there is not a moment to lose, Raskolnikov unhesitatingly smashes her head with the ax and strikes her a few more times after she falls. Hands shaking, he takes her key ring, and searches the bedroom. Worried she will come around, he returns to make sure she is dead. Then, he finds another key around her neck, along with two crucifixes (one of copper, one of cyprus wood) and a purse full of money. After much effort, he finds the key to fit a trunk in the bedroom, where he finds expensive clothes, jewelry from other pawned items.

While he is stuffing his pockets with these, he suddenly hears Lisaveta's footsteps. Taking the ax, he rushes out to the front room and splits her head open. The poor girl does not even try to shield her face. Seized with panic and disgust at this new, unexpected murder, Raskolnikov stops thinking straight. He cannot bring himself to return to the bedroom for the money. Instead, he begins slowly, methodically cleaning himself. Then he realizes he should run away instead of worrying about his clothes, yet, it is already too late to run, for he suddenly hears someone outside ringing the bell.

A couple of customers have come for their appointment with the old woman, and they wonder why she does not answer as usual. They suspect foul play, and one of them goes downstairs to find the caretaker. Raskolnikov is trapped inside until the other man goes to check on his friend. Then, while the stair is empty, he runs for it. He almost passes the men on their way back up, and indeed, if not for his hiding the empty apartment where the painters were working, they would have caught him. Back out on the street, exhausted and covered in sweat, he replaces the hatchet and makes his way home. Again, he escapes into sleep.

Part 1: Chapter 7 Analysis

The murder scene is filled with a gripping tension. Since the narrator stays so closely with Raskolnikov's every thought and concern, the reader is dragged through his mental anguish at every step. Every narrow escape for him becomes a thrilling moment of suspense for the reader. Such excitement plays a far more important role. By being caught up in the suspense, is the reader is led to sympathize with the hero, perhaps without even realizing it. One notable moment comes is just after the murder. Raskolnikov is trapped inside the pawnbroker's apartment by two visitors, and narrowly escapes. At this tense point, it is natural for the reader to become concerned for the murderer and actually hope for his successful escape.

All Raskolnikov's well-laid plans go slightly awry. The murder of Lisaveta, the bungled retrieval of the money, the narrow escape and poor clean up job, were all things that escaped his 'rational' and calculated plan. We see that an idea making sense in theory was altogether different when actually put into practice. Remarkably, all of the action (that is, the 'crime') happens in the first part, leaving four more parts for the Raskolnikov's long psychological self-examination (the 'punishment').

Part 2: Chapter 1

Part 2: Chapter 1 Summary

Raskolnikov sleeps until two in the morning then wakes abruptly. Astonished to see he had fallen asleep without hiding the stolen items, or cleaning the bloody parts of his clothing, he panics. It is obvious he had come from a murder, and he's lucky no one came in.

Given all the mistakes, he begins to doubt his mental capacity. After trimming bloody stains from his clothes and hiding the stolen items, he falls asleep again.

Later, when the housekeeper and caretaker come by, they laugh at him for sleeping with rags, not seeing the bloodstains. They deliver a police summons requiring him to go to the station. Apprehensive, he wonders if it is a plan to trick him into confessing, or search his room while he is out. Part of him wishes that the whole ordeal were over, even if he must confess. At the station, Raskolnikov learns that the summons merely concerned his unpaid rent. He is so relieved that he becomes overconfident and reckless, insulting the police agent. He freely tells his personal history to everyone, telling how he had had a romance with the landlady's daughter, who later died. This sad tale softens the agents towards him, but oddly, their kindness brings a strange new emotion to Raskolnikov. He abruptly realizes he will never again be able to speak spontaneously and unreservedly to others about his personal life. A sense of agonizing and total solitude strikes him, and he has a sudden impulse to confess the murder. Yet at that moment, the police begin discussing that very subject. Raskolnikov faints dead away. When he comes to consciousness, the assistant superintendent begins to question him suspiciously about his recent actions.

Part 2: Chapter 1 Analysis

Part One contains the entire planning and execution of the crime. Part Two begins the long tale of Raskolnikov's psychological and social ordeal, his punishment.

Raskolnikov took pride in his ability to be rational and efficient, and the success of his plans depended on it. Yet almost immediately after killing the women, he starts to show signs of a mental breakdown. Unable to stay conscious, he forgets even to deal with the evidence of his crime. He becomes quite irrational and incompetent when faced with unexpected problems such as the bloodstains, or the police questioning. Instead of being calm and calculating, he falls asleep with the very few bloody rags instead of hiding them. He was so focused on the murder itself that he forgot to make any plans beyond it. He never thought of how to clean up, where to hide the money or what to do next. He also suffers wildly shifting emotions and an irrational desire to confess. In the station, he realizes he can never again interact with his fellow humans as before, innocently and honestly. This is the beginning of his "punishment."

Part 2: Chapter 2

Part 2: Chapter 2 Summary

Returning from the police station, Raskolnikov sets about destroying all traces of his crime. He takes the stolen articles outside and hides them in deserted yard under a large stone. A feeling of general misanthropy settles over him, and to combat it, he stops to visit Razumikhin, another unemployed student. Razumikhin is his opposite; he is a generous, easygoing and hard working young man. His new friend offers to share some of his well-paid translation work, but Raskolnikov rejects this offer and leaves abruptly. Feeling totally isolated, he goes home and to bed, as he so often does now. Confused hallucinations haunt his sleep; he hears the police assistant superintendent beating his own landlady, who screams while a crowd gathers on the stairs to watch the violence. In the morning, when he asks about the violent incident in the night, the maid Natasya says it was only his fever.

Part 2: Chapter 2 Analysis

Raskolnikov's new behavior is marked by constant mental illness and frequent loss of composure. Internally divided, he wants to social contact but also cannot permit himself to talk to anyone, even Razumikhin.

His disturbing dreamlike hallucination seems related to his paranoia and his guilt. Like most dreams, this is irrational but symbolic rather than logical. It features the major figures and worries in the Raskolnikov's in new, isolated life. Since he is afraid of the assistant superintendent of the police, (because the superintendent suspects him), the superintendent turns into a threatening dream figure. Similarly, the cruel beating of the landlady echoes his own merciless treatment of the two sisters.

Part 2: Chapter 3

Part 2: Chapter 3 Summary

Raskolnikov is feverish and delirious, lying in his room. He loses track of time and does not know who is with him. When he comes to full consciousness, he discovers that his school friend Razumikhin has been caring for him, bringing food and coming by with a doctor. His money problems are over, his friend tells him, and he must sign for a large sum sent from Raskolnikov's mother, which has just arrived. He does not want to sign for it but they force him. Razumikhin tracked him down after their brief meeting, being worried. By now, the friendly Razumikhin is on excellent terms with both the landlady (Pashenka) and the housekeeper. He tells them how Raskolnikov's situation became so desperate. It seems that after her daughter's death, the landlady stopped giving Raskolnikov credit and transferred his debt to a collection agency. However, the charismatic Razumikhin set everything straight, re-establishing both Raskolnikov's credit and reputation. He has also brought visitors to the little apartment while Raskolnikov was delirious and, including Zamyotov, the chief clerk of the police and Doctor Zossimov. Raskolnikov remembers nothing of this, and is astonished to hear that he had ranted on about socks and frayed trouser ends. Very disturbed, he wonders if they searched his room or heard him talking in his fever. He has a beer and falls asleep. Razumikhin wakes him up with a gift of new clothes.

Part 2: Chapter 3 Analysis

Raskolnikov has become so looks sick and delirious that everyone takes pity on him. Yet all of the concern and helpfulness is bittersweet for Raskolnikov, because of his secret. Ironically, a large sum of money arrives from his mother, only a few days after the son was driven to murder for it. Razumikhin is a key character for bringing everyone together: Zossimov, the police agents, the women of the house and the family. His generosity, sociability and high spirits provide a sharp contrast to Raskolnikov's morose solitude. His openness and friendliness with other people puts him in their good graces, and he uses his connections to help Raskolnikov. Thanks to Razumikhin, the debt is handled, food and clothes are brought and several visitors come by. Dostoevsky sends a strong moral message here; he illustrates how people benefit by cooperating and taking care of each other and getting to know each other personally rather than in a cold bureaucratic way. Razumikhin always sees the face behind the role or the job, and treats no one impersonally. In contrast, Raskolnikov was able to turn a woman's life into a simple obstacle to his need for money.

Part 2: Chapter 4

Part 2: Chapter 4 Summary

The visitors are all still in Raskolnikov's room. Dr. Zossimov advocates bed rest for but Razumikhin promises there will soon be parties and exhibitions. Then the murders are mentioned again, and the housekeeper tells them that Lisaveta was an acquaintance of the household, and had even mended Raskolnikov's shirts on occasion.

Razumikhin reports that a certain Nicolas, a house painter, has been charged for the crime. Talk of the murder paralyzes Raskolnikov, and he withdraws into a close study of the wallpaper. Razumikhin, who believes the painter is innocent, tells the man's story. It seems that Nicolas found a box of jewelry in the street and went to sell it in a local bar. The bar owner buys the jewelry but later connects the painter with the murdered pawnbroker and notified the police. Under heavy questioning, the young painter admitted that he found the earrings in the empty apartment he had been renovating, behind the door, reports Razumikhin. Hearing this, Raskolnikov grows very agitated and murmurs to himself, but his guests attribute it to his delirium. Ignoring him, Razumikhin continues to give his version of the crime. He is certain Nicolas must be innocent, since witnesses report seeing the two painters wrestling and cavorting like children, just after the murder. Razumikhin says that he doubts a person would be seen playful and laughing if they had just killed two women. Instead, he is sure that the real murderer was already in the apartment when the new clients arrived. He goes on to recount every detail of he crime, as he has deduced it. It turns out he's completely right.

Part 2: Chapter 4 Analysis

Nicolas was one of the painters employed in the building when Raskolnikov committed the murder. Raskolnikov hid in the very apartment where they had been at work. The painter's accidental discovery of the box of jewelry, on the same day as the murder, results in hard material evidence against him. However, the psychological evidence indicates otherwise.

As Razumikhin interprets the events, the dramatic tension rises. Raskolnikov is forced to listen as Razumikhin, his friend and protector, accurately tells everyone the exact details of the murder. One might claim that Razumikhin's deep affinity with human nature pointed him towards the truth. His main clue was that no murderer would have been wrestling and playing, as the painter had been seen doing, after such a bloody crime. The psychological evidence gives the correct answer, but as we will see, is not enough to prove anything.

Part 2: Chapter 5

Part 2: Chapter 5 Summary

The fiancé of Raskolnikov's sister arrives. This Luzhin, a lawyer by trade, appears to the group as pompous and disagreeable, even though he is wealthy and good-looking for an older man. The sight of the small, run-down apartment and the shabby appearance of his future brother-in-law clearly offend him. Luzhin announces that Raskolnikov's' mother and sister will arrive soon. As they chat, Luz tries to impress them with his knowledge of current affairs and ideas, but they merely get into disagreements. Raskolnikov recalls Luzhin's statement that he, a wealthy man, should marry a poor woman so that she could benefit from his money. Raskolnikov is skeptical of this motive, accusing him instead of wanting to flaunt his wealth and feel superior to his future wife. An argument erupts and the fiancé angrily leaves.

Part 2: Chapter 5 Analysis

In this chapter, Dostoevsky lets his characters loosely present some social and economic notions underlying the book's themes of crime, poverty and justice. The fiancé voices his conservative but sensible opinions. By hard work and individual initiative, a nation builds a healthy economy that eventually results in a higher standard of living for all. The simple enthusiasm and impractical idealism of lazy students do not achieve tangible goals. Raskolnikov proposes strangely that self-interest taken to the extreme, to the logical conclusion, would lead to justifying murder.

Part 2: Chapter 6

Part 2: Chapter 6 Summary

Taking all of his money and wearing his new clothes, Raskolnikov goes out. The sun is going down, his spirits are sinking and he ponders suicide. He tries to escape his own thoughts by striking up casual conversations with people he sees on the streets, but they shun him. He wanders into a bar to read the papers. It happens that Zamyotov, the chief police clerk, is also there having a beer. The chief just wants to enjoy his drink and forget about fighting crime, but Raskolnikov keeps awkwardly bringing up the subject of the murder. They discuss other local crimes, most of which went wrong when the criminals lost their nerves in the middle. Proud of himself, Raskolnikov mocks the amateurs who make mistakes under pressure. The policeman, on the other hand, believes that it is far more difficult to avoid mistakes. He cites one example of a totally incompetent crime when an old woman was murdered. As he explains, the criminal missed most of the money, and ran away. He asks how Raskolnikov would have handled it. Cleverly disguising reality as idle speculation, Raskolnikov tells exactly what he did. The policeman does not know whether he is serious and calls him mad. Just as the agent begins to believe he is facing a murderer, Raskolnikov deftly turns it into a joke, and then teases the man for falling into his trap. Oddly, he is extremely excited and delighted by coming so near to revealing his secret. Thinking of confessing, he wanders about and comes to the scene of the crime, almost accidentally. Some workmen have already put up new wallpaper and removed the furniture. Raskolnikov says he wants to rent the flat, and asks if they cleaned up the bloodstains on the floor. Shocked and suspicious, the workers lead him to the caretaker. Raskolnikov arrogantly invites them all to take him directly to the police station, but he is so rude and offensive that they just throw him in the street.

Part 2: Chapter 6 Analysis

Russell feels the whole world is dead and indifferent to his presence. His solitude weighs heavily on him and he appears desperate for human contact. Yet each conversation is tainted with the fact of the murder. He seems to want people to guess what he has done, but at the same time, he conceals the secret with his cleverness and mockery. He is preoccupied with the idea of confessing. However, his confessions remain on the level of mental games; first, he admits to something, then denies it, and laughs at those who believed him.

Part 2: Chapter 7

Part 2: Chapter 7 Summary

Coming across a traffic accident in the street, Raskolnikov sees a gentleman lying in the street, mangled and crushed by a carriage. He recognizes Mr. Marmaladov, the civil servant who had driven his family into poverty. Raskolnikov takes him home immediately and calls both a doctor paying all expenses with his new stash of money. Mrs. Marmaladov receives them hysterically, and expresses both sympathy and fury towards her husband. Her cries attract curious neighbors and the German landlady demands that the man go to a hospital as is proper. Mrs. Marmaladov argues with the landlady and sends her away. Her husband's dying words are to beg for forgiveness, yet she refuses to pardon him for having driven them into poverty and ruin. The priest asks her to forgive in the hour of death, to no avail. At that moment, Marmadalov's daughter Sonia, recently forced into prostitution by her father's irresponsibility, arrives to hold him gently in her arms as he dies. Touched by this sad scene, Raskolnikov donates his entire 20 rubles to Sonia for the funeral. Excited by his contact, he decides, "there is such a thing as life" and vows to find the will and strength for it. On his way out, he sees a familiar policeman who notices that he is 'all covered in blood." Raskolnikov smiles oddly at this observation and does not answer.

Raskolnikov hastens to go and tell Razumikhin about his great tragic adventure. Razumikhin walks him home, where a surprise awaits them. Raskolnikov's mother and sister have arrived and have been waiting for hours. When they greet him with joyful hugs, he faints away in shock.

Part 2: Chapter 7 Analysis

The Marmaladov family's struggle with poverty and misfortune is one of the key subplots of the novel, and their tale is intertwined with Raskolnikov's own. The tragic accident allows him to meet the family while Mr. Marmaladov's death initiates a sequence of events that brings them into frequent contact. In donating the twenty rubles to the family, Raskolnikov confronts some ethical problems about charity. He gives the money away in one gesture, as this is a desperate family in great need. Yet the money he has just given away was available to him simply through financial stability resulting from his sister's prestigious engagement, which he opposes violently. This is a minor inconsistency, however, and does not prevent him from benefiting from his charitable impulse. Most importantly, through helping the Marmaladov, he seems to find a genuine sense of purpose and desire to live.

The death of Mr. Marmaladov echoes, in a sense, the death of the old pawnbroker. Yet this new death provokes entirely opposite reactions in Raskolnikov. After the murder of the old woman, he was eager to take the money and escape with no blood on his

hands. Confronted with this second death, he now gives away all his money, and leaves covered in blood. One might read this as an unconscious act of repentance on his part.

This small gesture will bring him into closer contact with Sonia, whose sympathy and goodness eventually rescue him. Mrs. Marmaladov's inability to forgive her husband foreshadows her own behavior in her own hour of death, when she will refuse to ask forgiveness from anyone, thinking herself without sin. She is simply incapable of the love and trust necessary to ask for, and receive, forgiveness.

Part 3: Chapter 1

Part 2: Chapter 1 Summary

Raskolnikov has not seen his mother and sister Dunya in three years, since he left home for the university in St. Petersburg. The women have come to introduce Dunya' fiancé and to visit Raskolnikov. They have learned of his disturbed mental state and the argument with Luzhin already, and are somewhat concerned. His mother badly wants to stay and take care of her son, but Razumikhin promises that he will stay instead. Their presence would only upset him more, he adds.

Dunya, who understands her brother well, watches him closely. He declares his opposition to her marriage. An emotional family quarrel follows, and is eventually smoothed over by Razumikhin. Capable and upbeat even though he's still a bit drunk, Razumikhin succeeds in calming the mother, making sleeping arrangements, and reassuring everyone. Then he rambles on, in drunken good humor, to Dunya and her mother. He hints to the family idea that their brother might be going mad, praises Dunya's beauty and finally insults her fiancée.

Razumikhin wakes the next morning deeply regretting having said such silly things. With Dunya in mind, he dresses neatly before going to meet the women at their hotel. Razumikhin gives a perceptive description of Raskolnikov over breakfast; he is 'morose, gloomy, proud and stuck up.' He thinks he is very busy but actually lies around doing nothing. Such talk disappoints the mother but his sister says it was quite fair. The women report that Luzhin requests a meeting the next evening at 8 pm. In a very polite but subtle threat, he asks that Raskolnikov not be present. They all get ready to go and visit Raskolnikov, and his mother worries about how to behave around her moody, unpredictable son.

Part 2: Chapter 1 Analysis

The letter sent by Luzhin has put the woman in a difficult position; if they do not comply with his request, he hints that he will end the engagement. His irritated and indignant tone suggests that his pride has been deeply wounded.

Razumikhin naturally is infatuated with Dunya, since she shares her brother's exceptional good looks. Unlike her brother, she is a strong and confident person, without his hesitancy and morose sickness. Unfortunately for Razumikhin, this lovely woman is already engaged. His role is restricted to that of an advisor and friend to the family. He struggles to hide his distaste for Luzhin.

Part 3: Chapter 2

Part 3: Chapter 2 Summary

For the first time in weeks, Raskolnikov is nicely dressed and polite. Dunya who knows Raskolnikov best of all, suspects something false in his manner of speaking. Raskolnikov admits to giving the entire twenty rubles to the Marmaladov family, adding that he must have been mad and that he had no right to do so. However, his apology is quite insincere.

At a loss for words, his mother gently compares his little room to a tomb. She tells some local news, but Raskolnikov responds rudely and frightens her. His sister reproaches him for his cruel and insensitive manners. Chastened, he assures them that there is plenty of time to talk later, but then his blood runs cold as he realizes he will never again talk freely with his mother, nor to anyone.

Regarding the wedding, Dunya insists her brother is mistaken about her motives; she is marrying to make her own life easier. Naturally she is also glad to help her family but principally she find it the lesser of two evils (that is, she can marry this man or keep being poor). Raskolnikov says that she cannot possibly respect such a fiancée and accuses her of selling herself. She agrees that Luzhin thinks too highly of himself, but accepts that. They show him Luzhin's recent letter with its request for a meeting, but his only response is to insults its style as illiterate and legalistic. Dunya asks her brother to come to the next day's meeting and he agrees.

Part 3: Chapter 2 Analysis

R appears to be putting on an act for his family; he is distant and well controlled, and easily offended. We see that the sister is the only person who really will stand up to her brother. His mother timidly worships her son, and tries her best to understand him, but usually fails. Yet she accidentally shows great insight when she compares his room to a tomb, for in this little room, lying forever on his sofa and unsure of the time of day or night, floating between consciousness and sleep, delirium and sanity, Raskolnikov is indeed in a sort of psychological limbo, or purgatory.

Part 3: Chapter 4

Part 3: Chapter 4 Summary

Quietly, a young girl, Sonia Marmaladov, comes in timidly to invite Raskolnikov to the next day's funeral. She thanks him again for the donation and suddenly realizes he gave her family all that he had. When his family leaves, Raskolnikov tells his Razumikhin he needs some help. A relative of Razumikhin's, the magistrate Porfiry, has just been assigned to the murder case and plans to question all the old woman's clients. Raskolnikov says he would like to recover some family heirlooms he had pawned and asks if they can go straight to Porfiry together, instead of to the police. They decide to go immediately, and Sonia accompanies them out. Raskolnikov's promise to visit her the next day leaves her glowing with happiness.

As Sonia goes home, a mysterious man who had been waiting outside Raskolnikov's building follows her. About fifty, well dressed, broadly handsome, this gentleman follows her to her very apartment, which is, coincidentally, in the same building where he has just moved in. Raskolnikov learns that that Porfiry is a skeptical, clever magistrate who is eager to meet him. What sort of attitude would be the most natural, least suspicious one, he wonders. Does Porfiry know he went to revisit the old woman's flat, and asked about the blood?

Part 3: Chapter 4 Analysis

Raskolnikov has found out that all the clients of the murdered woman are being questioned, and cleverly, he has arranged to meet the new magistrate Porfiry on a friendly, social level first. This might reduce the magistrate's suspicions. A magistrate, incidentally, was something like a district attorney in our day. Porfiry was trained in law, questioning suspects, and had the power to arrest people.

Raskolnikov becomes apprehensive when he learns the magistrate has been looking forward to meeting him. The man following Sonia home is Svidrigaylov, Dunya's former employer, and he has a great interest in the whole family.

Part 3: Chapter 5

Part 3: Chapter 5 Summary

After friendly introductions, Raskolnikov explains to Porfiry that some family heirlooms were with the old woman. He would like to identify the items and recover them when he has money, he says. Raskolnikov is careful with every word, and tries to play the role of poor, concerned student. Porfiry catches Raskolnikov totally off guard; he has been expecting Raskolnikov since he is the last of the victims' clients to come forward.

Porfiry's questions about his recent actions make Raskolnikov very nervous. He suspects they know everything, and are only toying with him before they arrest him. Tea comes and the conversation turns to the nature of crime itself. Porfiry remembers that he has recently read an article Raskolnikov recently published (oddly, Raskolnikov did not know of its publication). This paper claims great people, who have some extraordinary aim to achieve, do not have to follow society's laws. People like Newton and Napoleon had so much to offer mankind that traditional laws of ordinary men should not restrain them. The masses of 'inferior men' are 'conservative, respectable, and docile' he adds. They manages thing in the present, maintain the world and keeps it populated. The 'extraordinary' ones shape the future, bringing new ideas, accomplishments and victories. P asks how one can distinguish the two types, and Raskolnikov says nature takes care of it. The masses will always try to punish an individual who tries to be superior, and if the masses succeed, the individual is shown as not superior after all. Porfiry asks if the superior type is allowed to murder who he wishes, and whether Raskolnikov if he thinks himself a bit extraordinary, perhaps committing murder and robbery himself. Raskolnikov coldly replies that he would obviously not tell them if he had. The room grows very tense. Porfiry finally tricks Raskolnikov into admitting he had visited the old woman on the night of the murder, and not three days before it, as Raskolnikov had claimed.

Part 3: Chapter 5 Analysis

Raskolnikov entertains more than one justification for his crime, besides utilitarianism, he has the idea of the superior man, one who breaks all rules that interfere with his vision. Initially these two ideas seem unrelated, for superior man does not' seek to bring happiness to the many, only himself. Again, both of these ideas see other human beings as mere instruments, tools that one uses to achieve a goal. Whether that goal is happiness for the many, for oneself, or for the state, changes little.

As the book progresses, one sees the deeper motivations for Raskolnikov's actions. He was influenced by various ideas that were often debated in the 19th century. At that time, with the rise of science, people were beginning to doubt the existence of God and to question religions authority. Darwin and other evolutionary biologists were in the process of showing that mankind came from nature like all the other animals, and might

not be the creation of the divine. The overall decline of religious authority forced people to re-examine the foundations of all their laws, moral ones as well as legal ones. In the absence of a divine authority, might all law and even morality turn out to be mere social conventions, rather than god-given laws? If so, one might ask why anyone would choose to follow them, as Raskolnikov asks.

Part 3: Chapter 6

Part 3: Chapter 6 Summary

Raskolnikov thinks the police want to trip him up using psychologically stressful questioning, because they have no hard evidence. He realizes the clever and insightful magistrate Porfiry may pose a new threat. The caretaker arrives with an unknown visitor, a local craftsman. This visitor looks at Raskolnikov and leaves without a word. Curious, Raskolnikov follows the stranger until the man finally looks at him, saying, 'Murderer! Raskolnikov goes cold with fear and despair; he has no idea who this new accuser could be. Returning to his sofa, he slips back into his private reality. Perhaps he is not, he thinks, like these superior men he has written about. He asks himself if Napoleon would have snuck around an old woman's hunting for money. Wild with regret, he decides he is even worse than the louse he killed. He slides into delirium. Then he seems to be at the crime scene again. The furniture is back, and the old woman is sitting in a chair. Although he keeps hitting her with the ax, she refuses to fall, and just sits silently laughing at him. With every blow, her laughing gets louder, attracting a crowd of onlookers who peer from dark corners of the stairs. When Raskolnikov wakes from this terrifying dream, yet another strange man waits at the foot of his sofa. After ten silent minutes, he introduces himself as Svidrigaylov.

Part 3: Chapter 6 Analysis

After the questioning with Porfiry, Raskolnikov is quite shaken. His fears are compounded by the new accusation from a total stranger. Raskolnikov's theories of the superior man give him no comfort. Quite the contrary, n fact he starts to think he is far too weak to be a napoleon. His undervaluing of the old woman's life (she is just a louse to be squashed) now applies to his own life; he is nothing at all.

In the dream presents his feeling that he cannot be rid of the old woman, cannot bury her and be done with her. She traps Raskolnikov in a terrible state of isolation and half-aliveness.

Part 4: Chapter 1

Part 4: Chapter 1 Summary

The silent man in Raskolnikov's room introduces himself as Svidrigaylov. After Raskolnikov recovers from his surprise at finding his sister's enemy, in his room, they realize they have a lot to discuss. They have an unusual, frank talk about Dunya, women, ghosts, and the afterlife. Raskolnikov asks if Svidrigaylov really drove his own wife into the grave but it seems claims she drank too much and had a stroke, which was hardly his fault. Svidrigaylov explains that his was an unconventional marriage, motivated mainly by his need to get out of debt. He was not bound by promises of fidelity, and his days were filled with entertainment, spending, socializing and idleness.

Suddenly Svidrigaylov reveals that his wife's ghost has visited him three times. Excitedly Raskolnikov sensed that 'something of the sort must be happening' to Svidrigaylov. They see that have something strange in common, which allows them to talk so freely. Regarding the ghost, Raskolnikov thinks only sick people see ghosts. That fact does not prove ghosts are just imaginary, answers Svidrigaylov; only sick people see another world. Changing the subject, Raskolnikov asks why his guest has come. Svidrigaylov also opposes Dunya's marriage, claiming that Luzhin is nothing but trouble. Svidrigaylov will give her 10,000 rubles, a fantastic sum, to end the engagement. R refuses to take this message to Dunya, suspecting Svidrigaylov has designs of his own on Dunya. Svidrigaylov replies that he is probably engaged to another girl already, though he admits that he did recently think of competing for Dunya. Yet his feelings changed and now he simply wants to do something good for her. Finally, he mentions that his own late wife left Dunya three thousand rubles in her will.

Part 4: Chapter 1 Analysis

Svidrigaylov gets along well with Raskolnikov; they share some good traits; they are both intelligent men who question social conventions and are not afraid to delve into the darker side of human nature. They also share negative traits. Both have injured a woman and with profit as a motive. Both refuse to feel guilt for their acts, since they both think they were behaving quite rationally and did nothing wrong. Neither feels a guilty conscience. Perhaps each man's determined refusal to think about his feelings of guilt is what causes the specters of ghosts to appear to him. When the rational mind cannot accommodate some feeling, often such a feeling emerges in the subconscious, irrational realm, showing up in dreams or hallucinations.

Part 4: Chapter 2

Part 4: Chapter 2 Summary

The family, Razumikhin and Luzhin all gather in the hotel at 8pm. The self-important Luzhin wears an air of hurt dignity and waits for an explanation for Raskolnikov's presence. Small talk fails in the awkward atmosphere. Mrs. Raskolnikov mentions the Svidrigaylov family, and Luzhin adds that Svidrigaylov has come to Petersburg. He repeats some of the awful gossip about Svidrigaylov: rumor has it that the man is linked to many deaths, both accidental ones and deliberately caused ones. When the women press him to back up his gossip with facts, he takes offence, claiming the Svidrigaylov family confided in him as their legal counselor.

Raskolnikov interrupts with the news that Svidrigaylov has come with a proposition for Dunya, but stubbornly refuses to go into any details with Luzhin present. He also mentions the three thousand rubles coming Dunya's way from the deceased wife. Luzhin grows annoyed at being excluded from the discussion and gets up to leave.

Wishing to smooth things over between her brother and Luzhin, Dunya asks Raskolnikov to apologize for anything inappropriate he may have said earlier. She says she cares about both of them but if they keep quarrelling, she will just have to choose between them.

Luzhin says Dunya should put her fiancée before her brother. An argument breaks out and various complaints come to the surface. The women accuse Luzhin of controlling them with his money, while he accuses them of secrecy and calculation, (especially now that they have Svidrigaylov new offer to consider). Insults are exchanged and Mrs. Raskolnikov asks him to leave. He threatens never to return if he leaves, and is quite shocked when consent, calling his bluff. Luzhin is shattered when he sees his money no longer gives him any power over the women.

Part 4: Chapter 2 Analysis

During the meeting at the hotel, many pent-up emotions come to the surface and spark heated exchanges. The women no longer feel obligated to coddle the fiancé, thanks perhaps to the financial assistance from the late Ms. Svidrigaylov.

The conflict between Raskolnikov and Luzhin comes to a climax when Dunya forces the two men to confront each other. When Luzhin's pride prevents him from any reconciliation with her brother, the conflict is resolved. She discovers her fiancé's true nature to be materialistic, insecure and manipulative.

For once, Raskolnikov is only peripherally involved rather than being on center stage. Regardless, the disappointed and resentful Luzhin blames Raskolnikov for all his recent troubles.

Part 4: Chapter 3

Part 4: Chapter 3 Summary

Luzhin realizes how much he wanted to possess this beautiful impoverished girl in his power. Her helplessness excites him and her beauty, character and education, superior to his, would have helped him to climb the social ladder. He is devastated at the break up. The family, on the other hand is extremely relieved.

Raskolnikov tells them about Svidrigaylov's offer of 10,000 rubles, but Razumikhin opposes it with his own, more honest and respectable idea for earning money. He proposes to start a book translating and publishing company together, with the women's inheritance. Everyone loves the idea and they all start to make enthusiastic plans for the future. At exactly this point, Raskolnikov announces he must go away for good. He makes a tragic exit, noting that they all talk "as if he were burying me he says, or saying goodbye forever." He asks them to forget about him. Dunya thinks he is being selfish while Razumikhin wonders if he has gone mad again and runs after him in the dark hallway. Raskolnikov turns back to him and requests that Razumikhin should never ask about him or come to see him. He asks Razumikhin to stay with his mother and sister and take care of them always. In the dark corridor under a lamp, they silently stared into each other's eyes for a long, fateful minute. Suddenly Razumikhin sees the hideous truth in his friend's eyes. Then he returns to take care of the women, becoming their new brother and son.

Part 4: Chapter 3 Analysis

Removing Luzhin from the picture allows a new dynamic to form between the two women and Razumikhin, there are no obstacles to his plans and he quickly envisions a bright future for them all.

Just when all are looking forward to a bright future, Raskolnikov realizes he should leave the scene. He cannot imagine a future for himself because there is no such future. In a sense, they really are "burying him" and "saying goodbye forever." They are saying goodbye to the Raskolnikov who lived in a state of limbo, neither living nor dead. This dramatic exit must have left the first readers in great suspense; it foreshadows a great change and marks the end of the old Raskolnikov. He will be rescued from his solitude and will soon start the journey back to life. Yet he must first face great suffering.

Part 4: Chapter 4

Part 4: Chapter 4 Summary

Raskolnikov goes directly to Sonia, who lives poor and alone in a rented room. He announces that it is his last visit to her and that she will know everything on the following day. He wants desperately to confess but is still not ready or able to do so. Instead, they talk about Sonia's family and friends. Raskolnikov is surprised to discover that Sonia was friends with Lisaveta and that they used to read the Bible together.

Raskolnikov keeps evading his confession and tries to distract Sonia with other problems. He tells her she will never be safe, will not earn enough money to protect her family and wonders why she did not just throw herself into the river. She holds fast to her belief that God will take care of her and her family, but he mocks her faith, asking why God lets such terrible things happen to good people.

Then changing his tone, he bends to kiss her foot, as a symbol of suffering humanity. He says that she also is Sonia is a sinner who has destroyed a life, that is, her own life. Her three options are suicide, insanity or immorality, he adds. In addition, her failure to kill herself would means that she has accepted her lowly state and become desensitized to it. Then he sees his mistake, realizing and that her love of her family and simple faith in God preserves her.

Sonia fetches a Bible and Raskolnikov asks her to read the passage about the raising of Lazarus from the dead. She reads it aloud and with great feeling, oddly emphasizing that Lazarus was dead for *four days*.

After she has read it, Raskolnikov tells her they only have each other now, since both of them are damned. He tries to frighten her again with the dangers of poverty and tells her the only answer is freedom and power. Then he promises to return and tell her who killed Lisaveta. Svidrigaylov, who lives practically next door to Sonia, has been eavesdropping on their whole conversation through the door to her room.

Part 4: Chapter 4 Analysis

When Raskolnikov decides he must begin his true punishment, he goes directly to Sonia, who is a path to his salvation. Raskolnikov equates Sonia with himself, looking for a companion in his solitude. Both of them have transgressed social laws and both have destroyed a life, he says, comparing Sonia's destruction of her own life to his act of murder. Now they both are left with three options: of suicide, immorality, or insanity. Yet Raskolnikov finally sees that Sonia's faith gives her a fourth option, one that purifies and saves her. He cannot share her faith, as he finds the idea of God naïve. In spite of this, he understands that Sonia's very goodness and humanity is the key to his rebirth. Hence, we see that Dostoevsky is not writing a tale in which a criminal is redeemed by his faith in God. Raskolnikov's intellect will not allow him to believe in God. His inability

to put faith in a higher power has led him to create his own laws, and now that these laws have failed him, he is not sure where to turn.

Sonia's faith in the divine means little to Raskolnikov; it is her own virtuousness and love that inspires him. She symbolizes another, perhaps higher sort of human existence, in which faith and love permit a cessation of the wars of power.

The story that Raskolnikov asks to hear recounts Christ's miraculous revival of a dead man, Lazarus. Sonia's reading of the gospel is the first crucial step towards his slow awakening. Just as Jesus raised Lazarus, Raskolnikov will return to the world of the living through Sonia's guidance.

The story is an allegory for Raskolnikov's own ordeal, that is, it is a symbolic representation of an abstract idea. In this case, the physical raising of the dead symbolizes the idea of Raskolnikov's rejoining the human community, after being isolated from it.

After his murder, Raskolnikov was in a state of delirium and confusion for four days, just as Lazarus was dead for four days before Jesus raised him. Raskolnikov's mother had said his room looked like a tomb. This was indeed a perceptive comment, since her son was drifting in a marginal zone between living and dead, sane and insane. His confusion over time and place reflects his inability to belong to the same world as everyone around him. Instead, he is in a sort of purgatory, between the living and the dead. His interest in Lazarus's tale foreshadows that he is willing to return soon to the living, which he will eventually do by confessing and accepting the consequences.

The Lazarus story is the fourth book of the Gospel, while this meeting with Sonia lies in Part Four, Chapter Four. The story seems to have special significance for Sonia as well as for Raskolnikov. Some interpret this to mean that she believes that her own troubled life will someday be transformed. Others simply think she understands intuitively what the tale means for Raskolnikov.

Part 4: Chapter 5

Part 4: Chapter 5 Summary

The next morning Raskolnikov goes to see Porfiry with the list of his pawned articles. This chapter is one long dialogue between Porfiry and Raskolnikov. Dostoevsky portrays an incredible psychological duel between criminal and magistrate, in which there is no hard evidence, only the play of human reactions. Raskolnikov's anxiety grows steadily throughout.

Both men know how conventional interrogation works, but the magistrate does not play by the rules. He has unpredictable, sophisticated techniques: he is extremely friendly and genuine, but he often puts words in Raskolnikov's mouth and misquotes him. The magistrate subjects Raskolnikov to such an unpredictable examination so subtle that his subject cannot tell an accusation from a joke.

Porfiry mentions all of the details of Raskolnikov's recent strange behavior: the visit to the scene of the crime, and all his various private conversations about the murder. Porfiry mentions several ways that he does not follow expected procedures when he suspects someone. He would not arrest a suspect immediately, nor would he searches his room or question him. His reasoning is this: as soon as the murderer knows he is a suspect, that he will become more careful, and to stop behaving naturally. Natural behavior, that is, simple human nature will give itself away in the end. A murderer can physically hide the traces, but he cannot run away psychologically. Porfiry compares the murderer to a moth drawn to a flame; criminal will soon come by himself into the magistrate's hands. This lack of method upsets Raskolnikov, who demands that he be interrogated by means that are more conventional. However, the magistrate says that established conventions of interrogation are nonsense, and that examining is more of an art form. Finally, the magistrate has a surprise to show Raskolnikov but things go quite wrong

Part 4: Chapter 5 Analysis

In many ways, the two men have switched roles and taken on characteristics of the other. Now the magistrate refuses to play by the established conventions of interrogation, while Raskolnikov demands to be questioned according to normal procedures. As Raskolnikov guiding principle is that superior people make their own rules, it is quite ironic that he demands a strict adherence to rules by the magistrate. Now it is Porfiry, not Raskolnikov, who teases and makes fools of his audience. Moreover, Raskolnikov accuses Porfiry of 'lying with every sentence', even though the real liar is himself. Whatever he feels or thinks, he wrongly imagines the magistrate is feeling or thinking it instead. The psychological mistake of mistakenly attribute our own feelings to others is called projection. Porfiry's psychological portrait of Raskolnikov is

deadly accurate, and indeed Raskolnikov has come himself to the police, just like "a moth around a flame."

Part 4: Chapter 6

Part 4: Chapter 6 Summary

Porfiry has a surprise for Raskolnikov, he says, and points for a door to be opened. Instead of the person Porfiry demanded, however, the painter Nicolas is unexpectedly brought into the room. Trembling and pale, he confesses to the murder. Porfiry angrily refuses to believe a word of it, claiming Nicolas is just repeating what his accusers said to him. Raskolnikov sees that he has gained his advantage and departs. He and Porfiry exchange apologies for the heated questioning earlier and he returns home. As he reflects, he grows nervous and suspects that Porfiry had another card to play. How would the meeting have ended if Nicolas had not cut it short with his unexpected confession? Restless, he heads for his door, where he encounters the very same craftsman who had accused him of murder the previous night. The craftsman has come to apologize, having heard the painter's confession at the police station. He had had been there also, strangely. In fact, the craftsman admits that a few days ago he had witnessed Raskolnikov's return to the crime scene and heard him ask about the blood on the floor. He had gone to Porfiry with his testimony and they were planning to confront Raskolnikov together. Then the painter confessed, rendering his testimony irrelevant.

Part 4: Chapter 6 Analysis

This dialogue contains some of most powerful intellectual debates and exchanges of ideas in the novel. In Porfiry, Raskolnikov has definitely met his intellectual, psychological equal.

The police have only circumstantial evidence to convict Raskolnikov; they can produce no facts, no eyewitnesses and no murder weapon. The magistrate's attempts therefore to capture him with psychological traps, but this strategy finally fails when the innocent painter abruptly confesses under stress.

Raskolnikov still has a final worry. Porfiry had planned to confront him with some secret evidence, and Raskolnikov could not guess what it was. When the little craftsman comes forth to apologize, even this final worry is laid to rest. Finally, all evidence pointing Raskolnikov has been discredited. He has gotten away with murder.

Even though Raskolnikov has promised Sonia to confess, he will do anything to avoid actually going through with it. Instead, he spends all his time and energy defending himself against new suspicions. His thoughts and feelings directly conflict with his stated intentions, now it becomes a battle for his own internal will. The combined influence of Porfiry and Sonia will draw Raskolnikov out of his isolation and towards a confession. While Porfiry shows him great understanding, it is Sonia who perform the still greater act of forgiving him.

Part 5: Chapter 1

Part 5: Chapter 1 Summary

The Marmaladov funeral dinner takes place. Luzhin and his younger roommate Lebezyatnikov have been invited since they live in the same building. Luzhin is still fuming at Raskolnikov, blaming him for the broken engagement to Dunya and the lost money invested in home furnishings. He skips the funeral dinner to count his money. While going through enormous stacks of bills on his desk, he asks Sonia in for a meeting and informs her not to expect his help in obtaining a government pension, a promise he had made earlier. Astonished at all the cash displayed on the desk, Sonia politely tries not to stare at it, and prepares to leave. Luzhin stops her, saying he would like to donate a small sum to the family. He hands her a ten-ruble note and she thank him before returning to the party. The roommate z, having watched the whole scene, compliments Luzhin on his generosity and discretion.

Part 5: Chapter 1 Analysis

Luzhin uses his wealth to feel superior, especially over poorer women like Dunya and Sonia. Though Luzhin pretends to want to help Sonia, his motives will turn out to be exactly the opposite, in the next chapter.

Part 5: Chapter 2

Part 5: Chapter 2 Summary

Mrs. Marmaladov spent half of Raskolnikov's twenty rubles on the elaborate funeral dinner, since she expected the most important residents of her building to come. Sadly, the event only draws a group of drunken, slovenly neighbors seeking a free meal. When Raskolnikov comes, Ms Marmaladov is delighted and gives him the place of honor; she speaks only to him and treats everyone else to her most vicious criticisms. The rest of the guests show their worst behavior, insulting each other and quarrelling. Mrs. Marmaladov and gets into a spiteful argument with her landlady about whose families have more noble ancestry. When the scene right reaches maximum chaos, the lawyer Luzhin enters.

Part 5: Chapter 2 Analysis

This chapter portrays the desperate, miserable atmosphere in which Sonia grew up. One appreciates Sonia's goodness even more when seen in contrast to her stepmother.

The chapter has mostly a technical function, providing a change of scene and marking the passage of time since Sonia's interview with Luzhin and his later entry for the next, more important scene.

Part 5: Chapter 3

Part 5: Chapter 3 Summary

Luzhin interrupts the dismal party with a dramatic accusation of Sonia, claiming she has stolen 100 rubles from his desk. He points to Lebezyatnikov, his roommate, as a witness.

Sonia denies this emphatically, even returns the gift of 10 rubles. Mrs. Marmaladov determines to show Sonia's innocence by searching her, since the girl has not left the room since coming from Luzhin's. Expecting to find nothing in the girl's pockets, Mrs. Marmaladov becomes hysterical when she finds a hundred ruble note hidden there. Pretending to have compassion, Luzhin offers to makes a gift of the hundred rubles.

His plan backfires; however, when Lebezyatnikov appears he angrily announces he had seen Luzhin secretly plant the 100-ruble note in Sonia's pocket. Lebezyatnikov mistook this sly move for charity, but now sees Luzhin was framing Sonia to humiliate her. Raskolnikov adds that Luzhin's was aiming to wound him, not Sonia. Although the lawyer is too powerful politically for anyone to call the police on him, he is asked to leave the party and the building. Someone throws a glass at him as he leaves but unfortunately, it hits the landlady instead. In retaliation, she turns the whole Marmaladov family onto the streets.

Part 5: Chapter 3 Analysis

Everything Sonia did in the interview of the scene before is described with a different interpretation: he uses her discomfort and hurry to leave as a sign of her guilt.

Luz wanted to strike back at Raskolnikov who he blames for helping destroy his engagement to Dunya. To do so, he improvised the false accusation at the dinner party to show that he had been right all along about Sonia, who he had called a thief when Raskolnikov gave her the 20 rubles.

This is the last time Luz appears in the novel. His character has undergone a total transformation. He first appeared as an honored and talented professional with a beautiful fiancée, but he slowly became a despised, lonely man whose manipulative tactics and self-serving greed led to his complete humiliation by those he most despised.

The Marmaladovs, having lost their home, seem to know no end of suffering.

Part 5: Chapter 4

Part 5: Chapter 4 Summary

Raskolnikov goes to visit Sonia after the disastrous dinner, having decided to confess his murders to her. However, as usual, he talks around the subject, posing the following hypothetical situation to her: if she had to decide who should go on living, her stepmother or Luzhin, whom would she choose? Sonia answers that life and death are God's domain, no one else's. Her answer does not satisfy him.

When he tries to go on with his confession, a sudden hatred of Sonia comes over him. Yet when he looks in her eyes, he feels close to her again. He asks her to guess who killed Lisaveta. Very slowly, she realizes the truth, and her face takes on a childlike terror. Sonia moves away but then returns and clasps his hands, crying 'What have you done to yourself!' There must be no one unhappier than he is, she adds. She responds with compassion and promises to follow him, even to prison in Siberia.

When she asks about his reasons, he gives various confused explanations. He had wanted to be heroic and exceptional like Napoleon, who would not have hesitated an instant to eliminate ordinary obstacles to achieve his greater goals and greater goods. He adds that he needed to finance his studies so he could help his family out of poverty. She cannot accept these as the true reasons. Searching his character, he tells her he is arrogant and envious and lazy and mad; but then he returns to the theory of the superior man. Power belongs to those who take it, he says. He just wanted to find out if he had hat intrinsic superiority to others. However, he only killed himself, he concludes. Sonia tells him to go and announce to the world that is a murderer, only then will God send him life and peace again. She thinks accepting his punishment will save him. Raskolnikov hesitates, afraid of laughter and public humiliation. His idea was to confess to Sonia alone. He sees no need for a public confession or imprisonment, and is sure that the police can never convict him, even if they are sure of his guilt, for they have no evidence. Dismayed at this, Sonia asks him to a wooden cross to wear around his neck, as she does (she wears Lisaveta's cross now) so they can suffer the ordeal together. However, he refuses it for the moment, and says he will take it up later.

Part 5: Chapter 4 Analysis

In this climatic scene, we finally see the full confession that has been foreshadowed throughout the book, especially in Raskolnikov's previous visit to Sonia (Part Four, Chapter Four). Dostoevsky portrays Raskolnikov's violently conflicting emotions by drastic mood changes and reversals of beliefs. Experiencing one emotion usually leads to the contrary one, as he alternately trusts Sonia then hates her, mocks her then worships her. He confesses his own weakness then professes to his faith in the superior man.

His efforts to justify the murder all seemed convincing to him when he is alone, but when he tells them to Sonia, they all sound quite hollow. He repeats his utilitarian argument that he had served the greater good; he gives the nihilistic one also, which claims the old woman was valueless and superior men make their own laws. These theoretical justifications, however, do not satisfy Sonia.

When he searches his soul, Raskolnikov finds that his motives were actually very personal and emotional. He had wanted to find out if he had the superior nature he had written about, he tells her. All his rational justifications were merely at the service of his own insecurity. While all along he had prided himself on his reason, it turns out that his reason rested on very simple, ordinary human emotions like pride and insecurity. He had hoped to confess to Sonia alone because he respects her and identifies with her. Yet he balks when she suggests confessing publicly, for he fears the humiliation of facing the common people and sees no point whatsoever in going to prison. The idea of a debt to society will never cross his mind, and indeed, plays no role in his ultimate return to it.

Part 5: Chapter 5

Part 5: Chapter 5 Summary

Word comes to Sonia that Mrs. Marmaladov has gone mad and disappeared; Sonia goes after her. Meanwhile, Raskolnikov secludes himself in his old room to think. His sister turns up to let him know she has found out everything. Actually, she only knows he is suspected of murder, not that he is guilty. Soon Raskolnikov sends her away, fearing that she will guess the truth. He thinks she would be too horrified to accept it. Only Sonia has the courage to accept him now.

Next, he goes with Lebezyatnikov to Sonia and her stepmother, who turned up at last. Mrs. Marmaladov is forcing her children to beg and dance in the street. The dreadful scene draws a large crowd, who watch as the widow pleads to them on behalf of her aristocratic heritage. She even sings to the crowd in French in a pathetic effort to appear cultured and educated. The poor, terrified children run away from the awful scene. Chasing them, she takes a bad fall that hastens her death. A priest is brought to perform the last rites, but Mrs. Marmaladov refuses to speak with him, insisting she has no sins, having only suffered in her life. Sonia falls upon her dead body and weeps. By a coincidence, Svidrigaylov appears to rescue them, generously paying for her funeral and for orphanages. He also gives Sonia enough money for several years. Raskolnikov asks why he does all this, to which Svidrigaylov replies he just wants to help humanity. Pointing to Ms. Marmaladov lying dead in the corner, Svidrigaylov asks whether she "was not 'a louse' like some old hag of a moneylender', directly quoting Raskolnikov's recent conversation with Sonia. Then he winks at Raskolnikov, letting him know that he had overheard the whole confession. Moreover, he tells Raskolnikov they will become great friends.

Part 5: Chapter 5 Analysis

Ms. Marmaladov finally meets her end when the pressures of reality finally overwhelm her; her funeral dinner has failed, her family sent onto the streets, and her pride destroyed. No one else takes her delusions about her superior social standing and aristocratic roots seriously, yet she dedicates every ounce of her strength to perpetuating her illusions. Unlike Raskolnikov, she will never question her illusions of her own superiority, and thus she does not evolve as a character or reach any psychological breakthroughs; she dies proclaiming herself a perfect sinless martyr. Svidrigaylov quotes Raskolnikov's own words when he compares the widow to a 'louse;' he does this to show he had overheard and understood Raskolnikov's discussion with Sonia. As for Svidrigaylov's generosity, he seems now to be trying to justify his earlier actions by helping people with the money. This echoes Raskolnikov's original desire to do so many good deeds with the pawnbroker's money that it would justify the murder. One might say that Svidrigaylov's life represents a path that Raskolnikov did not follow.

Part 6: Chapter 1

Part 6: Chapter 1 Summary

After his confession to Sonia and her stepmother's death, Raskolnikov enters a strange new time when his memories, thoughts and perceptions become confused. He wanders about the city, often finding himself in strange places without knowing how he got there. Razumikhin visits him to ask him if he has gone mad, and why he ignores his family, breaking his mother's heart. He adds that Dunya has received a letter that upset her, probably from Svidrigaylov. Finally, Razumikhin says he still discusses the murder case with Porfiry, who is not satisfied to let it rest with the painter's confession. This news makes Raskolnikov fear that the magistrate still suspects him. Indeed, immediately after Razumikhin leaves, Porfiry himself appears.

Part 6: Chapter 1 Analysis

In Part 5, Chapter 4, Raskolnikov made his private confession to Sonia, but does not see the need to tell anyone else. Part Six of the novel leads him to realize the necessity of making his private confession into a public one. Yet this transition is a long and painful one for him, for he cannot sacrifice his theory of superior man, and he has no wish to sacrifice his pride in a public confession. He can confess to Sonia since he sees her as someone living outside of society's moral norms, like him. Yet he does not feel he has an obligation to society at large, fearing ridicule and humiliation. Therefore, he continues to live in a confused, ambivalent state of semi-madness, unable to live freely amongst his fellow men.

Part 6: Chapter 2

Part 6: Chapter 2 Summary

Porfiry comes speak with him and Raskolnikov immediately worries that the magistrate will trick him into revealing his guilt. However, Porfiry says he has has merely come to apologize for causing Raskolnikov such suffering. Porfiry admits being certain that Raskolnikov would eventually fall into one of their traps and confess.

The circumstantial evidence was overwhelming, he adds. Even now, he is sure the painter will retract his confession. In fact, Porfiry goes on, ominously, the murderer is still at large and "still regards himself as an honest man. The tension rises as Porfiry comes closer and closer to the truth. When Raskolnikov finally asks whom Porfiry suspects, the magistrate whispers, "Why, you are the murderer, my dear fellow!" Raskolnikov continues to deny it. Porfiry admits he still has no real evidence but encourages Raskolnikov to confess, since because his sentence will be greatly reduced if he does. As if giving advice to a friend, Porfiry counsels Raskolnikov to surrender to life without thinking so much about it, to have faith in life and to do what justice requires. Time served is not as important as being able to be one's true self, he says. Raskolnikov insists he has confessed nothing. Porfiry departs and Raskolnikov leaves soon after.

Part 6: Chapter 2 Analysis

Raskolnikov knows that has only circumstantial evidence and suspicions. This makes a confession optional on his part. Porfiry does not intend to come to capture or trick Raskolnikov anymore. In fact, he seems really to have Raskolnikov's own good in mind. He seems to understand that Raskolnikov possesses a desire to confess and lay his burden down at last, and with his deep and sincere reassurances, appeals to the sense of hope and purpose he knows Raskolnikov still possesses.

Part 6: Chapter 3

Part 6: Chapter 3 Summary

Raskolnikov sets off in search of Svidrigaylov, in order to keep him from telling Porfiry about his confession, or blackmailing his sister with the information. Wandering in the city, he accidentally spots Svidrigaylov in a restaurant and then goes in. Raskolnikov says it is an odd coincidence to meet like this, but Svidrigaylov says he should just admit that it is a miracle. Raskolnikov threatens to kill Svidrigaylov if he should blackmail his sister, but the latter claims to have no ultimate aims, he is just observing him to relieve his boredom. Svidrigaylov admits he has no profession and his main interest is women. He also has a terrible fear of death. He tells Raskolnikov that Dunya herself tried to save him and change his character.

Part 6: Chapter 3 Analysis

Svidrigaylov is a fascinating complex character whose motives are never completely clear. He is often very generous, but also calculating and cynical. His fear of death foreshadows his imminent suicide. The idea that their chance meeting is a miracle rather than a mere coincidence is an offhand remark that one can use to interpret Dostoevsky's frequent use of coincidence throughout the novel.

We call coincidence a sequence of events that although accidental seems to have been arranged; in doing so, we insist that chance, not intelligence, was the cause. Yet we are the ones who must interpret for ourselves if we think material, chance causality explains everything, or if we are willing to see some purpose and order behind events.

For example, the phrase 'the miracle of life' is something of a cliché, and is even misleading, since we now know how to explain scientifically much of the life process. Yet the phrase persists in our language because we resist the reduction of our own human lives, to mere facts and scientific descriptions.

In questioning whether the ultimate causes are coincidence or miracles, dost is asking us to consider another order of causality. Do we believe in a world where all events, including our own lives, are determined only to physical and natural causes only? On the other hand, can we acknowledge another order or causality, one that allows for a sense of purpose and free will? Whether this other mode of causality is divine, ethical or supernatural is left open to question in the novel. One certainly should not conclude that Dostoevsky thinks a divine being is causing all the coincidences. Rather, he is pointing to the realm of human value and psychological free will that transcends the world of material facts and physical causality. One could compare his ideas to those of Kant, an 18th century philosopher. Kant defended the idea that humans have a unique ability to make ethical decisions, and that this is what makes us both free and human.

Part 6: Chapter 4

Part 6: Chapter 4 Summary

Raskolnikov asks for details about the sinister rumors surrounding Svidrigaylov. Avoiding this subject, Svidrigaylov instead shares the details of his married life. His wife had permitted him affairs with other women, provided that they were never serious, permanent, or with women of his own class. Svidrigaylov tells Raskolnikov that the secret to seduction is flattery. He flattered Dunya by letting her think she had the power to change and improve him.

Raskolnikov suspects that Svidrigaylov came to St Petersburg in order to pursue Dunya, but the older man strongly denies it. He is even engaged to marry a sixteen–year-old girl, of whom he speaks highly. Her combination of childishness and maturity fascinates him. Raskolnikov is repulsed at the older man's desire for such a young bride, but his disapproval only encourages Svidrigaylov to tell more of his immoral exploits.

Raskolnikov trails Svidrigaylov when they leave the club, thinking he might still have plans on Dunya.

Part 6: Chapter 4 Analysis

Svidrigaylov's darker side emerges here, in his account of his marriage. He shows his lack of faith in women in general, as well as his attraction to very young girls. Still, something about his clever, mocking manner makes it clear that he is not revealing all his thoughts. His interest in Dunya appears to be different from all the casual affairs, for some reason. Perhaps he respects her, because of her high principles and proper behavior towards him.

Part 6: Chapter 5

Part 6: Chapter 5 Summary

Raskolnikov follows Svidrigaylov until he sees Svidrigaylov get into a cab (though Svidrigaylov only pretends to do so. In reality, Svidrigaylov goes to meet Dunya for a secretly arranged meeting. He as already sent her a letter recounting her brother's confession, and now blackmails her to coming home with him to talk. He takes her home and proves how he eavesdropped on Sonia's room. Dunya grows alarmed at being alone with him and asks to see Sonia, but he has locked her in his room.

Now that she is frightened and imprisoned, Svidrigaylov offers to save her brother by sending him to America. He still loves her madly, he adds. Seeing the sinister bargain that he proposes, as well as the potential threat of rape, Dunya pulls a revolver out of her pocket. She fires twice, at close range, but she only grazes his head. Unwilling to kill him, she throws the gun away. She says she does not love him and asks to be let free. Bitterly disappointed, he struggles against his desire, and then moves away from her. He tells her to leave 'at once' and refuses to look at her. A moment later, he leaves as well, picking up the pistol on his way.

Part 6: Chapter 5 Analysis

Despite all his denials, Svidrigaylov really loved Dunya all along. She was his last hope for some sort of redemption. Svidrigaylov shows for the first time a real emotion, despair. Dunya's refusal to kill comes as a sharp contrast to her brother's willingness to do so. She would have been completely justified, in protecting herself, but something in her did not let her pull the trigger. Whereas Raskolnikov, who was in no danger at all, had no trouble using the ax, aided by his elaborate arguments. One might infer from this that argument and justifications should not be used to make decisions of life or death, and that such decisions are better left to God or Fate, as Sonia pointed out earlier.

Part 6: Chapter 6

Part 6: Chapter 6 Summary

After spending time in several bars, Svidrigaylov goes home for his money and papers. Ignoring the thunderous downpour, he goes out. First, he visits Sonia and informs her he is on his way to America. He gives her enough money for her to follow Raskolnikov to prison in Siberia. Next, he drops in on his future in-laws, who let him see his teenage bride even though it is almost midnight. He makes a present of 15000 rubles to the girl, a small fortune. Next, he seeks out a seedy, dirty old hotel where he takes a room. He lies down in the candlelit room, listening to the mice and the wind. He wonders why he is now so sensitive to his surroundings, as if he was an animal looking 'for the right place ---for such an occasion." Sleepless, he thinks of Dunya and wonders if she would have made him a different person. He drifts in and out of strange dreams, thinking he sees a small abused girl hiding in the corridor. He takes the frozen, wet child to his warm bed, but then her innocent face takes on a flirtatious, depraved look that frightens him.

Waking from these nightmares, he resolves to leave. Taking Dunya's gun, he heads to the park. On his way, he happens by a soldier keeping watch in tower. Having found a witness, Svidrigaylov pulls out his gun, says he is going to America and shoots himself dead.

Part 6: Chapter 6 Analysis

Svidrigaylov has been a parallel figure to Raskolnikov both try not to ignore their consciences, both try to make up for their bad deeds with good ones, and both do their best to live out side societies the rules. Svidrigaylov has often suggested suicide as a cure for Raskolnikov's problems. One sees now that he had been thinking of this solution for himself. Whether or not his suicide is a tragedy or an act of personal conviction is debatable. Svidrigaylov certainly goes out in style and in great generosity. His financial gift to Sonia will allow her to follow Raskolnikov to prison; this will change the course of both their lives for the better. The rest of his money goes to good causes, also. Having lost Dunya, he sees no real reason to go on. Perhaps it is a rational, strong decision to end his unhappy life. On the other hand, perhaps it is a great weakness; the reader must decide. In both life and death, Svidrigaylov remains one of the most complex, ambiguous, and provocative characters in the novel.

Part 6: Chapter 7

Part 6: Chapter 7 Summary

The story returns to Raskolnikov, who is approaching the final decision to confess. He pays a last visit to his mother, who he has been avoiding for awhile. She persists in her blind, maternal faith he will accomplish great things in the future. Sadly and modestly, Raskolnikov simply asks if she will always love him no matter what she may discover.

Back in his old room, he meets Dunya, who now knows the whole truth. She says his willingness to face suffering is a sign of pride, which pleases him, but her suggestion that his suffering will partially make up for his crime makes him angry. He does not see his act as a crime, for, in wartime, many men who shed blood are later honored as heroes. Why is his action different, simply because it was not done with the authority of the king or the state? Not only does he not believe punishment will reform him, he worries that twenty years of punishment will have 'reduced him to idiocy', leaving him no reason to live at all.

Part 6: Chapter 7 Analysis

Raskolnikov still strongly rejects the idea that committed any crime. He is going to confess and receive punishment, but only because he was too weak to carry through with it and now must face the consequences. One is reminded here of his belief that the crowd will occasionally defeat the superior man who makes his own laws, if that man is not strong enough. This is, according to Raskolnikov, nature's law. It seems he views his confession as yielding to his own natural weakness, but not as evidence that his theory is wrong. Indeed, he will hold to this theory long after he has nothing else, having invested so much in it.

Part 6: Chapter 8

Part 6: Chapter 8 Summary

Sonia has waited for Raskolnikov the whole day, knowing he will soon confess. At sunset, he comes to take the cross she had promised to give him. She is disturbed by his attitude, which is insincere, a little defiant. He hesitates to face the judgment of police and the public, but he leaves her and goes into the thick crowd of the marketplace. Feeling crushed by hopelessness and anxiety, he remembers Sonia's orders to go to a crossroads, to bow down and kiss the earth, and to announce that he is a murderer. Suddenly moved and sincere, he kneels down and kisses the ground. In the corner of his eye, he sees Sonia following him and realizes she will never leave him.

He goes to the police station, where he is now a well-known figure. Pleased to see him, the lieutenant apologizes having ever suspected Raskolnikov, and begins happily chatting about all sorts of current affairs, including the suicide of Svidrigaylov. Dizzy and numb, with this unexpected news of his friend's suicide, Raskolnikov gets up and pushes his way outside to leave. Yet he cannot go further, for Sonia is there, watching. Faced with her unshakable faith that he will do the right thing, he pauses, grins and re-enters the station. He firmly pronounces the famous words, "*It was I who killed the old woman moneylender and her sister Lisaveta with a hatchet and robbed them.*"

Part 6: Chapter 8 Analysis

Svidrigaylov was the last person likely to reveal truth of the crime. When Raskolnikov hears Svidrigaylov killed himself, he realizes there is no more danger to him. Should he really choose to confess now, just as he has completely gotten away with it? This final, powerful coincidence serves as a final test of Raskolnikov's will at the very end of his journey. Yet it also allows him to make his confession as a completely free choice. He is no longer compelled by fear of being caught, or any other reason. One can argue that his confession is where he most freely exercises his will. His taking up of the cross from Sonia symbolizes that he is both dying and also way to a new, purer life.

Epilogue: Chapter 1

Epilogue: Chapter 1 Summary

The epilogue begins in the prison where Raskolnikov has already served nine months. Because of various circumstances (his confession, his charity to others, his odd mental state) Raskolnikov received a light sentence of only 8 years. He is sent to Siberia and Sonia followed him there, where she lives in a nearby village. Back in St. Petersburg, Razumikhin and Dunya had a quiet wedding. Mrs. Raskolnikov never recovered from the shock of her son's troubles, and suspected the worst, even though they protected her and never spoke of the truth. She died of a fever soon after her son left.

The only news of Raskolnikov now comes to the family by Sonia's letters, which are uneventful and even boring. Raskolnikov, she reports, seems indifferent, quiet and even rude. Eventually he becomes quite ill and goes to the prison hospital.

Epilogue: Chapter 1 Analysis

The reader is no longer inside Raskolnikov's head. Instead, all anyone knows of Raskolnikov is what Sonia's letters convey to Raskolnikov's family. The reader, along with Raskolnikov's family, watches from afar. The reader sensing he has really gone somewhere we cannot follow at all, we have lost him from our view. Sonia can follow him now.

Epilogue: Chapter 2

Epilogue: Chapter 2 Summary

Raskolnikov has fallen ill from shame and wounded pride. Previously, his high ambitions gave purpose to his life, but now, reduced to simply surviving, he sees no value in life. He has not repented of his deed. He still thinks that one's success determines whether one is seen as a 'benefactor of mankind' or a criminal. He still thinks it is his weakness, not his actions, that make him a failure and a criminal.

In the hospital, Raskolnikov dreams of a world infected by a terrible virus that is making people violent and aggressive while also giving them the illusion of being morally correct. Chaos and war breaks out at all levels of society, since each person defends his own ideas to the death and no agreements can be reached. The dream haunts him.

Sonia falls sick and disappears for a while. When Raskolnikov finally sees her again, he finally opens his heart to her and realizes his unlimited love for her. Speechless with joy, they see that the love in their hearts will redeem them both.

After this climatic moment, everything changes for Raskolnikov; his relations with others improve, the future holds promise, and he looks at the seven years of his sentence as a bearable, even short time to wait until their new life can begin.

Epilogue: Chapter 2 Analysis

Rather surprisingly, even in this very last chapter, Raskolnikov still does not see his act as a crime. Nothing has discredited his theory, in his eyes. The last pages create great suspense, as one wonders what, if anything, will reform him.

The his dream of the virus shows him what a world might be like where everyone took his own idea to their logical conclusion, and felt themselves the only source of law and moral correctness. A perpetual power struggle would ensue (one sees here the influence of Darwin's 'natural selection' and 'survival of the fittest' accounts of human nature).

Raskolnikov had long put his faith in rationality and power, thinking these would save him and give meaning to his life, but these goals bring him nothing. Raskolnikov's salvation finally comes to him, but it does not come through God, or the justice system, or himself. Only Sonia, the single person who always stood by him, finally reaches him. Once he fully appreciates and yields to their shared love, he can rejoin humanity and end his position of superior alienation.

With such an ending, Dostoevsky makes a powerful statement about how he views human nature, and places two options in front of us. Either we can define ourselves as lone individuals pursuing our own self-interest, ignoring the laws and ethical obligations

of the community. Such a world would be marked discord, struggle and competition, he thinks. The other option is to realize the value of social relations and the innate human capacity for love and understanding.

Like Raskolnikov, people are often divided by a desire for power and superiority on the one hand, and a need for love and belonging on the other. Crime and Punishment points out the close relation between these two, and pleads that we let the gentle, unifying force of love counteract the violent and divisive drive for individual supremacy. Only in this way will a stable, ordered community be possible.

Characters

Pulkheria Aleksandrovna

Raskolnikov's mother. A widow, she is forty-three years old, but her face "still retains traces of her former beauty." When she arrives in St. Petersburg with her daughter Dunya and meets Raskolnikov, whom she has not seen for three years, she is deeply concerned about him. She finds his behavior puzzling, and she worries about him. Raskolnikov is embarrassed (among other things) by his mother's attention and attempts to rebuff her. In his final encounter with his mother, Raskolnikov reveals his love for her but does not tell her about his crime. However, with a mother's intuition, she is more aware of what is happening to her son than he realizes.

Dunechka

See Dunya Avdotya Romanovna

Alyona Ivanovna

A pawnbroker whom Raskolnikov murders. The widow of a college registrar, in Raskolnikov's eyes she is a suspicious, miserly old woman who preys on unfortunate people who are forced to pawn their few possessions with her. Raskolnikov reasons that she is a "vile, harmful louse" who is no good to anyone and who only causes pain and suffering to others (including her simple-minded sister, Lizaveta Ivanovna). Therefore, for Raskolnikov, her murder is justified. However, Dostoyevsky suggests that the murder of even such an unsympathetic character is a crime against humanity.

Katerina Ivanovna

The wife of Marmeladov. Marmeladov tells Raskolnikov that she is "full of magnanimous emotions" but "hot-tempered and Irritable." The daughter of a military officer, she was a poor widow when she met Marmeladov, and since her marriage to Marmeladov she has been reduced to total poverty. She has three children from her previous marriage. She is "a thin, rather tall woman, with a good figure and beautiful chestnut hair." Raskolnikov guesses that she is about thirty years old. She suffers from consumption (tuberculosis) and has been driven to despair by her husband's drunkenness and extreme poverty. In this piteous state she abuses her children, and on her deathbed she refuses to forgive Marmeladov for his irresponsibility. After her husband's death, she retreats into the fantasy that she has an aristocratic background. She dies shortly thereafter.

Lizaveta Ivanovna

The simple-minded younger half-sister of the pawnbroker Alyona Ivanovna. Raskolnikov kills Lizaveta when the woman unexpectedly enters the apartment where Raskolnikov has just murdered Alyona Ivanovna. Ironically, Raskolnikov had earlier expressed some sympathy for Lizaveta, a poor soul who was abused by her sister. Raskolnikov had learned that Alyona would be alone when he overheard Lizaveta talking to someone in the market. Curiously, his unpremeditated killing of the innocent Lizaveta plays little part in his subsequent feelings of guilt. He later learns that Lizaveta was a friend of Sonya Marmeladova.

Andrei Semyonovich Lebezyatnikov

A former student of Luzhin, with whom Luzhin lodges temporarily in St. Petersburg. Lebezyatuikov belongs to a radical utopian organization. Luzhin attempts to enlist him as a witness when he accuses Sonya of robbery. However, Lebezyatuikov realizes that Luzhin has framed Sonya, and he speaks up on her behalf and tells the truth. Dostoyevsky ridicules Lebezyatnikov' s naive political ideas, but the character is commended for his basic honesty and decency.

Pyotr Petrovich Luzhin

The manipulative fiancé of Raskolnikov's sister, Dunya. Luzhin is related to Svidrigailov and Svidrigailov's wife, Marla Petrovna, for whom Dunya previously had worked as a governess. In his early forties, Luzhin is depicted as a self-important dandy with uncertain government connections. He clearly does not love Dunya, and his motives for marriage are suspect. After a brief acquaintance, he has arranged for Raskolnikov's sister and mother (Dunya and Pulkheria Aleksandrovna) to follow him to St. Petersburg. However, his arrangements are less than satisfactory. Raskolnikov takes an instant dislike to Luzhin and insults him. Raskolnikov vows to stop his sister's marriage to a man whom he regards as a hypocrite and an opportunist. Luzhin later falsely accuses Sonya of having robbed him, but the charges are disproven and Luzhin is humiliated. For Dostoyevsky, Luzhin embodies superficiality and corruption.

Semyon Zaharovitch Marmeladov

A drunken civil servant; the father of Sonya and the husband of Katerina Ivanovna. In the novel's second chapter, Raskolnikov encounters Marmeladov in a tavern, where Marmeladov tells the former student the story of his degeneration. Despite his drunkenness, Marmeladov is intelligent and perceptive, but he has abandoned his job and lost all self-respect Consequently, his family has fallen into dire poverty, and his daughter Sonya has resorted to prostitution in order to help support them. Marmeladov is fully aware of his irresponsibility and its disastrous consequences for his family. Indeed, he seems to take pleasure in his depravity and suffering. However, he is

unwilling or unable to change his ways and reform himself. Marmeladov is later run over by a carriage and is fatally injured. Raskolnikov happens to come along and has the older man carried to Marmeladov's apartment, where he dies. Both comic and pathetic, Marmeladov is regarded as one of Raskolnikov's "doubles." Dostoyevsky may also intend him to be symptomatic of a Russian national tendency toward slothfulness and irrationality and an inability to reform or modernize.

Sonia Marmeladova *See* Sonya Marmeladova

Sonya Marmeladova

A meek young prostitute to whom Raskolnikov first confesses his guilt. The eighteen-year-old daughter of the drunken civil servant Semyon Marmeladov, and the stepdaughter of Katerina Ivanovna, Sonya has become a prostitute in order to help support Katerina's children. She is thin, fair-haired, and has "remarkable blue eyes." Raskolnikov first learns about her from Marmeladov. Although other characters scorn Sonya because of her profession, Raskolnikov is drawn to her because of her innocence. She reads Raskolnikov the biblical passage about Jesus's raising of Lazarus from the dead. . She also tells Raskolnikov that she was a friend of the murdered woman Lizaveta. When Raskolnikov confesses that he is the murderer, Sonya is horrified because she realizes that he has murdered his own human spirit. She forgives him and urges him to go to a public place and bow down and confess his sin to God. Sonya follows him to Siberia. Sonya represents Dostoyevsky's religious faith. Her Christianity emphasizes redemption through suffering.

Natasya

Natasya is the cook and only servant of Raskolnikov's landlady. Dostoyevsky describes her as a "country peasant woman, and a very talkative one." She tells Raskolnikov that the landlady has been talking about calling the police because he has been behind in his rent and will not leave. She is very kind to the poor student, bringing him tea and urging her cabbage soup on him, rather than taking his money to buy sausage.

Nikolay

Nikolay is one of the workmen. He is a house painter who confessed to the murders and who is described by Porfiry as a "child... responsive to influences." His false evidence serves to distract people from suspecting Raskolnikov and provides Porfiry with a chance to urge Raskolnikov to make a full confession for his own good.

Pawnbroker

See Alyona Ivanovna

Porfiry Petrovich

A police inspector whose interviews with Raskolnikov provide much dramatic tension in the book. A relative of Raskolnikov's friend Razumikhin, he is about thirty-five years old and pudgy. At times he seems a somewhat befuddled, comical character. but in fact he is extremely perceptive and intelligent. His investigative methods are highly unorthodox. He is more interested in criminal psychology than in standard police procedure or material evidence. Raskolnikov is uncertain how much Porfiry really knows about the crime, and he attempts to outwit the detective. However, Porfiry's friendly but persistent and all-knowing manner upsets and confuses Raskolnikov. In the end, Raskolnikov breaks down and confesses. Porfiry's emphasis on criminal psychology reflects Dostoyevsky's own ideas and interests as a novelist.

Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov

The central character of *Crime and Punishment.* He is a poverty-stricken twenty-three-year-old. Described as an "ex-student," Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov has dropped out of the university presumably because of his inability to pay his fees. Beyond this, he has been suffering from a spiritual crisis. Proud, aloof, and scornful of humanity, at the beginning of the novel Raskolnikov has become obsessed with the idea that he is a "superman" and therefore not subject to the laws that govern ordinary humans. He has published an essay on his superman theory. To prove this theory, he intends to kill an old pawnbroker, whom he regards as worthless. However, the murder goes horribly wrong: he also kills the old woman's simple-minded innocent sister (Lizaveta), who stumbles upon the scene of the crime. Moreover, the crime fails to confirm Raskolnikov's cool superiority. Tormented by feelings of guilt, he acts erratically, and he fears that his guilt will be obvious to others. Much of the novel centers on Raskolnikov's irrational state of mind and the eccentric behavior that follows from this. On several occasions he comes close to boasting that he could have committed the crime, and dares others (notably the detective Porfiry Petrovich) to prove that he lid It. He insults his friend Razumikhin and deliberately offends his mother and sister. However, he also acts in ways that show he still has a moral conscience. For example, he defends his sister against her scheming fiancé Luzhin. He gives money to Marmeladov's widow Katerina Ivanovna. He recoils in horror from the depraved Svidrigailov. Most significantly of all, he is drawn to the young prostitute Sonya Marmeladova, who is morally pure and innocent despite her terrible life. He ultimately confesses his Crime to her and begins his journey to redemption. The Russian word *Raskol* means "schism." The term was used to describe a split in the Russian Orthodox Church that occurred in the mid-1600s. Dostoyevsky's Russian readers would have been aware of the significance of Raskolnikov's name, which suggests contradictions in his own personality as well as his rebellion against God. In the complex Raskolnikov, Dostoyevsky created one of the most interesting and most human of all fictional characters.

Dmitry Prokovich Razumikhin

Raskolnikov's best friend. A former student himself, Razumikhin helps to nurse Raskolnikov back to health after the latter's breakdown (following Raskolnikov's murder of the pawnbroker and her sister). His attitude toward Raskolnikov is complex: he often berates Raskolnikov, but he is also protective toward his wayward friend. Razumikhin falls in love with Raskolnikov's sister, Dunya, and he subsequently acts as her protector. He is a cousin of the police inspector Porfiry Petrovich, to whom he introduces Raskolnikov. On the surface, Razumikhin is himself no paragon of virtue. He is unkempt and ungainly, and when he meets Raskolnikov's mother and sister after a party he is drunk. Razumikhin's name derives from the Russian word for "reason". Some critics have compared Razumikhin and his role in this novel to Shakespeare's character Horatio, the friend of Hamlet.

Rodya

See Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov

Dunya Avdotya Romanovna

Raskolnikov's sister. She bears a physical resemblance to her brother, but in contrast to his morbid character she is self-confident, strong, and straightforward. She is devoted to Raskolnikov, and initially decides to marry Pyotr Luzhin primarily for her brother's financial benefit with her mother (Pukheria Aleksandrovna), she unexpectedly arrives in St. Petersburg from the provinces and visits Raskolnikov. Raskolnikov is horrified at the thought of her loveless arranged marriage to Luzhin and attempts to stop it Indirectly through Dunya, Raskolnikov also encounters Svidrigailov, whom Dunya earlier had served as a governess and whose intentions toward Dunya are not entirely honorable. Raskolnikov's friend Razumikhin falls in love with Dunya and serves as her protector; he eventually marries her.

Sofya Semyonovna

See Sonya Marmeladova

Arkady Ivanovich Svidrigailov

A mysterious wealthy landowner, Svidrigailov is a shadowy, highly ambiguous character. He does not appear directly until the last third of the novel, although he is mentioned earlier. He is about fifty years old but looks younger. His "strange face" resembles a mask. He has blue eyes, a blond beard and blond hair, and ruby-red lips. Svidrigailov's background is thoroughly distasteful. He and his wife had employed Raskolnikov's sister Dunya as a governess, and he became obsessed with her. (Marfa Petrovna helped to

arrange Dunya's engagement to Luzhin in order to get the girl away from Svidrigailov.) He confesses to Raskolnikov that his marriage to an older woman, Marfa Petrovna, was one of convenience. He is a shameless sensualist whose favorite activity was seducing young girls. There are rumors that he is responsible for the deaths of a servant, a girl whom he had raped, and his wife; he is occasionally visited by their ghosts. Svidrigailov has recently arrived in St. Petersburg. While lodging in the apartment next to Sonya's, he overhears Raskolnikov tell Sonya that he (Raskolnikov) is a murderer. Svidrigailov subsequently lets Raskolnikov know that he is aware of the young man's secret, and he attempts to blackmail Raskolnikov emotionally. Yet, for all his lurid interests, Svidrigailov is apparently capable of compassion. He gives much-needed money to both Dunya and Sonya, and he arranges for Katerina Ivanovna's children to be put in a good orphanage after their mother dies. (However, he hints that his motives for this last act may be entirely selfish.) After his last meeting with Raskolnikov he again attempts to seduce Dunya. When this fails, he spends a night in a run-down hotel and is troubled by dreams about his former victims. In the morning he goes outside, puts a gun to his head, and commits suicide. Svidrigailov is often considered Raskolnikov's "double." His utterly selfish, callous, and destructive nature points to what Raskolnikov might become if Raskolnikov were to abandon all conscience and follow his theories through to their logical conclusion.

Zametov

The police clerk who tells Porfiry of his suspicions that Raskolnikov is the murderer early in the story. When Raskolnikov asks for him at the end of the novel in order to make his confession, he learns that Zametov is no longer there.

Dr. Zossimov

Dr. Zossimov is a young physician and friend of Razumikhin who comes to treat Raskolnikov. Described as "a tall fat man with a puffy, colourless, clean-shaven face and straight flaxen hair," he is fashionably dressed and nonchalant in manner, but he is known to be excellent at his work. Dr. Zossimov continues to look after Raskolnikov, "his first patient," he says, and is one of two friends to attend the wedding of Razumikhin and Raskolnikov's sister.

Themes

Guilt and Innocence

In large part, *Crime and Punishment* is an examination of the guilty conscience. For Dostoyevsky, punishment is not a physical action or condition. Rather (much as in Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost),* punishment inherently results from an awareness of guilt. Guilt is the knowledge that one has done wrong and has become estranged from society and from God. From the very beginning of the novel, Raskolnikov (whose name derives from the Russian word for "schism") suffers from this estrangement. In murdering the pawnbroker, he seeks to prove that he is above the law. But his crime only reinforces his sense that he is not a part of society.

Although she is a prostitute, Sonya is the embodiment of innocence. Her motive in becoming a prostitute was not one of lust. Indeed, in all of the novel, there is no indication that Sonya has any lustful or sexual inclination. On the contrary, she is embarrassed by, and ashamed of, her profession. In Dostoyevsky's eyes, she is not guilty of any transgression. She does what she does out of sheer necessity, not out of any base instincts or any hope for personal gain.

In contrast with Sonya's sense of shame over the life she leads, Pyotr Luzhin is shameless in the way he manipulates Raskolnikov's sister and mother (Dunya and Pulkheria Aleksandrovna). He is guilty of emotional blackmail as well as of fraud. Arkady Svidrigailov is an even more "guilty" character. Luzhin's crimes are calculated, whereas Svidrigailov's crimes result from his complete surrender to his evil nature. Rather than facing up to his guilt and its consequences, as Raskolnikov does, Svidrigailov partially acknowledges his guilt but evades the consequences by committing suicide. Although Raskolnikov is the central figure of *Crime and Punishment,* Dostoyevsky suggests that Raskolnikov may not quite be the book's most guilty criminal. Svidrigailov and Luzhin are also guilty of criminal misdeeds, and they are less open than Raskolnikov to the possibility of redemption.

Atonement and Forgiveness

The theme of atonement and forgiveness is closely related to that of guilt and innocence. As Dostoyevsky's title suggests, punishment is the only logical and necessary outcome of crime. Punishment, however, does not mean merely a legal finding and a sentence of imprisonment. In Dostoyevsky's view, the criminal's true punishment is not a sentence of Imprisonment. Nor is legal punishment the definitive answer to crime. The criminal's punishment results from his own conscience, his awareness of his guilt. However, he must not only acknowledge his guilt. The criminal must atone for it and must seek forgiveness.

Raskolnikov at first tries to rationalize his crime by offering various explanations to himself. Foremost among these is his "superman" theory. By definition, the superman theory denies any possibility of atonement. The superman does not need to atone, because he is permitted to commit any crime in order to further his own ends. Raskolnikov also rationalizes his crime by arguing that the old pawnbroker is of no use to anyone; in killing her, he is ridding the world of an unpleasant person

Driven by poverty, he also claims that he wants to use her money to better his position in life. In the *course* of the book, he comes to realize that none of these excuses justifies his crime.

Raskolnikov's reasons for fearing arrest are equally complex. It is clear, however, that without the example and the urging of Sonya, he would not be able to seek forgiveness. He finds it remarkable that when he confesses his crime to her, Sonya immediately forgives him. She urges him to bow down before God and make a public confession. This act of contrition, she believes, will enable him to begin to cleanse his soul.

Svidrigailov is aware of his own guilt, but he does not seek forgiveness. Unlike Raskolnikov, he does not believe in the possibility of forgiveness. In giving money to Sonya and others, he attempts a partial atonement for his sins. However, even these gestures are motivated partly by base self-interest. Because he is spiritually dead, he feels that the only atonement he can make is to commit suicide.

Ubermensch ("Superman")

Part of the motive for Raskolnikov's crime comes from a theory that he has developed. In an essay that he publishes, Raskolnikov argues that humankind is divided into two categories: ordinary people, and geniuses or supermen. Ordinary people must obey the law, but "supermen" - of whom there are very few in any generation - are entitled to break existing laws and make their own laws.

Raskolnikov cites the French emperor Napoleon as the epitome of the superman type. He argues that Napoleon rose to power by overstepping the laws that govern ordinary people. Napoleon made his own laws and achieved his goals by killing tens of thousands of people in wars. Because Napoleon was a genius, Raskolnikov reasons, he was not regarded as a criminal. On the contrary, he was hailed as a hero. Early in *Crime and Punishment,* Raskolnikov has become obsessed with the notion that he himself is a "superman." Therefore, he thinks, he is not subject to the laws that govern ordinary people. (In the original Russian text, Dostoyevsky frequently uses a word that means "overstepping" or "stepping over"-that is, transgressing. This word is closely related to the Russian word for "crime" *(prestuplenie)* Raskolnikov decides to murder the pawnbroker Alyona Ivanovna partly to prove that he is a superman. However, his indecision and confusion throughout the novel indicate that he is not a superman. Moreover, in the course of the novel, Dostoyevsky seeks to prove that there is no such thing as a superman. Dostoyevsky believes that every human life is precious, and no one is entitled to kill.

Dostoyevsky's formulation of the superman theory (through Raskolnikov) clearly anticipates the ideas developed by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in the 1880s. For Nietzsche, the superman and his "will to power" were supreme ideals. Christianity stood in the way of the superman, and Nietzsche scorned Christianity as a "slave morality." Dostoyevsky's view of the superman is absolutely opposed to Nietzsche's. For Dostoyevsky, following the "superman" theory to its natural conclusion inevitably leads to death, destruction, chaos, and misery. Rather than seeing Christianity as a "slave mentality," Dostoyevsky views it as the true vision of the human place in the world and of the human relationship with God. In Dostoyevsky' s view, all people are valued in the eyes of God.

Style

Narrative

Crime and Punishment is written in the third person. However, Dostoyevsky's narrative focus shifts throughout the novel. *Crime and Punishment* is widely credited as the first psychological novel and in many passages, Dostoyevsky is concerned with the state of mind of the central character, Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov. In these passages-including those that relate Raskolnikov's brooding, the murder itself, and his encounters with the inspector Porfiry Petrovich-Dostoyevsky puts us inside Raskolnikov's head. We view the action from Raskolnikov's viewpoint and share his often disordered and contradictory thoughts. These passages read more like a first-person confession than a detached third-person fictional narrative. At the same time, he describes exterior events with clear realism.

Critics have pointed out that Dostoyevsky is essentially a dramatic novelist. He does not so much *tell* a story as enact it. *Crime and Punishment* is full of dramatic scenes, of which Raskolnikov's murder of the pawnbroker is only one. There are also a number of dramatic confrontations between characters. Dostoyevsky's characters rarely have calm discussions; rather, they have fierce arguments and verbal duels. Generally (but not always) Raskolnikov is at one end of these confrontations. At the other, in various scenes, are his friend Razumikhin, his sister and mother, his sister's corrupt suitor Luzhin, the police investigator Porfiry Petrovich, the innocent prostitute Sonya, and the cynical landowner Svidrigailov. These duels and pairings help to illustrate the Idea of the double, discussed further below.

Setting

The action of the book takes place in St. Petersburg, the capital city of Russia, in the summer of 1865. (The brief epilogue is set in Siberia.) *Crime and Punishment* is a distinctly urban novel. In choosing a definite urban setting, Dostoyevsky was paving new ground for Russian fiction. His Russian predecessors and contemporaries such as Gogol, Turgenev, and Tolstoy generally set their stories on country estates. In confining the action of his novel entirely to St. Petersburg, Dostoyevsky was emulating the English author Charles Dickens, who set his well-known stories IN the British capital, London. Moreover, St. Petersburg is not just a backdrop, but It is an inherent part of the novel. Dostoyevsky recreates St. Petersburg's neighborhoods and its streets, bridges, and canals with great realism. In his narrative, Dostoyevsky does not give the full street names, but uses only abbreviations. (In the very first paragraph, for example, he refers to "S-Lane" and "K-n Bridge.") Readers who were familiar with St. Petersburg would probably have been able to identify most of these specific locations, as modern scholars have done.

Much of the action takes place indoors, generally in cramped tenement apartments. With these settings, Dostoyevsky creates a tense, claustrophobic atmosphere. For example, in the weeks before he commits the murders, Raskolnikov has been lying in his tiny room and brooding. He retreats to this room after the murders, occasionally leaving his lair to wander the city's streets.

Most of the book's main characters are not natives of St. Petersburg, but have come to the city from Russia's far-flung rural provinces. Thus, they are not at ease in this urban setting. Provincial Russians might normally regard the capital city, created by Peter the Great as Russia's "window on the West," as a place of opportunity. However, for Raskolnikov, Katerina Ivanovna, Svidrigailov, and other characters, the City turns out to be a destination of last resort, a place where their diminished expectations are finally played out. (Svidrigailov remarks that "there aren't many places where there are as many gloomy, harsh and strange influences on the soul of man as there are in St. Petersburg.") This sense of the city as a dead-end is emphasized by the settings. The apartments where Raskolnikov and the Marmeladovs live are so small that there is scarcely enough space for a small group of visitors. Moreover, at several points in the novel, characters are threatened with eviction and fear that they will wind up on the streets. Near the end of the book, Katerina Ivanovna and her children beg on the streets by singing and dancing.

Most readers tend to think of Russia as a "winter" country, with lots of snow and cold weather. Dostoyevsky contradicts these expectations by setting his story during an unusual summer heat wave. The heat and humidity add to the general sense of discomfort that pervades the narrative. They also reflect and reinforce the feverish state that afflicts Raskolnikov throughout the book.

Structure

Crime and Punishment is divided into six parts plus an epilogue. Each part is broken further into several chapters. For the most part, each chapter centers around a self-contained dramatic episode. Much of this episodic structure is attributable to the fact that *Crime and Punishment* was written for serialization in a magazine. Magazine readers wanted each installment to be complete in itself and to contain colorful incidents. Many chapters end with the sudden, unexpected arrival of a new character. By introducing such developments at the end of many of the chapters, Dostoyevsky maintained a high level of suspense. He knew that his readers would be curious to know what would happen in the next chapter and that they would look forward to the next installment. Moreover, an unresolved complication at the end of a particular chapter would also stimulate Dostoyevsky to write the next chapter. This method of writing helps account for the numerous abrupt shifts in the plot focus.

Coincidence

Like many other important nineteenth-century novelists, Dostoyevsky does not hesitate to use coincidence to advance the plot. Indeed, many of the crucial developments in *Crime and Punishment* depend on sheer coincidences that seem highly unlikely to the modern reader. However, coincidence was an accepted literary convention of the period. Dostoyevsky does not attempt to explain away his coincidences, but on the contrary he simply states them as matters of fact. He uses this technique as a short cut to bring together certain characters and set up dramatic situations.

While he is walking down the street, Raskolnikov comes upon the scene of an accident. The accident victim turns out to be Marmeladov, a drunken civil servant whom he had met earlier in the novel. Marmeladov has been run over by a horse-drawn carriage. Raskolnikov takes charge of the situation and has Marmeladov carried home, where the injured man dies. Tills coincidence leads to Raskolnikov's first meeting with Marmeladov's daughter Sonya, who has turned to prostitution to support the poverty-stricken family. Drawn to Sonya by her meek nature and pure heart, Raskolnikov will later confess to her. In another coincidence, Sonya turns out to have been a friend of Lizaveta This disclosure serves to increase Raskolnikov's sense of guilt and further points up Sonya's selflessness.

It is also purely coincidence that the scheming Luzhin happens to be living temporarily in the same building as Katerina Ivanovna. This makes plausible his appearance at Katerina's funeral party and his attempt to frame Sonya for robbery. Later, Svidrigailov just happens by coincidence to be renting the apartment next door to Sonya's apartment. Thus, he is able to overhear Raskolnikov's murder confession. Svidrigailov's awareness of Raskolnikov's guilty secret helps set into motion another chain of events. There are many more such coincidences in the course of the story. That such coincidences involving a relatively small number of characters would occur in a large City like St. Petersburg is almost unbelievable. However, Dostoyevsky's narrative has such dramatic force that the reader is able to overlook the implausibility of these coincidences.

Symbolism and Imagery

As already discussed, Dostoyevsky's literary technique mixes narrative realism, dramatic scenes, and psychological analysis. He also uses symbolism and imagery, not so much for aesthetic effect as to emphasize certain points about his characters' psychology. One of his main symbolic devices is the pairing of certain characters. Early in his writing career, Dostoyevsky formulated the idea of the "double." That is, he believed that there may be two sides to a human personality. In giving a character like Raskolnikov several "doubles," Dostoyevsky emphasizes certain aspects of Raskolnikov's personality by contrasting him with these "doubles."

Among Raskolnikov's symbolic "doubles" are Marmeladov, Razumikhin, Dunya, Sonya, and Svidrigailov. Where Raskolnikov is obsessed with a theory, Marmeladov lives

entirely by impulse. Where Raskolnikov is extreme, Razumikhin is reasonable. (The Russian word *razum* means "reason.") Raskolnikov cuts himself off from his family, while his sister Dunya is completely dedicated to the family. Sonya too sacrifices herself for her family. Furthermore, her meekness and faith contrast with Raskolnikov's pride and his rejection of God. Raskolnikov is literally sickened by his crime and does not give any indication that he will commit more murders, whereas Svidrigailov takes pleasure in his criminal lust and persists in it.

Appropriately enough, blood and blood imagery pervades the book. Before he commits the murder, Raskolnikov has a horrific nightmare in which a group of drunken men flog "a little grey mare" to death. The notion of "shedding blood" becomes quite literal. Raskolnikov's murder of the pawnbroker and her sister with an axe is naturally a bloody act. As he attempts to escape notice, Raskolnikov becomes obsessed with the idea that he is covered in blood and that this will give him away. Toward the end of the novel, his sister Dunya tells him that "you have blood on your hands"; Raskolnikov defiantly replies that the world is covered in blood. It can be noted, as well, that the novel's blood imagery is paralleled by frequent references to tears.

Dostoyevsky uses dreams to give insight into his characters' psychology, as well as for symbolic purposes. Critics have debated the meaning of Raskolnikov's nightmare about the horse, mentioned above. As well as indicating his tormented state of mind, this nightmare may also symbolize the brutality of murder and the helplessness of the innocent. In the book's epilogue, in Siberia, Raskolnikov dreams that the world is swept by a terrible plague that turns people mad. This dream is generally believed to symbolize what would happen if all people rejected traditional morality and acted out Raskolnikov's "superman" theory. Svidrigailov, too, has terrible dreams and claims that he has seen the ghosts of his deceased wife and of a servant. The night before he kills himself, he dreams about a little girl whom he has victimized. In this dream, he sees the moral consequences of his crimes.

Historical Context

Dostoyevsky's Russia: Social and Political Background

For most modern Americans, the Russia of Dostoyevsky's time is almost incomprehensible. Sir Winston Churchill's comment in 1939 that Russia "is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma" can apply equally to the Russia of the 1860s when Dostoyevsky wrote *Crime and Punishment.* In the most simple terms, much of Russia's historical difference from the West has to do with the fact that for centuries It was cut off from Western Europe. The Reformation, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment that helped transform the countries of Western Europe from feudalism to modern nations with well-educated citizens and important cultural institutions barely touched Russia. Moreover, large-scale foreign invasions (from the Mongols in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to the Nazi armies in the early 1940s) periodically devastated the country. As a result, Russia has historically been suspicious of other nations. Also, early in its national history, Russia developed a tradition of government that centralized immense power in the hands of an emperor-the tsar-and a handful of his advisors. (The Russian title "tsar" derives from the Latin word "Caesar.") In the mid-1500s, Tsar Ivan *IV* (known as Ivan the Terrible) established what for more than the next four hundred years became the model for Russian government, alternating short-lived periods of ineffectual reform with periods of severe repression.

Relatively "liberal" rulers such as Tsar Peter the Great (reigned 1682-1725) and Tsarina Catherine the Great (who was actually German; reigned 1762-96) pursued a policy of "westernization." They attempted to Import modern technology and manners from Western Europe. At the same time, however, they held tightly onto absolute power and ruthlessly suppressed any challenge to the established political order.

During the period when Dostoyevsky was receiving his education and then establishing his literary career-the 1830s into the 1860s-Russia was stirred by intense intellectual debate. The small class of the educated people recognized that major changes were needed if the huge but backward country was to address its social problems and find its way successfully in the world. One general approach to change was proposed by certain intellectuals collectively known as Westernizers. The Westernizers were influenced by German philosophy and by social ideas that developed in Western Europe during the Industrial Revolution. They were also influenced by contemporary European revolutionary movements. The Westernizers were not united in their goals or methods. There were various factions. Some favored gradual democratic reforms, while others called for revolution to replace the tsarist government with a socialist regime. Among the leading Westernizers was Vissarion Belinsky (1811-48), the most famous Russian literary critic of his day. Belinsky praised Dostoyevsky's first book, *Poor Folk* (1846), and declared that Dostoyevsky was the literary successor of Gogol.

Another group of thinkers, known as the Slavophiles, proposed an entirely different approach to Russia's problems. Broadly speaking, the Slavophiles felt that Western ideals of rationalism and modernization were dangerous and alien to Russia. Rather than relying on a program of legislation and material improvement, the Slavophiles argued that Russia could only fulfill its destiny when Russians returned to their native spiritual values. Although they disagreed with the Westernizers, the Slavophiles were also opposed to the existing Russian government. By Western standards, the Slavophiles could be considered romantic and reactionary, but they made an important contribution to the debate over the future of Russia.

As a young man, Dostoyevsky was influenced by the Westernizers. In the mid- 1840s he joined the so-called Petrashevsky Circle, a small group that met weekly to discuss socialist ideas. The group demanded political reforms and generally opposed the government of Tsar Nicholas I. In the spring of 1849 the members were arrested. Twenty-one of them, including Dostoyevsky, were sentenced to death but were pardoned at the last minute. During his subsequent imprisonment in Siberia, Dostoyevsky underwent a profound spiritual and political change. He renounced political radicalism and came to believe that Russia's hope lay in Slavic idealism. His travels in Western Europe in the 1860s and 1870s reinforced his distaste for modern industrial society. In the great novels of his mature period, including *Crime and Punishment,* Dostoyevsky expresses his sympathy with the Slavophiles and attacks the Westernizers and radicals Raskolnikov reflects the viewpoint of the radical Nihilists (from the Latin word for "nothing"), who rejected all the traditional conventions of society.

By the time Dostoyevsky wrote *Crime and Punishment* Tsar Alexander II (reigned 1855-81) was in the midst of a significant reform policy. In 1861 the Tsar signed a proclamation that freed millions of Russian serfs (peasants who lived and worked in conditions similar to slavery). This was followed by reforms of local government, the courts, and the military. (The police inspector Porfiry Petrovich refers to these reforms.) However, these reforms failed to resolve the major problems in Russia and helped to create new problems. Again, the immense social problems facing Russia at the time-widespread poverty, ignorance, and social agitation-form the background to *Crime and Punishment.*

Crime and Punishment in a Literary Context

In the words of historian Nicholas Riasanovsky, "Literature constituted the chief glory of Russian culture in the first half of the nineteenth century." Like most educated Russians of his time, Dostoyevsky knew and revered the work of the great Russian poets Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837) and Mikhail Lermontov (1814-1841). In his verse novel *Eugene Onegin* (written 1822-31), Pushkin cast a clear light on Russian society and its problems. Dostoyevsky was also familiar with the work of the novelist Nikolai Gogol (18091852), the most important Russian novelist before Dostoyevsky himself. Gogol was a master both of realism and of the fantastic in his masterpiece *Dead Souls* (1842), Gogol examined the state of Russia with deep psychological understanding. Significantly, certain elements in *Crime and Punishment* can also be traced to two non-

Russian writers whose work Dostoyevsky knew and admired, the French novelist Victor Hugo (author of *Les Miserables)* and the English novelist Charles Dickens (author of *David Copperfield,* which Dostoyevsky read while in prison). Indeed, Dostoyevsky frequently mentioned Dickens in his letters and notebooks. In *Crime and Punishment,* Dostoyevsky shares Dickens's concern with contemporary urban life, poverty, crime, and the sufferings of children and the innocent.

Among Dostoyevsky's Russian contemporaries, two other major novelists stand out. Ivan Turgenev (1818-83) sided with the Westernizers and lived in Western Europe for much of his life; however, his subjects are thoroughly Russian. In his best known novel, *Fathers and Sons* (1862), he examines the relations between the older Russian democratic reformers and the younger, more radical generation. He also coined the term *nihilist.* Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) is often placed as Dostoyevsky's equal, though he was very different. His epic novel, *War and Peace* (1863-69) began to appear in installments around the same time as *Crime and Punishment.* In his later years, Tolstoy developed a unique philosophy of nonviolence that has been compared to the philosophy of Mohandas K. Gandhi Interestingly, both Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy knew and respected Turgenev although both disagreed with him, but Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy never met.

Critical Overview

Crime and Punishment excited much attention when it started to appear in serial form in a Russian literary journal in early 1866. Reviewing the first installment, an anonymous critic declared that "the novel promises to be one of the most important works of [Dostoyevsky]." The British scholar and translator David McDuff notes that "as the subsequent parts of the novel began to appear it acquired the status of a social and public event." A Russian critic of the time, N. N. Strakhov, later recalled that *Crime and Punishment* was "the only book the addicts of reading talked about."_ Strakhov noted that the novel was so powerful that people became agitated when they read it.

Some Russian critics-especially liberals and "Westernizers" -disapproved of the book because of its Implicit, controversial political viewpoint. They viewed the novel as an attack on the younger generation in Russia. One reviewer, G. Z. Yeliseyev, accused Dostoyevsky of "fanaticism." An anonymous reviewer in the journal the *Week* criticized Dostoyevsky for implying "that liberal ideas and the natural sciences lead young men to murder and young women to prostitution" D. I. Pisarev, a leading nihilist critic of the time, wrote an in-depth analysis of Raskolnikov' s motives. Pisarev understood the conflicting emotions that drove Raskolnikov, but believed that Raskolnikov was basically a product of his environment. Emphasizing a social view of the novel, Pisarev rejected Dostoyevsky's insistence on redemption through suffering. Instead, he called for social change through a revolution.

N. N. Strakhov, mentioned above, praised the novel for its important treatment of universal themes and disagreed with the interpretations offered by the Westernizers. The book did not mock young Russian Idealists, said Strakhov, but was a "lament" over the way that these young people were the victims of nihilistic ideas. When Strakhov's article appeared, Dostoyevsky wrote to him and told him that "you alone have understood me."'

After Dostoyevsky's death, his philosopher friend Vladimir Soloviev gave several speeches about the meaning of Dostoyevsky's work. Soloviev distinguished between the outward (legal) and inward (moral) definitions of the terms "crime" and "punishment." Solovlev interpreted Raskolnikov's inward sins as "pride" and "self-idolatry, which can only be redeemed by an inner moral act of self-renunciation." Another important assessment of the novel was given by Russian critic Vasily Rozanov in 1893. Rozanov remarked on the power with which Dostoyevsky gave readers a glimpse into the criminal soul. According to Rozanov, the book "lets us feel criminality with all the inner fibers of our being." Rozanov found that "the general mood of the novel... is far more remarkable than any of its individual episodes."'

As Dostoyevsky's work became more widely known, it began to influence Writers outside of Russia. Robert Louis Stevenson was an early British admirer of Dostoyevsky. In 1886 he declared that *Crime and Punishment* was "the greatest book I have read in ten years." (Coincidentally, that same year Stevenson published *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* which embodies the Dostoyevskyan theme of the double.)

Stevenson went on to note, however, that "many find *[Crime and Punishment]* dull; Henry James could not finish it." James's dislike was shared by such British authors as Joseph Conrad, John Galsworthy, and D. H. Lawrence However, Dostoyevsky was championed in England by the translator Constance Garnett (1862-1946). Between 1912 and 1920, Garnett translated *Crime and Punishment* and Dostoyevsky's other major novels into English. Despite the criticism of James, Conrad, and others, mentioned above, Garnett's translation proved enormously influential. It introduced this novel to a new generation of British and American readers, and the book's reputation soared. For many years, Garnett's translation remained the standard English language version of *Crime and Punishment.* (Garnett's translation is now considered to be somewhat flawed and has been largely superseded by others, including the 1991 translation by David McDuff published by Penguin.)

Debate over the interpretation of *Crime and Punishment* has continued throughout the twentieth century to the present. Writing in 1939, scholar Helen Muchnic observed that what Critics say about Dostoyevsky really tells more about those critics than about Dostoyevsky. McDuff agrees that "in many of the critical analyses of his work the operative factors are of an ideological rather than a purely aesthetic nature" Thus, Russian critics during the Soviet period hailed Dostoyevsky as a great writer, but they tended to overlook the book's Christian, anti-revolutionary, and anti-materialist sentiments. Instead, they praised it as an attack on the decadent bourgeoise society of pre-Revolutionary tsarist Russia. Similarly, the American critic Philip Rahv believed that the book's epilogue did not offer a satisfactory resolution. On the other hand, Critics like Konstantin Mochulsky and Nicholas Berdyaev have emphasized the book's Christian and existentialist ideals. The French novelist Andre Gide believed that the ideas Dostoyevsky worked out in *Crime and Punishment* led directly to the author's subsequent novels. The Scottish poet and critic Edwin Muir wrote that "Dostoyevsky wrote of the unconscious as If it were conscious; that is ... why his characters seem 'pathological,' while they are only visualized more clearly than any other figures in imaginative literature." Translator McDuff believes that "Raskolnikov, far from being a madman or psychopathic outcast, is an image of Everyman." And Ernest J. Simmons lauds the novel for "the characteristic spiritual glow that radiates through all the action and illuminates the darkest recesses of the minds of these tormented and suffering men and women."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

In the following essay, Connolly, a professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Virginia, reveals how Raskolnikov's plight is *symbolic of Dostoyevsky's belief that those who seek a rationalistic solution to society's ills are doomed to failure if they neglect to understand the spiritual and emotional needs of humanity.*

In *Crime and Punishment,* Fyodor Dostoyevsky created an unforgettable novel of haunting intensity. With its sustained focus on the emotions and thoughts of its young protagonist, Rodion Raskolnikov, Dostoyevsky's novel provides a harrowing portrait of human error and misfortune. Dostoyevsky had originally intended to write an account of murder from the perspective of the murderer himself. As he worked on the project in November 1865, however, he concluded that such a perspective might be too limited, so he chose an omniscient, third-person narrative mode instead. Yet traces of the original design remain: much of the novel offers direct insight into Raskolnikov's impressions and experiences. One of the ways in which Dostoyevsky allows the reader intimate access into his protagonist's mind is by describing Raskolnikov's dreams. Early in the novel, for example, Raskolnikov has a vivid dream in which he sees himself as a young boy accompanying his father on a visit to the grave of a younger brother who died in infancy. On the way to the grave, Raskolnikov and his father witness an enraged peasant beating an old, overburdened mare. The young boy is horrified to see how the peasant whips the horse across the eyes. Finally, the peasant kills the horse with an iron crowbar, and the shocked child runs over to kiss the horse's bloody muzzle. It is after he awakens from this dream that Raskolnikov utters aloud for the first time his plan to take an axe and smash open the old pawnbroker's skull. Clearly, Raskolnikov's vivid dream has brought to the surface his unexpressed, murderous intentions.

Dostoyevsky's treatment of this dream has additional significance, however. Some dream analysts might argue that every character in one's dream represents some aspect of the dreamer's personality or Impulses. Therefore, not only does the figure of the murderous peasant evoke Raskolnikov's own murderous urges, but also, the figure of the murdered horse might represent some part of the dreamer. Indeed, Raskolnikov's Crime not only has the effect of killing the pawnbroker and Lizaveta in a *physical* sense, it also has the effect of killing Raskolnikov himself in a *spiritual* sense. Long after the murder he would tell Sonya: "I killed myself, not that old creature!" Having "died" at the moment when he killed the pawnbroker and Lizaveta, Raskolnikov is faced with the challenge of being restored to "life," and much of the novel records his struggle with this problem.

Raskolnikov's interactions with Sonya playa significant role in this process. During the meeting in which he confesses his crime to her, Raskolnikov's conduct and words have the effect of creating a kind of psychological or emotional reenactment of the original murder Just as Raskolnikov feels that he killed himself when he murdered the pawnbroker, so too must he now have a second victim: the innocent Sonya takes the symbolic place of the innocent Lizaveta. The unconscious aim of Raskolnikov's behavior during this scene is to see how Sonya handles the dreadful experience. Will she be

devastated by her recognition of Raskolnikov's crime, or, on the contrary, will she find a way to go on living and thus serve as a model for Raskolnikov himself? Her religious faith and her love for Raskolnikov serve as a potent force for the criminal's regeneration.

Dostoyevsky's treatment of the theme of death and regeneration makes distinctive use of religious imagery, from the Gospel account of the raising of Lazarus (first mentioned to Raskolnikov by Porfiry Petrovich and then read aloud by Sonya to Raskolnikov) to the final scene of the novel, which takes place soon after the Christian holiday of Easter. During that final scene, Raskolnikov feels a surge of overwhelming love for Sonya, as if his soul has undergone a sudden cleansing or purification. Dostoyevsky's description of this moment emphasizes its religious dimensions. He writes that Raskolnikov and Sonya experience "a perfect resurrection into a new life" and that "Love had raised them from the dead."

In addition to its religious imagery, *Crime and Punishment* also incorporates other symbolic systems. Landscapes and physical settings often suggest a character's emotional or psychological conditions. Raskolnikov lives in a tiny, cramped room, an evocative emblem of how constricted his lifestyle and thinking have become. He buries the items stolen from the pawnbroker under a huge rock. This rock serves as a reminder of the crushing burden of guilt that Raskolnikov carries with him. Recognizing the cramped nature of Raskolnikov's lifestyle and thinking, Porfiry Petrovich tells him that he needs "air" and that he should learn to be a "sun." The only time that Raskolnikov feels some sense of ease is when he leaves the stifling city streets behind and walks out into the countryside. His spiritual conversion at the end of the novel takes place on the bank of a river with a wide, pastoral scene displayed in front of him.

Yet it is not only the physical landscape that amplifies and reflects Raskolnikov's inner condition. Dostoyevsky's handling of other characters also plays a key role in the development and exposition of the central figure. As Raskolnikov moves through the city, he seems to move through a charged atmosphere in which every encounter triggers a resonant response in his soul. Thus, his chance meeting with Marmeladov introduces the concepts of suffering and self-sacrifice, concepts that will become so important to Raskolnikov later in the novel. More importantly, the characters who surround Raskolnikov often seem to serve as potential doubles or alter egos. That is, the traits that these characters embody represent potential directions for Raskolnikov himself. On one side stands the humble Sonya. She is willing to sacrifice herself for her family, and she puts the Ideals of love and service to one's fellow humans above any notion of self-glorification. On the other side stands the corrupt Svidrigailov. He indulges in extreme forms of debauchery simply to relieve his boredom. Svidrigailov tells Raskolnikov that he considers the young man to be something of a kindred spirit. Although Raskolnikov does not wish to admit it, he senses that there may be some validity to Svidrigailov's assertions. When Svidrigailov informs Sonya that Raskolnikov only has two paths to choose from, either "a bullet in the brain" or "Siberia," he has effectively identified the choices that lie in front of the wretched young man. Only Sonya's appearance outside the police station at the end of the main section of the novel prevents Raskolnikov from emulating Svidrigailov's example and committing

suicide. Instead, he follows her advice, confesses his crime, and with her love and support he ultimately finds redemption in Siberia.

In addition to the main characters who reflect and amplify Raskolnikov's conflicting impulses, several secondary characters appear in the novel to convey Dostoyevsky's scorn for certain ideological trends in contemporary Russian society. The pompous Luzhin, for example, has come to St. Petersburg to curry favor with the new "progressive" elements among the intelligentsia. Dostoyevsky uses Luzhin' s simplistic praise for scientific thought and the virtues of self-interest to mock the popular ideas of the progressive writer N. G. Chernyshevsky. Even more satirical in this regard is the character of Lebezyatnikov, who has been so impressed with scenes from Chernyshevsky's novel, *What Is to Be Done,* that he tries to outdo the behavior of characters from that novel. He tells Luzhin that if he had a wife, he would encourage her to take a lover simply so he could show his magnanimity and understanding in refusing to condemn her.

Dostoyevsky's disdain for the radical movement was perhaps fueled by his own early exposure to progressive social movements. As a young man in the 1840s he had belonged to a small circle devoted to the discussion and dissemination of utopian socialist thought. His participation in this group had led to his arrest and imprisonment in 1849. He was subsequently sentenced to prison camp and exile in Siberia, and a decade would pass before he could return to St. Petersburg. Through his portrait of the young Raskolnikov, Dostoyevsky wished to show the dangers of errant thought in contemporary Russia. Those who believed that society's ills could be cured through rationalistic schemes, without regard for the inner spiritual and emotional complexity of the human subject, were not only doomed to fail, but from Dostoyevsky's perspective, they represented a serious threat to society Itself. Raskolnikov's crime, then, serves to illustrate the pernicious nature of the radicals' self-centered and self-elevating intellectual schemes. Yet Dostoyevsky's novel offers much more than a partisan ideological tract. His haunting description of Raskolnikov's desperate struggles and aspirations has resulted in one of the most memorable and thought-provoking works in all of world literature.

Source: Julian Connolly, in an essay for *Novels for Students,* Gale, 1998.

Critical Essay #2

For Leatherbarrow, the principle of uncertainty is prevalent in many of Dostoevsky's novels but particularly in Crime and Punishment. *In the following excerpt, Leatherbarrow asserts that not only is the motive for the crime unclear to the reader and the perpetrator, but time, space, and point of view as well deliberately lack clarity and objectivity.*

As the novel *[Crime and Punishment] grew* under Dostoevsky's pen, his notebooks and drafts show that he went from uncertainty to uncertainty in depicting Raskolnikov and his crime, even jotting down reminders to himself to elucidate the murderer's motives more clearly. It would be easy enough to conclude *from* this that Dostoevsky... had simply not suspected the full richness and potential of his character and his theme, but this would be too simple a conclusion. Uncertainty is an Important artistic principle in much of Dostoevsky's work, and it is at the very heart *of Crime and Punishment...* .

In *Crime and Punishment* Dostoevsky sacrifices to the principle of uncertainty many of the conventional prerogatives of the novelist: his most far-reaching sacrifice was that of omniscience... In *Crime and Punishment* the narrator enjoys no consistent perceptual advantage over the participants: he sees the world through the same haze of subjective uncertainty as Raskolnikov does. It is this above all else that gives the novel its permanently nightmarish quality.

The most obvious manifestation of this kind of uncertainty is in the presentation of motive. Raskolnikov becomes a "criminal in search of his own motive", he does not in the end know why he committed his Crime, and neither does the reader. The narrator offers us no definite explanation, only a share in Raskolnikov's confusion...Dostoevsky originally conceived Raskolnikov's crime as a means of exposing the absurdity of the moral utilitarianism characteristic of many leading intellectuals in the 1860s. ..

The utilitarian principle undoubtedly remains a major aspect of Raskolnikov's crime in the finished novel. Indeed, he does not finally renounce it until his conversion in the Epilogue. In a conversation with Dunya late in the novel he vigorously defends the morality of his crime in utilitarian terms: "'Crime? What crime!' he cried in a sort of sudden frenzy. 'That I killed a vile, harmful louse, an old hag of a moneylender of no use to anybody, for whose murder one should be forgiven forty sins, and who bled poor people dry. Can that be called a crime? I don't think about it, and I have no desire to wipe it out.'" But the utilitarian ethic alone can satisfy the demands of neither the reader nor Raskolnikov himself for a comprehensive explanation of his act. In a sense, this affirms Dostoevsky's point that the complex and often contradictory impulses behind human action cannot in the end be reduced to simple causal chains or primary motives. But Raskolnikov, as a "man of the sixties," cannot countenance the possibility that he has committed an irrational or irreducible act. He craves a comprehensive motive to restore his belief in the lucidity of human values and behavior. Yet rational utilitarianism is not adequate to the task, and he loses himself in the maze of his own personality. He embarks upon his crime ostensibly with the aim of robbery to further the fortunes of

himself and other socially worthy people at the expense of a worthless parasite-a simple and logical adjustment of society's faulty arithmetic. Yet he fails to ascertain in advance the extent and whereabouts of his victim's wealth; he leaves with only a few cheap trinkets which he soon abandons under a stone and never reclaims. At no stage does he consider the possibility of appropriating the old woman's wealth without resorting to murder. It quickly becomes obvious that Raskolnikov has not murdered in order to steal; he has fabricated a shabby robbery in order to murder. He has only murder on his mind, not the appropriation and redistribution of wealth.

After the murder the utilitarian motive slips farther and farther into the background as Raskolnikov's probing intellect discerns the shapes of other and more disturbing implications of his act. It is worth remembering that he is rarely troubled by the murder of Lizaveta, the innocent victim of an unanticipated turn of events. This second killing does not engage his concern, for it was an unpremeditated, simple, even "innocent" slaying with a clear motive: Raskolnikov killed Lizaveta in order to escape. It is the "rationally justified" murder of the old hag that gnaws at his soul and that in the end he cannot account for.

Porfiry Petrovich, the examining magistrate, is the first to associate the murder with the ideas expounded in an article of Raskolnikov's on crime, and thus to open the way to an explanation of the crime, not in terms of Raskolnikov's professed utilitarian altruism, but in the light of his insane pride, egoism, and craving for power. Raskolnikov's article, published without his knowledge, is a product of the narrow, cloistered intellectualism which characterizes the young ex-student and makes it so difficult for him to enter the mainstream of life. It is composed of the cramped and arid thoughts engendered by the coffin like room in which he leads only the ghost of a life. The article divides humanity into two distinct categories: the *Supermen,* such as Newton and Napoleon, who by virtue of their originality, strength of will, or daring, write their names boldly in the history of human achievement; and the *Lice,* the ordinary men and women who are the bricks and not the architects of history and who contribute nothing new. The former, according to Raskolnikov, have an inherent right to moral and intellectual freedom; they create their own laws and may overstep the bounds of conventional law and morality. The latter are condemned by their ordinariness to a life of submission to common law and common morality; their sole function is to breed in the hope of one day giving birth to a Superman.

Clearly belief in any such division of humanity must tempt the man of pride into a harrowing dilemma of self-definition; and Raskolnikov is a man of immense pride. Does he therefore murder in the conviction that, as a superior man, he has the right to brush aside conventional morality in order to expedite the contribution he must make to history? This is unlikely, for, although Raskolnikov is seduced by his pride into longing for the status of Superman, his persistent doubts as he plans and rehearses the murder reveal all too clearly his uncertainty and fear of the Superman's freedom. Is the crime therefore conceived as a grotesque act of self-definition, whereby by assessing his reaction to moral transgression Raskolnikov seeks to choose his true self from the differing options offered by his pride and his uncertainty? This affords a tantalizingly plausible explanation of the murder; after all, we would expect the abstract Raskolnikov

to respond most readily to abstract motives. Somehow it is impossible to imagine this unphysical intellectual murdering in response to such physical needs as hunger or want; but we can imagine him chasing the specter of self-knowledge. Moreover, Raskolnikov's need of self-definition is acute; in the novel's early chapters he oscillates wildly between satanic pride and abject humility, between unbounded admiration for the strong and limitless pity for the weak....

But the crime could be an authentic attempt at the resolution of this duality only if Raskolnikov were genuinely uncertain to which category of humanity he belonged, and this is not the case. In his pride he might long to be a Napoleon, but he knows that he is a louse, knows it *even before he commits the crime,* as he later acknowledges: "and the reason why I am finally a louse is because I am perhaps even nastier and viler than the louse I killed, and I felt *beforehand* that I would say that to myself *after* I had killed her." The implications of this admission are startling: Raskolnikov embarked upon the murder of the old woman knowing in advance that he had no right to kill and no clear motive, and, moreover, clearly anticipating the destructive effect such an act would have upon the rest of his life. Perhaps it is this he has in mind when he later asserts: "Did I really kill the old hag? I killed myself, not the old hag' At that moment in one blow I did away with myself for good!" This feature of Raskolnikov' s behavior illustrates the incompatibility of knowledge and pride. Raskolnikov's knowledge that he is ordinary and has no special right to overstep conventional moral limits cannot contain his proud and essentially irrational need to assert himself. In the end his crime is an act of terrifying inconsequence: a proud, petulant, and meaningless protest against the certain knowledge that he is not superior; a moment when the demands of frustrated pride are so insistent that he is prepared to sacrifice the whole of his future to them. "I simply killed; I killed for myself, for myself alone, and at that moment it was all the same to me whether I became some sort of benefactor of humanity or spent the rest of my life catching people in my web and sucking the life forces out of them like a spider." ..

In *Crime and Punishment* the principle of uncertainty encompasses more than the question of motivation. Even the spatial and temporal coordinates of the novel are blurred and at times distorted by a narrator whose precise nature and point of view are neither clearly defined nor absolutely fixed. The notebooks reveal that the adoption of a narrative point of view presented Dostoyevsky with his greatest difficulty in writing the novel. He originally planned to use the first-person confession form, which would have allowed direct and easy access to the thought processes of the hero, but which would have created real difficulties when it came to filling in the objective details of the world in which the murderer moves. Dostoyevsky wrestled with this form until the third and final draft, when a new approach occurred to him: "Narration from point of view of author, a sort of invisible but omniscient being who doesn't leave his hero for a moment." The third-person narrator anticipated in this comment is retained for the novel itself, but his omniscience is open to doubt. Complete omniscience would have robbed the novel of its haunting uncertainty and provided the reader too clear an insight into Raskolnikov's behavior and motivation The first chapter illustrates this particularly well, as the alleys of St. Petersburg, with their stifling heat, dust, stuffiness, and smells, are conveyed to the reader in terms of the impression they make upon Raskolnikov. These details of the

physical world, in passing through Raskolnikov's awareness, lose their tactile and sensual authenticity and are transformed into psychological stimuli....

In much the same way our sense of real space is distorted by this subjective third-person narrative. Many years after the appearance of *Crime and Punishment* Einstein argued that we cannot experience space in the abstract, independent of the matter that fills it; and it is Raskolnikov's consciousness that fills this novel. Like a gravitational field, it warps the space around it. For example, the description of Raskolnikov's room as seen through Raskolnikov's eyes at the start of the novel is uncomfortably inconsistent with objectively narrated events which occur in this same room later. The room appears to shift its size with the narrative point of view. The early description is clearly conditioned by Raskolnikov's own sensations of claustrophobia' he is oppressed and haunted by ideas, theories, pride, poverty, and illness, and the room he describes with hatred upon waking from a restless sleep resembles a tomb. A mere six feet long, not high enough for a man to stand, littered With dusty books, Its yellow wallpaper peeling from the walls, it is dominated by a huge, clumsy sofa. The description accords so perfectly with what we know of Raskolnikov's state of mind that we hardly distinguish where his consciousness ends and the outside world begins. Yet a few chapters later, as Raskolnikov lies in bed semi-delirious after the crime and the narrative adopts a more objective course in order to permit the introduction of several new characters, our sense of the room's size is quite different. As the sick Raskolnikov is visited by his maid Nastasya, his friend Razumikhin, the doctor Zosimov, and his sister's suitor Luzhin, the "tomb" seems to open out in order to accommodate each new arrival.

Distance is equally intangible. When, in Chapter 1, Raskolnikov visits his victim's flat, we have no real sensation of his physically moving from one environment to another. Dostoyevsky tells us that "exactly seven hundred and thirty" paces separate the pawnbroker's flat from Raskolnikov's hovel, but the precision of this figure is entirely numerical. Locked inside Raskolnikov's consciousness as he rehearses a multitude of doubts and hesitations, we measure the physical distance only in terms of the number of thoughts which flash through his mind.

But the most uncertain quantity of all is time. Nearly all readers of *Crime and Punishment* experience the loss of a sense of duration in the course of the novel. It seems hardly possible, but the entire action requires only two weeks, and Part I a mere three days. Directed by the narrative mode into the inner world of Raskolnikov's turbulent imagination, we lose our temporal reference points. Absolute time ceases to be; we know time only as Raskolnikov experiences it. At moments It is severely retarded-indeed, in Part I, as Raskolnikov prepares for the kill, its flow is all but arrested; later the sense of time is violently accelerated as Raskolnikov undergoes the vertiginous fall from his crime to his confession. In this way time becomes a function of consciousness. We might go further and suggest an analogy with Einsteinian time, which, like Dostoevsky's, depends fundamentally upon point of view. For Einstein there could be no absolute time. the time experienced by separate observers differed according to their relative motion. Dostoyevsky seems to be suggesting something very similar in a cryptic remark in the drafts for *Crime and Punishment:* "What is time? Time does not exist; time is only numbers. Time is the relation of what exists to what does not

exist." Tills remark might perhaps be interpreted as meaning that there is no abstract, absolute time. Time exists only when actualized in an event or series of events. The importance of this for *Crime and Punishment* is that events and their duration are experienced differently by different observers. Through Raskolnikov's consciousness the reader of the novel observes only the hero's experiences of intervals between events. There are no events narrated With consistent objectivity which form reference points against which to Judge Raskolnikov's sense of time.. ..

Despite all the uncertainties upon which *Crime and Punishment* rests, one overriding certainty is sustained throughout the novel: the conviction, shared by author, reader, and hero, that the crime is in the final analysis wrong.

Source: William J Leatherbarrow, "The Principles of Uncertainty. *Grime and Punishment,"* in his *Fedor Dostoevsky,* Twayne, 1981, pp. 69-95

Critical Essay #3

In the following excerpt, associate professor of English and Russian at Smith College, Gibian, offers an authoritative study of pagan and Christian symbolism in Crime and Punishment. *Chief among them are the imagery of water, vegetation, sun and air, the resurrection of Lazarus and Christ, and the earth.*

It may seem paradoxical to claim that critics have not sufficiently concerned themselves with Dostoevsky's attack against rationalism in *Crime and Punishment;* yet this aspect of the novel has frequently failed to receive adequate attention, not because it has been overlooked, but because often it has been immediately noticed, perfunctorily mentioned, and then put out of mind as something obvious. Few writers have examined the consequence of the anti-rationalistic tenor of the novel: the extent to which It is paralleled by the structural devices incorporated in the work.

Dostoevsky held that dialectics, self-seeking, and exclusive reliance on reason ("reason and will" in Raskolnikov's theories and again in his dream of the plague) lead to death-in-life. In *Crime and Punishment* he set himself the task of exposing the evils of rationalism by presenting a laboratory case of an individual who followed its precepts and pushed them to their logical conclusion By working out what would happen to that man, Dostoevsky intended to show how destructive the Idea was for individuals, nations, and mankind; for to him the fates of the individual and the nation were inseparably interlocked....

The underlying antithesis of *Crime and Punishment,* the conflict between the side of reason, selfishness, and pride, and that of acceptance of suffering, closeness to life-sustaining Earth, and love, sounds insipid and platitudinous when stated in such general fashion as we have done here. Dostoevsky, however, does not present it in the form of abstract statement alone. He conveys it with superb dialectical skill, and when we do find direct statements in the novel, they are intentionally made so inadequate as to make us realize all the more clearly their disappointing irrelevancy and to lead us to seek a richer representation in other modes of discourse.. ..

Symbolism is the method of expression with which we are primarily concerned here, but it is far from being the only indirect, non-intellectual manner of expression on which Dostoevsky depends. Oblique presentation is another means which he uses; one example is the introduction of the subject of need for suffering. The idea is first presented in a debased and grotesque form by Marmeladov. His confession of how he had mistreated his family, of his drinking, and of the theft of money-to Raskolnikov, a stranger whom he has met in the tavern-is almost a burlesque foreshadowing of Raskolnikov's later penance, the kissing of the earth and his confession at the police station. Marmeladov is drunk, irresponsible, and still submerged in his selfish course of action; he welcomes suffering but continues to spurn his responsibilities; he is making a fool of himself in the tavern. His discourse throughout calls for an ambiguous response. Raskolnikov's reaction may be pity, agreement, laughter, or disgust; the reader's is a mixture and succession of all those emotions.

Thus the important ideas summed up in Marmeladov's "it's not joy I thirst for, but sorrow and tears" are introduced in a derogatory context and in an ambivalent manner, on the lowest, least impressive level. Yet the concept is now present with us, the readers, as it is with Raskolnikov even though it first appears in the guise of something questionable, disreputable, and laughable and we are forced to ponder it and to measure against it Sonya's, Raskolnikov's, Porfiry's and others' approaches to the same subject of "taking one's suffering."

A simple, unequivocal statement, a respectable entrance of the theme on the stage of the book, would amount to a reduction of life to "a matter of arithmetic" and would release the reader from the salutary, in fact indispensable task of smelting down the ore for himself....

In *Crime and Punishment* the reader, as well as Raskolnikov, must struggle to draw his own conclusions from a work which mirrors the refractory and contradictory materials of life itself, with their admixture of the absurd, repulsive, and grotesque.. . .

Traditional symbolism, that is, symbolism which draws on images established by the Christian tradition and on those common in Russian non-Christian, possibly pre-Christian and pagan, folk thought and expression, is an important element in the structure of *Crime and Punishment.* The outstanding strands of symbolic imagery in the novel are those of water, vegetation, sun and air, the resurrection of Lazarus and Christ, and the earth.

Water is to Dostoevsky a symbol of rebirth and regeneration. It is regarded as such by the positive characters, for whom it is an accompaniment and an indication of the life-giving forces in the world. By the same token, the significance of water may be the opposite to negative characters. Water holds the terror of death for the corrupt Svidrigailov, who confirms his depravity by thinking: "Never in my life could I stand water, not even on a landscape painting." Water, instead of being an instrument of life, becomes for him a hateful, avenging menace during the last hours of his life....

Indeed it will be in the cold and in the rain that he will put a bullet in his head. Instead of being a positive force, water is for him the appropriate setting for the taking of his own life.

When Raskolnikov is under the sway of rationalism and corrupting ways of thinking, this also is indicated by Dostoevsky by attributing to him negative reactions to water similar to those of Svidrigailov. In Raskolnikov, however, the battle is not definitely lost. A conflict still rages between his former self-which did have contact with other people and understood the beauty of the river, the cathedral (representing the traditional, religious, and emotional forces), and water-and the new, rationalistic self, which is responsible for the murder and for his inner desiccation There is still left in Raskolnikov an instinctive reaction to water (and to beauty) as an instrument of life, although this receptivity, which had been full-blown and characteristic of him in his childhood, is now in his student days overlaid by the utilitarian and rationalistic theories...

But Raskolnikov also realizes that his trends of thought have banished him, like Cain, from the brotherhood of men and clouded his right and ability to enjoy beauty and the beneficent influences of life symbolized by water; hence his perplexity and conflict.. ..

Related to the many references to the river and rain, and often closely associated with them, are two other groups of symbolic imagery: that of vegetation (shrubbery, leaves, bushes, flowers, and greenness in general) and that of the sun (and the related images of light and air).

In contrast to the dusty, hot, stifling, and crowded city, a fitting setting for Raskolnikov' s oppressive and murderous thoughts, we find, for example, "the greenness and the freshness" of the Petersburg Islands.. . The natural surroundings reawakened in him the feelings of his youth, through which he came close to avoiding his crime and to finding regeneration without having to pass through the cycle of crime and punishment....

By the same token, vegetation exercised the opposite effect on Svidrigailov: it repelled him. In the inn on the night of his suicide, when he heard the leaves in the garden under his window, he thought, "How I hate the noise of trees at night in a storm and in darkness." Whereas Raskolnikov received a healthy warning during his short sleep "under a bush,"_ Svidrigailov uses the sordid setting of an amusement park which "had one spindly three-year-old Christmas tree and three small bushes" merely for vain distraction on the eve of his suicide, and contemplates killing himself under "a large bush drenched with rain." In him all positive elements had been rubbed out or transformed into evil.

Similarly to water and vegetation, sunshine, light in general, and air are positive values, whereas darkness and lack of air are dangerous and deadening. The beauty of the cathedral flooded by sunlight ought to be felt and admired Before the murder, he looks up from the bridge at the "bright, red sunset" and is able to face the sun as well as the river with calm, but after the murder, "in the street It was again unbearably hot-not a drop of ram all during those days... The sun flashed brightly in his eyes, so that it hurt ! urn to look and his head was spinning round in good earnest-the usual sensation of a man in a fever who comes out into the street on a bright, sunny day." The sun is pleasant for a man in good spiritual health, but unbearable for a feverish creature of the dark, such as Raskolnikov had become....

Absence of air reinforces the lack of light suggestive of inner heaviness. Raskolnikov, whom Svidrigailov tells that people need air, feels physically and mentally suffocated when he is summoned to the police-station: "There's so little fresh air here. Stifling. Makes my head reel more and more every minute, and my brain too." Later he tells his friend Razumikhin: "Things have become too airless, too stifling." Airiness, on the contrary, is an indication of an advantageous relation between outward circumstances and Raskolnikov's inner state The warning dream of the mare comes to Raskolnikov in a setting not only of greenness but also of abundance of fresh air: "The green vegetation and the fresh air at first pleased his tired eyes, used to the dust of the City, to the lime and mortar and the huge houses that enclosed and confined turn on all sides. The air was fresh and sweet here: no evil smells."

When we turn to specifically Christian symbolism in *Crime and Punishment,* we find the outstanding images to be those of New Jerusalem, Christ's passion, and Lazarus New Jerusalem is an important concept throughout Dostoevsky's work Porfiry asks Raskolnikov, "Do you believe in New Jerusalem?" The significance of Raskolnikov's positive answer lies in the fact that the New Jerusalem which he means is the Utopian perversion of it, to be built upon foundations of crime and individual self-assertion and transgression *(prestuplenie).* It is the "Golden Age,"' as Raskolnikov called it in the draft version in Dostoevsky's notebook: "Oh why are not all people happy? The picture of the Age of Gold-It is already present in minds and hearts. Why should it not come about? ... But what right have I, a mean murderer, to wish happiness to people and to dream of the Age of Gold?"

The confession of Raskolnikov is described in terms reminiscent of Christ's passion on the road to Golgotha: he goes on "his sorrowful way." When Raskolnikov reads in his mother's letter of Dunya' s having walked up and down in her room and prayed before the Kazan Virgin, he associates her planned self-sacrifice in marrying Luzhin with the biblical prototype of self-assumed suffering for the sake of others: "Ascent to Golgotha is certainly pretty difficult," he says to himself. When Raskolnikov accepts Lizaveta's cypress cross from Sonya, he shows his recognition of the significance of his taking it-the implied resolve to seek a new life though accepting suffering and punishment-by saying to Sonya, "This is the symbol of my taking up the cross."

One of the central Christian myths alluded to in the novel is the story of Lazarus. It is the biblical passage dealing with Lazarus that Raskolnikov asks Sonya to read to him. The raising of Lazarus from the dead is to Dostoevsky the best *exemplum* of a human being resurrected to a new life, the road to Golgotha the best expression of the dark road of sorrow, and Christ himself the grand type of voluntary suffering....

The traditional emphasis of the Eastern Church is on Resurrection-of the Western, on the Passion. In *Crime and Punishment* both sides are represented: the Eastern in its promise of Raskolnikov' s rebirth, the Western in the stress on his suffering. Perhaps at least part of the universality of the appeal of the novel and of its success in the West may be due to the fact that it combines the two religious tendencies.. ..

The Christian symbolism is underlined by the pagan and universal symbolism of the earth. Sonya persuades Raskolnikov not only to confess and wear the cross, but also to kiss the earth at the crossroads-a distinctly Russian and pre-Christian acknowledgment of the earth as the common mother of all men. In bowing to the earth and kissing it, Raskolnikov is performing a symbolic and non-rational act; the rationalist is marking the beginning of his change into a complete, organic, living human being, rejoining all other men in the community. By his crime and ideas, he had separated himself from his friends, family, and nation, in one word, he had cut himself off from Mother Earth.

By the gesture of kissing the earth, he is reestablishing all his ties....

Now that we have examined selected examples of symbolism in the novel, let us take a look at the epilogue as a test of insights we may have gained into the structure and

unity of the novel, for the epilogue is the culmination and juncture of the various strands of images which we have encountered earlier....

If we approach the epilogue with the various preparatory strands of images clearly in our minds, what do we find?. [We] see the state of the soul of the unregenerate Raskolnikov, the Lazarus before the rebirth, expressed by Dostoevsky through the symbolic imagery to which the novel has made us accustomed-water and vegetation. The love for life (which Raskolnikov does not yet comprehend) is represented by a spring with green grass and bushes around it.

When the regeneration of Raskolnikov begins, it is expressed in a manner still more closely linked to previously introduced imagery. His dream of the plague condemns Raskolnikov's own rationalism. It shows people obsessed by reason and will losing contact with the soil This dream of the plague, coming immediately before the start of the hero's regeneration, may also be another reminiscence of the Book of Revelation with its last seven plagues coming just before the millennium and the establishment of the New Jerusalem.

The epilogue then goes on to emphasize that it is the second week after Easter-the feast of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection; and that it is warm, bright spring-the season of the revival of dead nature, again a coupling of Christian and non-Christian symbolism of rebirth such as we have encountered earlier in the novel.

The crucial final scene which follows takes place on "a bright and warm day," and "on the bank of the river." The river which Raskolnikov sees now is no longer a possible means for committing suicide nor a sight inducing melancholy; it is the river of life....

Then appears Sonya, and with her arrival comes the moment when Raskolnikov is suffused with love for his guide and savior Vivid response to all that lives is a joining with the creator in creating and preserving the world; Sophia is a blissful meeting of god and nature, the creator and creature. In Orthodox thought Sophia has come close to being regarded as something similar to the fourth divine person. Love for Sophia is a generalized ecstatic love for all creation, so that the images of flowers, greenness, landscape, the river, air, the sun, and water throughout *Crime and Punishment* can be regarded as being subsumed in the concept of Sophia and figuratively in the person of Sonya, the embodiment of the concept. Sonya sees that all exists in God; she knows, and helps Raskolnikov to recognize, what it means to anticipate the millennium by living in rapt love for all creation here, in this world.

It was Sonya who had brought Raskolnikov the message of Lazarus and his resurrection; she had given him the cypress cross and urged him to kiss the earth at the crossroads. On the evening of the day when, by the bank of the river and in the presence of Sonya, Raskolnikov's regeneration had begun, the New Testament lies under his pillow as a reminder of the Christian prototype of resurrection which had been stressed earlier in the novel. Against the background of all the important symbols of the book, Easter, spring, Abraham's flocks, the earth of Siberia, the river, the dream, and Sonya, the drama within Raskolnikov's mind assumes Its expressive outward form.

There follow several explicit statements of what happened. We read that "the dawn of a full resurrection to a new life" was already shining "in their faces, that love brought them back to life, that the heart of one held inexhaustible sources of life for the heart of the other," and that "the gradual rebirth" of Raskolnikov would follow. But the power of the general, overt statements depends on the indirect, oblique, dramatic, and symbolic statements which preceded them and prepared the ground for our acceptance of them. If we sense the full significance of the statement that now "Raskolnikov could solve nothing consciously. He only felt. Life had taken the place of dialectics," for example, it is because we have seen dialectics and apathy dramatized in Luzhin, Lebezyatnikov, Raskolnikov, and Svidrigailov, and resurrection in Sonya and various symbols throughout the novel of which the epilogue is a climax and a recapitulation.

Source: George Gibian, "Traditional Symbolism in *Crime and Punishment,"* in *PMLA,* Vol LXX, No.5, December, 1955, pp. 970-96

Adaptations

The earliest film adaptation of *Crime and Punishment* was produced in France, released in 1935, and remade in 1958 The original title of this French-language black-and-white film was *Crime et Chatiment.* Written by Marcel Ayme, Pierre Chenal, Christian Stengel, and Wladimir Strijewski (based on Dostoyevsky's book), it was directed by Chenal. It starred Pierre Blanchar, Madeleine Ozeray, Harry Baur, Lucienne Lemarchand, and Marcelle Geniat. Available from Facets Multimedia, Inc.

An American film version of *Crime and Punishment* was released one week after the French film mentioned above. Adapted from Dostoyevsky's novel by Joseph Anthony and S. K. Lauren, it was directed by Josef von Sternberg. The cast included Peter Lorre, Marian Marsh, Edward Arnold, Tala Birell, Elisabeth Risdon, Robert Allen, Douglas Dumbrille, Gene Lockhart, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell. Available from Columbia Tristar Home Video.

A Swedish film of *Crime and Punishment* was released in 1948. Adapted by Bertil Malmsberg and Sven Stolpe, It was directed by Hampe Faustman. It starred Faustman, Gann Wallgren, Hugo Bjorne, and Sigurd Wallen. Distributed by Film Rights.

A Russian-language film of *Crime and Punishment* was produced in the Soviet Union in 1970. Written and directed by Lev Kulidzhanov, it featured Georgi Taratorkin, Victoria Fyodorova, and Innokenty Smoktunovsky. Distributed by Ingram International Films, Discount Video Tapes, Inc., and Horizon Entertainment.

Topics for Further Study

Research the City of St. Petersburg, Russia. How did the city arise and develop? What are St. Petersburg's main features and landmarks?

Research the main political movements in Russia in the mid-1800s. Is there any similarity between the kind of political groups that existed then and political parties as they are known in America?

Research the condition of serfs (peasants who worked for landowners) in nineteenth-century Russia. Compare serfdom in Russia to slavery in America. What were the main similarities and differences between the two institutions?

Research the plea of insanity as a legal defense in murder cases. What circumstances are usually necessary for a jury to find a defendant insane? Why does a defendant's claim of insanity often cause controversy?

Compare and Contrast

1860s: Russia's government is a monarchy, with a head of state called the "tsar." But even at the time of *Crime and Punishment's* publication, changes in government were beginning to be seen with Tsar Alexander II's introduction of reforms in the Russian military, the law courts, and local government.

Today: The Russian Revolution of 1917, which led to decades of oppressive rule under a communist government, has given way to a struggling democracy after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. President Boris Yeltsin has since introduced economic reforms, though his country's economy is still unstable.

1860s: The Russian novelists Dostoyevsky and Ivan Turgenev spend much of their time travelling abroad. Dostoyevsky eventually returns to Russia, but Turgenev decides to remain an expatriate.

Today: Russian author Alexander Solzhenitsyn, exiled from Russia in the early 1970s because of his opposition to the communist government, has returned to his native country. However, his calls for spiritual rebirth and a return to traditional Russian values have been met with little support.

1860s: Dostoyevsky notes widespread drunkenness is a major problem in Russian society.

Today: Alcoholism remains a serious national problem, affecting at least half of all Russian households, according to one survey. Government attempts to curb drinking face strong resistance from the Russian people.

What Do I Read Next?

Dostoyevsky wrote *Notes from Underground* (1864) Just before *Crime and Punishment.* Narrated by a tormented, alienated anti-hero, it introduces the moral, political, and social ideas developed in *Crime and Punishment.*

Among Dostoyevsky's later novels, *The Possessed* (1871-72) is noteworthy for its critical portrayal of young Russian revolutionaries.

Dostoyevsky's last novel, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), is generally considered his masterpiece. A family tragedy of epic proportions, it too involves a murder. However, it is best known for its philosophical treatment of the nature of good and evil and the existence of God. The hero of *Fathers and Sons* by Dostoyevsky's contemporary, Ivan Turgenev, is a young radical. Turgenev's political and social views were the opposite of Dostoyevsky's. This novel aroused much controversy when it was published in 1862.

Leo Tolstoy's epic novel *War and Peace* (186369) came out in serial form at about the same time as *Crime and Punishment.* It portrays upper-class Russian society during the Napoleonic wars. Tolstoy's clear, lucid style is often contrasted with Dostoyevsky' s more intense and abrupt writing style.

The American scholar Joseph Frank has written a definitive multi-volume biography of Dostoyevsky Volume One, *Dostoyevsky: The Seeds of Revolt* (1976), covers the novelist's early life and his involvement in radical Russian politics. Volume Two, *The Years of Ordeal, 1850-1859* (1983), covers Dostoyevsky's spiritual and political conversion in Siberia. Volume Three, *The Stir of Liberation, 1860-1865* (1986), covers the years that led up to the writing of *Crime and Punishment.*

Alexander Solzhenitsyn (born 1918) is the twentieth-century Russian writer most often compared to Dostoyevsky. His novella *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962; English language translation published 1963) is an account of life in a Soviet prison camp in Siberia.

Further Study

Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Bakhtin's analysis of language and point of view gives particular attention to the way in which voices and perspectives intersect and intermingle in Dostoevsky's novel.

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment,* edited by George Gibian, Norton, 1989.

This edition of the novel contains numerous essays and documents that illuminate various aspects of the novel, from its critical reception to its symbolic and literary attributes.

"Dostoevsky, Fyodor Mikhailovich," in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature,* fifth edition, edited by Margaret Drabble, Oxford University Press, 1985, p. 286.

Summarizes Dostoyevsky's relationship to English literature, including his travels in England, his admiration of Shakespeare, Dickens, and others, and British reactions to his own works.

Donald Fanger, *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism. A Study of Dostoevsky in Relation to Balzac, Dickens, and Gogol,* Harvard University Press, 1965.

Fanger explores the relation of Dostoevsky's novel to the literary tradition which preceded It, and he focuses on the treatment of the setting of the novel, the city of St Petersburg.

Joseph Frank, *Dostoevsky' The Miraculous Years,* 1865-71, Princeton University Press, 1995.

Frank provides a detailed account of the novel's themes, its genesis, and its relation to the literary and historical events of Its day.

Michael Holquist, *Dostoevsky and the Novel,* Northwestern University Press, 1977.

This book discusses the way in which Dostoevsky's novel reflects narrative patterns of the past, including detective tales and wisdom tales

R. L Jackson, editor, *Twentieth Century Interpretations of* Crime and Punishment, Prentice Hall, 1974

This book contains over a dozen insightful essays that are devoted to major themes and patterns in the novel

Malcom V. Jones, *Dostoevsky. The Novel of Discord,* Harper & Row, 1976

Jones discusses the underlying theme of psychological and emotional disorder in *Crime and Punishment.*

Janko Lavrin, *Dostoevsky. A Study,* Macmillan, 1947.

Lavrin discusses Dostoyevsky's technique, including his ability to weave profound psychological and spiritual insights into his complex narratives

Konstantin Mochulsky, *Dostoevsky: His Life and Work,* translated by Michael A. Minihan, Princeton University Press, 1967.

Mochulsky's biography of Dostoevsky highlights the writer's spiritual quest.

Richard Peace, *Dostoyevsky' An Examination of the Major Novels,* Cambridge University Press, 1971.

Peace focuses on the symbolic division within Raskolnikov's personality and the way in which this division is reflected in the characters surrounding him.

Gary Rosenshield, Crime and Punishment. *The Techniques of the Omniscient Author,* The Peter De Ridder Press, 1978. This book offers a close analysis of Dostoevsky's manipulation of point of view and narrative perspective in the novel.

George Steiner, *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky: An Essay in the Old Criticism,* Dutton, 1971

Steiner places *Crime and Punishment* in the context of Dostoyevsky's lifetime achievement, stressing the novel's moral, dramatic, and psychological dimensions.

Edward Wasiolek, *Dostoevsky. The Major Fiction,* MIT Press, 1964.

Wasiolek's discussion of the novel focuses on its exploration of the central characters and their personalities.

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David McDuff, introduction to *Crime and Punishment,* Penguin Classics, 1991, pp. 9-29.

Helen Muchnic, "Dostoyevsky's English Reputation (18811936)," in *Smith College Studies in Modern Languages,* Vol. 20, Nos. 2/3, 1939.

D I Pisarev, "A Contemporary View," in *Crime and Punishment and the Critics,* edited and translated by Edward Wasiolek, 1961.

Philip Rahv, "Dostoevsky in *Crime and Punishment,"* in *Partisan Review,* Vol. XXVII, 1960.

Ernest J Simmons, introduction to *Crime and Punishment,* translation by Constance Garnett, Dell Publishing, 1959, pp. 5-22.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Novels for Students (NfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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