

Questions for Part II Discussion

A. Raskolnikov Immediately After The Murder:

Objectively observed, the murder has come off well and there is no apparent reason for suspecting Raskolnikov. What then causes his alarm, even his near hysteria? Why, for example, does he faint at the police station?

B. Meeting with Luzhin

What techniques does Dostoevsky use to give the reader an unfavourable impression of Luzhin?

Why is Luzhin interested in "new ideas"? (What are the new ideas and how do these ideas become relevant to both the story and its characters?) Raskolnikov deduces murder as a logical consequence of Luzhin's economic ideas. Is this a bit of whimsy on Raskolnikov's part, or is it sound logic?

C. Dream Revisit to the Apartment of the Pawnbroker

How many times has Raskolnikov visited the apartment of Alyona Ivanovna? Do these visits have a structural function in the novel? Why does he go back in the dream? Since he tries to kill again the pawnbroker, what does this imply about his feelings about the crime?

C. Revisit to the Scene of the crime:

Why should Raskolnikov try to provoke Zametov's suspicions? Does this have anything to do with Raskolnikov's going back to the scene of the crime? Do both actions have anything to do with his fainting at the police station? Why is he irritated that furnishings have been changed at the pawnbroker's apartment? After leaving the apartment and failing to provoke the workers to take him to the police station, Raskolnikov looks out upon a world that is as dead as his soul. A short time later, after caring for the dying Marmeladov, while coming down the stairs he is filled with the sense of exhilarating life. What has caused this change?



## Panel Group Presentations and Discussions: Part III

### A. Raskolnikov's Relationship to his Family

Is he happy to see them? Many critics have said that Dunia and Raskolnikov resemble each other. Do you agree? If so, in what respects? Does this similarity have any importance? Explain why Raskolnikov is rude to his family. He says: "What am I making such a fuss about? Why all this clamour? Marry whom you like for all I care." (Part III, Chap. 3.) If he is so violently opposed to Dunia's marriage to Luzhim, why does he speak in this manner? Razhumihin says of Raskolnikov: "There are times, however, when he is not moody, but simply cold and inhumanly callous, just as if there were two people of diametrically opposed characters living in him, each taking charge of him in turn." (Part III, Chap. 2.) Is Razhumihin's observation correct? Have we seen Raskolnikov as Razhumihin describes him?

### B. The Superman Theory

When was the article written? Why or in what way is the following correct? "In short, I maintain that all men who are not only great, but a little out of the common, that is, even those who are capable of saying something that is to a certain extent new, must by their nature be criminals -- more or less of course." (Part III, Chap. 5.) Is this merely an extravagant, erratic statement, or does it follow naturally from certain premises? If the latter, what are the premises? Does Raskolnikov consider himself to be one of the extraordinary people? What relationship is there between his theory and the one in which Raskolnikov speaks of trading one useless life for thousands of useful ones?

### C. Dream Revisit to the Apartment of the Pawnbroker

How many times has Raskolnikov visited the apartment of Alyona Ivanovna? Do these visits have a structural function in the novel? Why does he go back in the dream? Since he tries to kill again the pawnbroker in his dream, what does this imply about his feelings about the real murder? Why does the pawnbroker laugh at him? Are there others present? What are they doing? Whom does Raskolnikov see when he wakes up? Is this significant?

Panel Group Presentations and Discussions: Part IV

A. Svidrigailov:

Summarize what we are told about his past. What were his relationships with his wife? What stories of harm to others have been rumored about him? Are these rumors true? What do his dreams tell us of his psychic or spiritual life? Contrast his dreams with the dreams Raskolnikov has had. Contrast Svidrigailov's bath-house view of eternity (Part IV, Chap. 1) with Raskolnikov's image of eternity as given in Part II, Chap. 6.

B. Visit to Sonia by Raskolnikov

What kind of room does Sonia live in? Compare it with the pawnbroker's and Raskolnikov's. Why does Raskolnikov bow down to Sonia? Is it because of her faith in God? Is he repentant for his crime? How well does he understand her? Why does Dostoevsky include the scene of the harlot reading the story of Lazarus to the murderer? Why does Raskolnikov suggest that they go off together? What like does Raskolnikov see between himself and Sonia? How do you explain this statement: "freedom and power--power above all the trembling vermin and over all the ant-hill." (Part IV - Chap. 4.)

C. Porfiry:

How strongly does Porfiry suspect Raskolnikov at this point in the novel? What is his strongest evidence? What provokes his suspicions? Would the plot be very much different without the cat and mouse game Porfiry plays with Raskolnikov? In other words, how important is Porfiry to the dramatic unfolding of the action? Why does Dostoevsky have Porfiry's elaborately planned surprise come to nothing?



Panel Presentation and Group Discussion: Part V.

A. Lebeziatnikov and Socialism:

What attitude does Dostoevsky wish to create toward the advanced social views of Lebeziatnikov? What tone does he take toward him? Is it one of scathing abuse, gentle irony, patience before foolishness etc.? Contrast Dostoevsky's tone toward Lebeziatnikov with the tone he takes towards Luzhin. Why the difference? Why does Luzhin become a friend of Lebeziatnikov? Although the novel seems largely about the "great questions", about sin, redemption, crime and murder, there is much in the novel about politics and economic theory. Can you disengage Dostoevsky's attitudes toward Capitalism and Socialism for instance? What kind of socio-economic system would Dostoevsky favor? Do politics have anything to do for Dostoevsky, with the "eternal" questions?

B. The Confession

Dostoevsky tells us in the novel that, at the moment of confessions to Sonia, Raskolnikov feels as he did when he sees the reaction in Sonia's face to his confession, it reminds him of Lizaveta's face at the moment he was about to hit her with the axe. Why does Dostoevsky so explicitly connect the murder and the confession? After confessing to Sonia, Raskolnikov reviews his motives for killing the old woman. Which motive does he explicitly eliminate? Which does he seem to believe in? How well does he understand his own motives? Does the confession mean that he is repentant? If not, why does he confess? What does he mean when he says that he killed himself and not the old hag? Why does he reject Sonia's suggestion that he give himself up.

Why does Dostoevsky devote this last part almost exclusively to Svidrigailov? What do Svidrigailov's fortunes have to do with Raskolnikov? What has Raskolnikov been doing while Svidrigailov concludes his life? Why does Raskolnikov finally give himself up?



Panel Presentation and Group Discussion: Part VI

A. Svidrigailov and Raskolnikov

Why are they attracted to each other? What does Raskolnikov hope to get from Svidrigailov? What common bond does Svidrigailov see between them? Where do they meet? What other events have taken place in the vicinity? Does Svidrigailov help Raskolnikov understand himself?

B. Svidrigailov's Goodness

Why does he help the Marmeladov children, the family of his fiancee? Is he better than he is reported to be, or has he had a change of heart? Does he have an ulterior motive in seeking to help others?

C. Svidrigailov's Attempted Seduction of Dunia

How has he lured Dunia to his apartment? Why does he think his chances of seduction are good? Does he want to seduce or to rape? Why does Dunia not kill him? Is she attracted to him in any way? Why does he not rape her?

D. Svidrigailov's Last Night

Explain the bizarre preparations Svidrigailov makes on the night before he murders himself? Why such a hotel? Such a part of the town? Such a room? What does the room remind you of? Explain the significance of his dreams. If we consider the dreams as a revelation of his unconscious, of his innermost being, in what way does the being differ from the conscious Svidrigailov? Why does he hate water so? Why, at one point, does he contemplate finding a bush and dousing himself with water?

E. General

Why does Dostoevsky devote this last part almost exclusively to Svidrigailov? What do Svidrigailov's fortunes have to do with Raskolnikov? What has Raskolnikov been doing while Svidrigailov concludes his life? Why does Raskolnikov finally give himself up?



## Discussion Questions on the Epilogue

How does Raskolnikov behave at the trial? Is he repentant? How does he behave in prison? What do the other criminals think of him? What relevance does the dream of the rational microbes have to the novel proper? How does Raskolnikov's conversion come about? Do you consider the epilogue to be weak? Would the alternative of Raskolnikov shooting himself, which Dostoevsky considered, have made a better ending? In what sense has the epilogue been anticipated, at least in a formal sense?

### General Questions on the Novel

Dostoevsky has been criticized for creating an "improbable" world in his novels. An Atmosphere of near hysteria, a world peopled with murderers, sadists, prostitutes, and masochists, may have its shock value, so the argument runs, but is lacking in sufficient realism to engage our serious belief. Argue for or against the effectiveness of Dostoevsky's "realism."

Crime and Punishment began as a short story about drunkards, in which the fortunes of the Marmeladov family, with the exception of Sonia, occupies a subordinate part. Has Dostoevsky been successful in integrating the Marmeladov theme with the finished novel? Could you defend, for example, the street scene of Katerina hysterically displaying the need of her children as a necessary and important part to understanding Raskolnikov's fortune? Comment on the success with which Dostoevsky unified the Marmeladov theme with the novel proper.

Several critics of Dostoevsky's novel maintain that many of the motivations Raskolnikov puts forth for murdering the pawnbroker are rationalizations. How can we tell what is a rationalization and what is not? Does Dostoevsky use certain technical devices to permit us to distinguish between true and false motivations?

It has been argued that Raskolnikov cannot kill the principle of humanity within him, which apparently lives on a sub-conscious level and contradicts the conscious direction of his acts. Is there evidence for the existence in Raskolnikov of such a sub-conscious principle of humanity? If so, define its essence. Bear in mind that most current Russian critics, for example, will explicitly exclude a conscious belief in God as a necessary ingredient in this principle of humanity.

What exactly is Rasumihin's role in the novel? Analyse his character, define his place in the novel, and comment on the success or lack of success in Dostoevsky's portraiture.

Selection no 50 from Dostoevsky's notebooks - (a copy of this may be obtained from Mrs. Van Zant) indicates that he intended Svidrigailov and Sonia to express two sides of Raskolnikov's character. Has he done this successfully in the novel? Give a full and critical account of the use Dostoevsky makes of the double theme in Crime and Punishment. Is a "crime" necessary for what Dostoevsky wants to say in the novel?