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Ryan Fink

Dostoevsky, Raskolnikov, and Freedom in *Crime and Punishment*

Author and philosopher V.V. Zenkovsky once wrote, “The theme of freedom, as man’s ultimate essence, attains equal acuteness and unsurpassed profundity of expression in Dostoevsky.” (Knight 42). This is a powerful assertion, but in order to fully understand the statement, one must understand what Dostoevsky, and therefore Zenkovsky, means by ‘freedom’. The concept of freedom is one which has been a very powerful factor in shaping world history. When used politically, it has caused powerful empires to rise and fall. When used socially, it has created societies in which people have more ‘rights’, and are allowed to act more in accordance with their own desires. But is the concept of freedom the same as the concept of being free from any and all rules or regulations? Many certainly believe this to be the case, but Dostoevsky does not fall into this trap. Rather than see freedom as a freedom from rules, Dostoevsky, through the depiction of Raskolnikov and the characters he encounters in *Crime and Punishment*, accepts the true view of freedom as the freedom to know the good, and to do it.

The view of freedom as ‘freedom to’, the one held by Dostoevsky and propagated in *Crime and Punishment*, is rooted in the writings of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. In order to understand freedom in the Thomistic view, one must first understand how Aquinas views the human person. Aquinas believes that every human has a three part soul; this human soul being made up of the intellect, the will, and the passions. (Pasnau 143) The passions, our human desires, wants, and inclinations, are the lowest level of the human soul. Passions in themselves are not bad, but they must be governed by higher facilities. The passions are our base animal instincts and need to be further refined to be truly human feelings. The second level of the soul

is the will. The will is what causes us to act on our passions. The will governs the passions by giving humans the ability to choose which desires should be acted on. The final level, the intellect, is what makes us truly human. Humans are different from animals because of the rational nature of our soul. We have the ability to contemplate and choose what actions we want to take rather than acting on instinct alone.

The human soul has these three parts to it, but these need to be properly ordered if one wants to act in a way that brings about human flourishing. If one acts with his passions at the top of his decision making, he is ignoring his rational soul in favor of his animal soul. While this does not always bring about bad decisions, this way of acting is contrary to human nature and dehumanizes a person's actions. If one puts the will on top of all else, he is acting more human than if his passions are guiding him, but he is still missing a crucial element of human action. The person who uses his will as his highest faculty is making his own choices, rather than allowing his desires to make choices for him, but these choices will not be 'good' choices because the intellect is not governing his selection. In order to be a truly human act, the intellect must be the highest element of the action. This allows humans to make good choices through rational thought and deliberation. The three part soul that Aquinas speaks of enables human flourishing by allowing humans to have passions which are governed by rational deliberation and choice.

This Thomistic view of the soul comes into play when discussing Dostoevsky's portrayal of freedom in *Crime and Punishment*. This view is in opposition to another view of freedom, one in which 'freedom' means that one has the ability to do whatever he wants and is not restricted by rules. This 'freedom from' view puts emphasis in the idea of rules and laws. It holds that rules inhibit ones freedom and that the only way to be truly free is to escape from the

oppression of positively imposed laws. A society restricts individual freedom by creating rules which inhibit an expression of one's own wants and desires. Personal autonomy is held up as the greatest attribute one can have, and this makes the 'freedom from' view a very individualistic view which does not look at humanity as a community, but as a group of individual persons who value their own happiness and well-being over that of others. 'Freedom from' is a perversion of the proper ordering of the human person as this idea puts the passions above the other elements of the human soul. It is of the utmost importance that a person is able to do what he wants when he wants to and not have to worry about the reaction of others or consequences of his actions. The intellect is ignored, and people are encouraged to make decisions based on 'what they want' instead of what is truly good for them and what will contribute to true human flourishing. This is the view of freedom that Raskolnikov espouses for the majority of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.

The Thomistic-Aristotelian view of freedom, on the other hand, holds a very opposite view. This view holds that 'freedom' is the freedom to know the good and to do it. This 'freedom to' is vastly different from the 'freedom from' theory because it does not put emphasis on outside rules and regulations, choosing instead to root freedom in an inner human ability to think. Stephen Wang comments on Aquinas's view in his article 'The Indetermination of Reason and the Role of the Will in Aquinas's Account of Human Freedom', "In the view of Aquinas, we are free to act (in one way rather and another) because we are free to reason and understand the good" (Wang 118). The 'freedom to' theory believes that true freedom lies in being able to know and choose the good, the 'good' being what contributes most to human flourishing. This view of freedom also includes a proper placement of the three parts of the soul. We are free because we have the ability to understand. This is rooted in the intellect, and is the

most important aspect of freedom. Even if we choose the good, if we do not know it to be the good we have not acted freely. Aquinas ties rationality to free will in the *Summa Theologica*; “And forasmuch as man is rational is it necessary that man have a free-will”(Aquinas). We are also free because of our ability to choose. This ability, rooted in the will, is often associated with freedom, but not in the same sense as the Thomistic-Aristotelian view of freedom holds. The ‘freedom from’ theory also places importance on the ability to choose, but the ‘freedom to’ theory orders the will in a more appropriate way. Aquinas writes, “But man acts from judgment, because by his apprehensive power he judges that something should be avoided or sought” (Aquinas). The ‘freedom to’ theory holds that the freedom found in the will is only complete when it is governed by the intellect allowing human to make the ‘good’ choices. Wang writes that “Freedom is not, for Aquinas, a third power which underlies or compliments the work of intellect and will, it is the unified functioning of these two powers. Freedom is simply the working of intellect and will. We are free because we understand and desire” (Wang 110). Finally, the ‘freedom to’ theory properly places the passions at the bottom of the hierarchy of the soul. We are free because we have the ability to think rationally about our passions, and make a choice to do the right thing.

The final piece of the freedom puzzle comes in the form of the four moral types of people identified by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. These four types of people are the virtuous, the continent, the incontinent and the vicious. It is important to understand these four moral types, because if one holds the Thomistic-Aristotelian view of freedom, one can see that only a virtuous person can be truly free. The virtuous person is someone who does the good freely and without struggle. Virtuous people understand the good and choose to act towards that good without any reservation. Aristotle outlines their actions as such; “Virtuous actions are such, so

that these are pleasant for such men as well as in their own nature” (Aristotle 14). These people and their actions are the ones that are truly free. Virtuous people have a proper ordering of the intellect the will and the passions. Continent people are those who do the good but without a real commitment. Continent people understand what the good is, and they choose to do it, but do not desire to do it. Although they choose to do the good, their actions are not truly free because they are acting against their passions. The incontinent person is the person who knows the good, but chooses to do the bad. In the same way as the virtuous and the continent person does, the incontinent person understands what is good, but he has a disordered will, and chooses to do the bad instead. Aristotle defines the difference between the continent and incontinent in *Nicomachean Ethics*; “The incontinent man acts with appetite, but not with choice, where the continent man on the contrary acts with choice, but not with appetite” (Aristotle 42). Finally, the vicious person is one who does the bad thinking that it is the good. The vicious person has a proper ordering of his intellect will and passions, but he has a damaged intellect and cannot know what is truly good. Therefore he cannot act freely in the Thomistic-Aristotelian sense, because to be free involves knowing the good in addition to doing it. Aristotle says of the vicious, “When a man acts with knowledge, but not after deliberation, it is an act of injustice....he is an unjust and a vicious man” (Aristotle 94). Of these types of people, only the virtuous person can achieve freedom, which is both knowing the good and doing it.

It is into the ‘freedom to’ camp that we find Dostoevsky falling more often than not. Although the Thomistic-Aristotelian view of freedom is rooted more deeply in Catholic theology than Eastern Orthodox thought, Dostoevsky’s characters struggle with this duality of freedom, and come down on the side of a freedom similar to that espoused by St. Thomas and Aristotle. *Crime and Punishment*, a novel which has this essential struggle over the idea of freedom as one

of its foundations, presents the reader with four characters who Dostoevsky uses to exhibit the Thomistic-Aristotelian view of freedom as the prevailing theory. These characters, Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov, Sofya (Sonya) Semyonovna Marmeladov, Arkady Ivanovich Svidrigailov, and Porfiry Petrovich, all represent different aspects of freedom. Some of these characters believe in ‘freedom from’ while others believe in ‘freedom to’, and it is through the failings of the first set of characters and the successes of the latter set that Dostoevsky shows his preference towards the Thomistic-Aristotelian view of freedom, over the ‘freedom from’ philosophy.

Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov is the main character of this novel and, as such, is the prime example of the two types of freedom displayed in the novel. Raskolnikov is the crucial piece in the puzzle of freedom in *Crime and Punishment* because he, through his dealings with the three other aforementioned characters, spends the course of the novel on a journey to correct his disordered view of freedom. Raskolnikov starts the novel as a morally vicious person, and throughout his journey makes strides towards becoming a virtuous person. In his literary criticism ‘Chesterton, Dostoevsky and Freedom’, Mark Knight writes, “In *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov believes that he is free to operate about the law, but he spends most of the novel coming to term with the fact that he is not as free as he first thought. Indeed, the murder that he commits actually restricts his freedom by consuming his thought to the extent that he loses the ability to think and act rationally” (Knight 46). Knight identifies Dostoevsky’s belief that the ability to think and act rationally are essential to freedom. Raskolnikov must achieve this state if he is to be truly free.

Raskolnikov’s view of freedom at the beginning of the novel falls clearly into the ‘freedom from’ category. In his article ‘The Five Motives of Raskolnikov’, Gennaro Santangelo

writes that “Raskolnikov kills two principles when he kills the old woman and her sister. He is obliterating his connection with God because the burden of freedom has been too much for him. He is attempting to prove that his will is autonomous, that his ego can reconstruct the universe as it wishes” (Santangelo). Raskolnikov commits the murder of the old pawnbroker because he needs to prove to himself that he can act ‘freely’ and do whatever he wants. This need to prove himself right comes from his theory of the ‘extraordinary man’. The extraordinary man is a man, representing a larger group of humanity, who the reader meets when Raskolnikov is talking to the police inspector Porfiry Petrovich. Porfiry asks Raskolnikov about an article he had written in which he briefly mentioned the concept of the extraordinary man. Raskolnikov then goes on to explain to Porfiry what he means when he talks about ordinary and extraordinary men. He tells Porfiry about the dichotomy he sees in humanity; one is either an ordinary man or an extraordinary one. He says, “An ‘extraordinary’ person has a right...not an official right, of course, but a private one, to allow his conscience to step across certain...obstacles, and then only if the execution of his idea (which may occasionally be the salvation of all mankind) requires it” (Dostoevsky 308). This type of person is a prime example of someone who exercises his freedom from restraint. Raskolnikov obsesses over the idea that ordinary people are born to be obedient while the extraordinary people are free to do as they please. Raskolnikov is disgusted by the concept of obedience and revels in the idea that certain people, himself included, are above simple rules and regulations. In this scene, Raskolnikov shows himself as a morally vicious character who believes vehemently in ‘freedom from’.

Dostoevsky believes this idea of extraordinary men to be nonsense because it is contrary to the Thomistic-Aristotelian view of freedom which is so present in his own philosophy. The extraordinary man is vicious; he does bad things believing that they are perfectly ok because he

has a unique right to do so. When Raskolnikov kills the old woman, he attempts to rationalize it by saying it is better off for everyone that she is dead. This is clearly a perversion of human intellect; Raskolnikov has convinced himself that evil is indeed good, morally permissible, and actually encouraged. In the Thomistic-Aristotelian view of freedom, acts such as these would be in no way free, and would be contrary to freedom itself. A morally vicious person, such as Raskolnikov, is restricted by his very inability to rationally act. Finally, as the Thomistic-Aristotelian view holds that freedom is freedom to know and *do* the good, someone who steps over moral boundaries to commit deeds such as murder or theft, no matter what their reasons are, is not a free person. Dostoevsky presents Raskolnikov as a morally vicious character who is wrong in this thinking, and thus shows his own preference toward a freedom based on the Thomistic-Aristotelian tradition. Dostoevsky does not exclusively use this scene between Raskolnikov and Porfiry to show his readers that this view of freedom is superior; he also uses Raskolnikov's change in character and psychological breakdown over the course of the novel to show that, in the end, those who choose to believe in the Thomistic-Aristotelian view of freedom will be truly free and experience true human flourishing. Raskolnikov's experiences and interactions with Sonya and Svidrigailov, in addition to his experiences with Porfiry, show the reader that Raskolnikov's perverted view of freedom is what causes him to encounter so many difficulties.

After Raskolnikov commits the murder, his conscience begins to tug at him. He contemplates turning himself in, tries to rationalize his action, and even becomes physically sick from his mental confusion. He is frustrated and confused because an extraordinary man should be free from conscience, an essential part of what constitutes ultimate freedom. Raskolnikov, however, cannot escape his conscience, and, instead of being freed by his actions, is even more

constrained. Because of this, he turns to Sonya for help. Dostoevsky uses Sonya as a character who represents the morally virtuous in contrast to Raskolnikov's moral vice.

Sonya is a very complex character who embodies the Thomistic-Aristotelian idea of freedom and the virtuous moral type. From the outside, Sonya appears to be a character who cannot hope to claim freedom or virtue. She is a prostitute who has taken the 'yellow card' in order to help her family. Her money, however, is not always used to help the family and is often used by her father to drink himself into a stupor. As a prostitute, it seems as if Sonya cannot achieve moral virtue. She is misusing the gift of her body, even if it is for the right reasons. It also appears that she cannot truly be free because she is forced into a life of squalor and depravity. Both of these assumptions are, however, misguided. Sonya embodies the morally virtuous because of her constant desire to do good for the sake of the good. Not every action she takes is perfect because humans are all flawed, but her beliefs and her choices point her towards the good, which she willingly accepts. Because of her willingness to seek and understand the good, Sonya is freer than Raskolnikov can hope to be by simply ignoring moral norms and restriction. It is chiefly through Sonya that Raskolnikov sees the error in his way of thinking. Sonya changes his mind about the concept of freedom and puts him on the path to true freedom.

Dostoevsky uses two principal scenes to show the reader the impact Sonya's attitude has on Raskolnikov's conversion. While the two have several conversations in the first half of the novel, it is in Raskolnikov's confession that Sonya's full faith is made known, and the reader can see her as the ideal of true freedom in the Thomistic-Aristotelian sense. After revealing to Sonya that he knew who committed the murders, Raskolnikov promises her that he would tell her who it was when he returns the next day. On his return, Raskolnikov brings his confession with a question for Sonya; "If it were suddenly given to you to decide which one of them was to go on

living in the world, that is to say, whether Luzhin was to continue his existence and go on doing loathsome things, or whether Katerina Ivanovna was to die, what would your decision be? Which of them would you have die?" (Dostoevsky 487) Raskolnikov is still trying to justify his own action, and is hoping that Sonya will prove him right by choosing to have Luzhin die. Sonya, however, as a virtuous person, cannot choose. Instead she responds, "Why do you ask about something that's impossible....How could that ever depend on my decision? Who am I to set myself up as a judge of who should live and who should not?" (Dostoevsky 487) Sonya's response shows the reader that she is both virtuous and free. She cannot even fathom the idea of someone choosing who can live and who can die because she understands that people are not free to make that choice; that choice belongs to God alone. To make a choice in this instance would be to necessarily choose the bad and ignore the good. Raskolnikov does not understand this yet, but Sonya certainly does.

The second part of this conversation sees Sonya hand Raskolnikov the key to his freedom in the form of confession and redemption. Raskolnikov admits to Sonya that it was he who killed the two women, but cannot give her an honest answer as to why he did it. She responds to his confession in three stages. Initially, she is shocked as she does not understand why he would do something so horrid. After her initial shock, Sonya diagnoses Raskolnikov's real problem; "You've strayed away from God and God has laid his hands upon you and given you up to the Devil!" (Dostoevsky 499) Here Sonya identifies what she believes to be the problem; Raskolnikov has turned away from God. Because of this, he cannot be truly free because he is not seeking the good, and without knowing the good, one cannot act freely. Finally, Sonya provides Raskolnikov with a solution to his problem and a path to freedom; "What should you do....Get up....go immediately, this very moment, go and stand at the crossroads, bow down,

first kiss the ground that you've desecrated, and then bow to the whole world, to all four points of the compass and tell everyone, out loud: 'I have killed!' Then God will send you life again." (Dostoevsky 501) Confession will lead to redemption, according to Sonya, and redemption means new life. This is what Dostoevsky believes freedom truly is about. Sonya identifies true freedom as life sent from God, life which is aimed at doing good and avoiding evil. Steven Cassidy, in his article 'The Formal Problem of the Epilogue in *Crime and Punishment*: The Logic of Tragic and Christian Structures', comments on Sonya's view of freedom when he says, "What is denied is a *specific kind* of freedom of will, namely the kind where the will aims to suppress the freedom of others and establish itself in a position of dominance. What the will *is* free to do is shown by Sonya in her ecstatic exhortation to Raskolnikov to rise up and atone for his sins" (Cassidy). Sonya embodies the Christian ideals associated with the kind of freedom Dostoevsky believes to be true freedom. She understands that one must seek the good in order to be truly free, and she strives to live a virtuous life that will allow her to be free. Most importantly, however, she understands that humanity cannot be virtuous, and therefore cannot be free, without the help of God. She embodies the words of Aquinas when he writes, "'Man's way' is said 'not to be his' in the execution of his choice, wherein he may be impeded, whether he will or not. The choice itself, however, is in us, but presupposes the help of God" (Aquinas). Her example will eventually lead Raskolnikov toward his own redemption and his own quest for true freedom.

After his confession, Sonya offers Raskolnikov a cross to wear around his neck. He refuses, saying that he will return when he is ready to wear it, meaning when he is ready to turn himself in. Towards the end of the novel, Raskolnikov realizes that he cannot continue to live his life in the way he has been living, and makes the decision to turn himself in, hoping it will

free him of his conscience. He returns to Sonya before he goes, and here Dostoevsky presents the reader with a chance to see Raskolnikov taking his first steps towards true freedom. "I've come for your crosses, Sonya. After all, it was you who told me to go to the crossroads," he begins upon entering her room, "You see Sonya, I've decided that it may be for my own good to do it this way....After all, you yourself wanted me to go and give myself up, so now I shall." (Dostoevsky 622-623) Raskolnikov has realized that his way of looking at freedom does not make him free at all; it only restricts him even more than he was before. He is not fully convinced that Sonya's way is the true way, but he is willing to embrace it and see. As he leaves Sonya's to make his confession at the police station, Dostoevsky tells us that Raskolnikov has second thoughts; "But is this really right, is this the right thing to do?" he found himself thinking as he went down the stairs. 'Can I really not still call it all off and make amends for everything...and not go?' But even so he went" (Dostoevsky 624). It is in this moment that Dostoevsky shows his readers his own firm dedication to an idea of freedom rooted in Thomistic and Aristotelian philosophy. Raskolnikov has tried everything else, and Dostoevsky tells us that only through Sonya's way can Raskolnikov be truly free.

Sonya is the principal mover in Raskolnikov's transformation towards what Dostoevsky considers a correct view of freedom, but other characters come into play as well. Another significant character who affects Raskolnikov and points him towards this view of freedom is Porfiry Petrovich, the police inspector. Porfiry helps Raskolnikov along on his journey to true freedom in a very important way. Porfiry represents authority and rules. According to Raskolnikov, and by extension advocates of the 'freedom from' ideology, he is the enemy. He and his kind, the authority figures, make the rules and regulations which oppress people and restrict freedom, a central tenet of the 'freedom from' argument. In a novel centered around this

philosophy of freedom, Porfiry would build a case, call witnesses, and arrest Raskolnikov for murder. Porfiry tells Raskolnikov on multiple occasions that he knows Raskolnikov is guilty, and every indication is given that, if he wanted to, Porfiry could arrest Raskolnikov. In part six, Dostoevsky writes, “‘Yes Rodion Romanych, sir, it was you and no one else, sir’ Porfiry whispered sternly and with conviction” (Dostoevsky 545). *Crime and Punishment*, however, is not centered on ‘freedom from’, but instead champions ‘freedom to’. Porfiry, therefore, represents not the oppressive authority figure, but the figure who allows Raskolnikov to make his own decision.

Porfiry tells Raskolnikov, “You can see for yourself that I haven’t come here in order to hunt you down and trap you like a hare....it wouldn’t do me any good to place you directly under arrest....I’ve come to you with an open and straightforward proposition – that you should file a plea of guilty. That would be countless times better for you and better for me too” (Dostoevsky 546). In Raskolnikov’s mind, he is free if the authorities are not stopping him from acting. Porfiry directly tells Raskolnikov that he will not arrest him, but that he should turn himself in anyway. By his own logic, Raskolnikov should be free, but by now he has come to learn that freedom is about something more than stepping over moral barriers. Porfiry knows that it will be ‘better for’ Raskolnikov to turn himself in because it will make him truly free. Rather than worry about justice being immediately served for the two murdered women, Porfiry concerns himself with Raskolnikov’s soul, and his redemption. Dostoevsky uses the strange actions of Porfiry, actions contrary to how his character should act in his situation, to show his reader that freedom is more than simply freedom from authority; it involves an aspect of knowing and choosing the good that is the basis of Thomistic-Aristotelian freedom.

The final character who contributes in a significant way to Raskolnikov's journey toward true freedom is Svidrigailov. Svidrigailov is a crucial character to this development because he plays the role opposite Sonya; while Sonya is a model of the Thomistic-Aristotelian view of freedom for Raskolnikov to learn from and strive for, Svidrigailov is a model of the extraordinary man and the 'freedom from' model of human free will. Svidrigailov is a vile character who allows Raskolnikov to look in the mirror and see if he really wants to be free from authority and conscience. Dostoevsky writes, "He [Raskolnikov] could not escape the inward feeling that it was precisely Svidrigailov who had for a long time now been the person he needed for some special purpose" (Dostoevsky 553). While talking with Svidrigailov, Raskolnikov learns that Svidrigailov knows that he is a bad person, and has no problem with it. He degrades women without a hint of remorse, and tells Raskolnikov, "In lechery there is at least something permanent, something that is truly founded upon nature and is not subject to the imagination, something that is present like a constantly live coal in the blood, forever setting one on fire" (Dostoevsky 561). He relishes in his evil behavior and, in the form of an incontinent person, understands that his actions are evil. He cannot be free because he refuses to seek the good that leads ones to true freedom, and this is evidenced by his eventual suicide. Cassidy writes,

In fact, one of the most tragic characteristics of the conclusion of *Crime and Punishment* without the Epilogue is that the truth of Raskolnikov's incapacity to act freely in *his* sense finally catches up with him there. As he resolves to abandon his confession to the police (that is, to reject the only freedom available to him), he hears the news of Svidrigailov's suicide. It is undoubtedly no coincidence that this should occur precisely here at this point, since it proves to Raskolnikov once and for all, by showing the ultimate failure of a man whose very existence was

devoted to the imposition of his will on others, that such freedom is *not* possible.

(Cassedy)

As Dostoevsky writes, Raskolnikov needed Svidrigailov for a ‘special purpose’; he needed him to provide an example of what a vile person his ideal ‘free’ man truly is. The truth of this breaks his illusion that true freedom comes from a lack of rules. Combined with Sonya’s example and Porfiry’s psychological game, Svidrigailov’s vileness points Raskolnikov toward his final end of true freedom.

Geranno Santangelo writes,

The moral freedom of choice is a fundamental in Dostoevsky's moral dialectics, but this freedom is not only the freedom to do good. Such a concept leads to tyrannical socialism, constrained predestination, and the ideas of the inquisition. For freedom to be exercised, evil must exist to be chosen. Such a freedom entails the possibility of great wrong, which leads to the tragedy of freedom in Dostoevsky's novels. (Santangelo)

This is an important note to remember; while Dostoevsky believes in this specific ideal of freedom, one which holds that true freedom comes from knowing and doing the good, humanity is imperfect. We *are* free to choose evil in that we have the ability to do so, and this choice is what often causes confusion over the idea of freedom. Dostoevsky admits that ‘freedom from’ does also exist in this world, but he shows his readers, through Raskolnikov’s experience, that choosing ‘freedom from’ is not the path to true freedom. It can provide one with a certain amount of freedom, but not an ultimate freedom associated with knowing and doing the good.

The characters in *Crime and Punishment* all serve many purposes. This novel is not a novel strictly about freedom, or any other topic for that matter. It is a complex piece of literature with many different levels of understanding and messages conveyed in it. That being said, it appears to be very clear that one of these messages is the message that Dostoevsky holds a certain view of freedom as freedom to know the good and to do it, a view which is shared with the Thomistic-Aristotelian philosophy. Raskolnikov's journey and his interactions with Sonya, Porfiry and Svidrigailov all point to this truth. Dostoevsky concludes his novel by stating that "At this point a new story begins, the story of a man's gradual renewal, his gradual rebirth, his gradual transformation from one world to another, of his growing acquaintance with a new, hitherto completely unknown reality" (Dostoevsky 656). The elements of Christian redemption and salvation are very evident in this novel, and the idea of true freedom is one of these elements which Raskolnikov has begun his journey towards as the novel comes to a close. Only through his confession, penance, and eventual redemption by the grace of God can Raskolnikov become a virtuous person and finally be truly free, the state he has searched for through the whole novel.

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