

Spring 2013

Semiotics and Christian Discipleship in Fyodor
Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Dietrich
Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*

Jacob Pride

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd>



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), [Comparative Literature Commons](#), [German Language and Literature Commons](#), and the [Slavic Languages and Societies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Pride, Jacob, "Semiotics and Christian Discipleship in Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*" (2013). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 44.

<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/44>

This thesis (open access) is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies, Jack N. Averitt College of at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

Semiotics and Christian Discipleship in Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and
Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*

by

Jacob Pride

(Under the Direction of Dustin Anderson)

ABSTRACT

The literary and philosophical theory of semiotics considers signs and symbols. Pragmatics is the branch of semiotics that explicates the practical effects of a given interpretation according to its context. Through analyzing the pragmatic context of *Crime and Punishment*, one can begin to uncover the depth of meaning that the novel delivers. In *The Limits of Interpretation*, Umberto Eco talks about what he calls “intersubjective meaning,” which helps a particular interpretation of a text attain “a privilege over any other possible interpretation spelled out without the agreement of the community” (40). The particular intersubjective meaning that needs to be developed with respect to *Crime and Punishment* is one in which faith—in Dostoevsky's case, the Christian faith—becomes the focal point for understanding the novel as a coherent text, especially in regard to Raskolnikov's fragmentary conversion to that faith. Even at the end of the novel, Raskolnikov is more on the threshold of Christian discipleship. As the narrator describes, Raskolnikov's conversion to such a disposition has been a long time in coming—a gradual realization of a force latent within the protagonist from the beginning.

This thesis explores Raskolnikov's faith in light of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's understanding of Christian discipleship in *The Cost of Discipleship*. Raskolnikov is to a certain extent the same sort of Christian disciple whom Bonhoeffer describes in *The Cost of Discipleship*. According to Bonhoeffer, faith is authentic only insofar as it is lived through obedience. Bonhoeffer observes,

“Without the preliminary step of obedience, our faith will only be pious humbug, and lead us to the grace which is not costly” (64). According to Bonhoeffer, authentic Christian virtue and asceticism ultimately derive from faith in Christ. Using Bonhoeffer’s Christology as an interpretive lens to view Raskolnikov’s discipleship, my thesis explores and to some extent explicates the pragmatics of understanding *Crime and Punishment* as a story of Christian discipleship.

INDEX WORDS: Semiotics, Christian Discipleship, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Raskolnikov, *Crime and Punishment*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

Semiotics and Christian Discipleship in Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and
Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*

by

Jacob Pride

B. A., Ave Maria, 2008

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2013

© 2013

Jacob Pride

All Rights Reserved

Major Professor: Dustin Anderson
Committee: Hemchand Gossai
Joe Pellegrino

Electronic Version Approved:
May 2013

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my father, Robert E. Pride, who was a deacon in the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, the loving husband of Carol L. Pride, the wonderful father to one girl and five boys, and the grandfather to fifteen grandchildren and counting.

My father imparted upon me a love for learning and for life. He gave me the Catholic faith and encouraged my work at Ave Maria University, Mount St. Mary's Seminary, and Georgia Southern University. Most of all, he showed me what it means to be a good man. We miss you, Dad!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to acknowledge the following people for their help with this document: my thesis advisor, Dustin Anderson, who tirelessly corrected and commented on draft after draft of my thesis; the committee members, Hemchand Gossai and Joe Pellegrino, who helped me along the way and especially at the end with my final draft; my brother, James Pride, who read through drafts and encouraged me when things got tough; my mother, Carol Pride, who loved me like only a mother can; and finally my fiancée and love of my life, Caitlin Mulcahy, who faithfully accompanied me through it all, and will be marrying me this May.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	7
SECTION	
1 Introduction.....	9
2 Discipleship as Conversion.....	13
3 Existentialism: a Bridge to Semiotics.....	23
4 From Discipline to Death.....	31
5 Raskolnikov's Conversion Narrative.....	36
6 Raskolnikov: Finding a Lost Soul.....	44
7 Fools and Prophets.....	50
8 The Idea of Freedom.....	57
9 The Good Man and the Extraordinary Man.....	63
10 The New Jerusalem.....	68
NOTES.....	72
WORKS CITED.....	73

SECTION 1

Introduction

In the traditional reading of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, most critics perceive the novel's epilogue as anti-climactic and heavy-handed. Such critics see Raskolnikov's apparent conversion at the end of the novel as a kind of *deus ex machina* that does not have continuity with the rest of the story. Representative of this reading, Harold Bloom states decisively, "Raskolnikov never does repent and change, unless we believe the epilogue, in which Dostoevsky himself scarcely believed" (2). Bloom's interpretation concerning the appropriateness of the epilogue derives from a dismissal of Dostoevsky's view of faith and discipleship. For Dostoevsky, Raskolnikov does repent and change, although the conversion is uncompleted. *Crime and Punishment* is particularly a story about Christian conversion, which is simultaneously hidden and manifest. The ambivalent nature of Raskolnikov's ongoing conversion reflects that of the only partially apparent significance of the sign. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christology in *The Cost of Discipleship*, which Raskolnikov's conversion in some sense anticipates, sheds light on this neglected reading of *Crime and Punishment*, in which Dostoevsky himself believed.

Crime and Punishment communicates Raskolnikov's conversion as a message of hope. According to Pierre Guiraud, "The function of the sign is to communicate ideas by means of messages" (5). The literary and philosophical theory of semiotics considers signs and symbols. Pragmatics is the branch of semiotics that explicates the practical effects of a given interpretation according to its context. Through analyzing the pragmatic context of *Crime and Punishment*, one can begin to uncover the depth of meaning that the novel delivers. Umberto Eco explains in *The Limits of Interpretation*, "The moment in which the [interpretive] community is pulled to

agree with a given interpretation, there is, if not an objective, at least an *intersubjective* meaning which acquires a privilege over any other possible interpretation spelled out without the agreement of the community” [emphasis in the original] (40). The particular intersubjective meaning that needs to be developed with respect to *Crime and Punishment* is one in which faith—in Dostoevsky's case, the Christian faith—becomes the focal point for understanding the novel as a coherent text, especially in regard to Raskolnikov's conversion to that faith. The quality of confidence that Boyce Gibson assumes in *The Religion of Dostoevsky* with regard to Raskolnikov's conversion, however, is in some sense an over-confidence (187). Raskolnikov's conversion to the Christian faith is fragmentary. It is neither fully realized nor absolutely guaranteed. Even at the end of the novel, Raskolnikov is more on the threshold of Christian discipleship. As the narrator describes, Raskolnikov's conversion to such a disposition has been a long time in coming—a gradual realization of a force latent within the protagonist from the beginning.

Rowen Williams is not only an accomplished poet and translator with particular interests in scholars such as Dostoevsky and the Russian theologian Vladimir Lossky, but he is also formerly the Anglican Arch-Bishop of Canterbury. In *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith, and Fiction*, Williams states the matter of Dostoevsky's theological influence in its most basic terms. He says, “If I read correctly, [Dostoevsky] is committed to an understanding of both speech and fiction that is deeply rooted in a kind of theology. Acceptable or not to the reader, this is what we need to grasp if we are to read in a way that takes into account his own purposes” (5). More specifically, *Crime and Punishment* may also be seen in light of Dostoevsky's wider attempt to create a “good” man—an effort that was in a sense obsessive on Dostoevsky's part.

Semiotic pragmatism in many ways corresponds to the ancient religious notion of the active component of the contemplative life. For authors like Dostoevsky, it is not enough to know the will of God; one must also do it. Dostoevsky is drawing from the theology of John, the “beloved disciple.” The opening of John’s gospel communicates the revelation of Jesus Christ in terms of the Word: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (New Revised Standard Version, John 1:1).¹ This communication of the Word, however, calls for further action. In John 14, Christ explains that he reveals the will of the Father and sends his disciples to accomplish God’s will through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Christ reminds his disciples about this interdependence between the conversion of the mind and the conversion of the heart. He goes on to say to the disciples, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them” (John 14:23). Raskolnikov’s deepening cognizance of himself is concurrent with his obedience to Christ and his growing awareness of his relationship to Christ within a community of believers, especially through the witness of Sonya’s concern for his wellbeing.

The gravity of Raskolnikov’s rejection of Christian conversion is paradoxically the chaos from which Christian discipleship emerges through the invisible seed of grace. In *Dostoevsky: Freedom and the Tragic Life*, Vyacheslav Ivanov contends that Dostoevsky’s “contemporaries recognized and praised him primarily as a psychologist” (117). Ivanov goes on to acknowledge, “His metaphysical defense of the personality was—luckily for his success!—for a long time not noticed” (117). Ivanov’s comment on Dostoevskian criticism in the early part of the 20th century unfortunately remains the case today with respect to literary criticism of *Crime and Punishment* in the West. *Crime and Punishment* is a novel of mystery instead of merely a psychological thriller or a dime mystery novel, in the sense that the novel’s literary ambiguity reflects the

theological mystery of redemption taking place in Raskolnikov's soul. The theological dimensions of *Crime and Punishment* are not extraneous to its literary allure but rather form the heart of its appeal. *Crime and Punishment* is a conversion narrative, in which the wretched Raskolnikov is being called to live in Christian discipleship.

SECTION 2

Discipleship as Conversion

The term “disciple” comes from the Greek word *mathetes*, which means a student or a pupil. The Latin word for disciple is *discipulus*. In the Gospel of John, *mathetes* is used to indicate the followers of Christ.² *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer discusses the relationship between Christian conversion and Christian discipleship. Bonhoeffer calls Christian discipleship “the road to freedom,” in which a person grows in self-awareness and action. Then, he is subjected to suffering and finally death. Such a plan would indicate an unhealthy preoccupation with morbidity if it were not set in the context of Christ’s redemptive power. In *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov’s conversion follows this trajectory of self-awareness, action, suffering, and death. The narrator’s propensity toward ambivalence and indirection with respect to Raskolnikov’s gradual transformation indicates the necessity of grace alongside Raskolnikov’s own willingness to change.

At the beginning of the novel the narrator uses Raskolnikov’s identity as a student when Raskolnikov meets with the pawnbroker to foreshadow Raskolnikov’s conversion to Christian discipleship. Raskolnikov introduces himself to the pawnbroker as a student: “Raskolnikov, a student. I was here a month ago” (4). Discipleship is a relational term. Typically, a student is a student to a particular teacher, a disciple to a particular master. The story of Raskolnikov begins *in medias res*, since he is a student apparently without a master. Raskolnikov’s identity as a disciple generates at least two questions: What kind of disciple is he, and even more importantly, whose disciple is he? The answer to the latter question sheds light on Raskolnikov’s identity, and by extension provides a profound understanding of the meaning of *Crime and Punishment* as a whole.

Raskolnikov, at first, possesses only a miniscule amount of self-awareness, yet he is seeking a master even without knowing it. In *The Cost of Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer alludes to the Gospel of Matthew, in which a certain young man comes to Christ and asks, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” (Matthew 19:16). Christ responds first with a question: “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into [eternal] life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17). Bonhoeffer offers a solution to the young man’s problem: “The answer to the young man’s problem is—Jesus Christ” (76). Speaking about this young man Bonhoeffer remonstrates: “Eternal life is for him an academic problem which is worth discussing with a ‘good master’” (73). The young man uses his intellect as a substitute for faith rather than an aid to faith. Bonhoeffer says, “Doubt and reflection take the place of spontaneous obedience” (73). Bonhoeffer, thus, gives a primacy to obedience over the intellect. Bonhoeffer suggests that the devil says to the young man: “Keep on posing problems, and you will escape the necessity of obedience” (73). In a similar manner to the young man in the gospel, Raskolnikov seeks a kind of goodness, but on his own terms.

In Dostoevsky’s view, obedience cannot be separated from an understanding within its Christological context. For Dostoevsky, obedience to Christ, in spite of doubt and confusion, is more important than anything else. In 1854—over a decade before writing *Crime and Punishment*—Dostoevsky wrote, “If someone proved to me that Christ is outside the truth, and that in reality the truth were outside of Christ, then I should prefer to remain with Christ rather than with the truth”³ (Williams 15). According to Williams, Dostoevsky is not saying that Christ is opposed to the truth but that Christ’s claim to divinity is unique—set apart from claims by all others—with regard to authoritative power (15). Dostoevsky emphasizes the same sort of theological approach that Bonhoeffer delineates, in which obedience is primary. Bonhoeffer’s

insight into the barriers that the young man in the gospel sets up in order *not* to follow Christ reflects, in some sense, what Dostoevsky is doing with Raskolnikov.

Bonhoeffer, like Dostoevsky, does not deny the role of the intellect. Both authors, however, situate the role of the intellect as inferior to Christian discipleship as a whole. As Bonhoeffer says, “We must face up to the truth that the call of Christ *does* set up a barrier between man and his natural life” (95). Bonhoeffer emphasizes that the natural barrier between God and man is also paradoxically a door that leads not only into the fullness of human understanding but also into the fullness of divine knowledge. For Bonhoeffer and Dostoevsky, Christ’s radical call is to follow him even to poverty and to death, but ultimately to resurrection in him. Christian discipleship, then, for Dostoevsky’s Raskolnikov is likewise the doorway of conversion through which he must pass.

The simplicity of the answer to Raskolnikov’s problem does not entail that the answer is simplistic. In fact, due to the limitations of interpretation, Raskolnikov’s deepest identity is in a sense neither immediately nor ultimately accessible. There is always an element of process even as there is to some extent also an element of completion. Thus, in the epilogue as in the breadth of the entire narrative, there is an eschatological dynamic of *already* but *not yet*. The psychological complexity of Raskolnikov’s character, which has been so greatly heralded, points toward the significance of the greater issue at hand. Since Raskolnikov is on a journey of faith and conversion, what he does is not as important as who he becomes—a disciple capable of redemption. According to Dostoevsky, this status is not due to anything Raskolnikov has done but what God has done. Dostoevsky’s theological stance reflects the Scriptural injunction that man’s relationship to God and to others derives from the love that God has for man: “We love because God first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Raskolnikov’s creation of himself according to his

actions, in a sense, is not opposed to his being held in existence by God's grace. *Crime and Punishment* is a story that is fundamentally working under these terms.

This Scriptural depiction of the human-divine relationship in semiotic terms corresponds to the pragmatic context in this battle for Raskolnikov's soul. In "Pragmatics, Presuppositions, and Context Grammar," Teun A. Van Dijk explains the *a priori* dimension of pragmatics: "Intuitively, a context is the linguistically relevant set of characteristics of a communicative situation, the latter being the state of affairs in which communicative events in natural language take place" (57). This intuitive knowledge concerning context corresponds to an experiential knowledge of the world, or at least *a* world with respect to the speaking subject. The pragmatic meaning of the statement, "I jumped through the window," changes drastically according to whether the speaking subject is on the first floor or on the fifty-fourth floor of a building, as well as a number of situational components. Raskolnikov's "state of affairs" reflects Dostoevsky's understanding of the world.

Williams links Dostoevsky's genius directly to the Christian ideal. According to Williams, Dostoevsky works out the paradox of dying to self and living in Christ through a unified narration that "fuses" the total surrender to Christ to the active embracing of Him (242). Williams explains, "What is so distinctive about Dostoevsky's narrative art is that he not only gives us narratives in which the difficult fusion is enacted; he also embodies the fusion in his narrative method, in the practice of his writing, risking the ambitious claim that the writing of fiction can itself be a sort of icon" (242). According to Williams, this ambition of Dostoevsky is not hubris; rather, it is one aspect of embracing the Christian paradox, which simultaneously requires profound humility. Dostoevsky stakes his entire literary art upon whether salvation is possible, and *Crime and Punishment* is not exempted from this ostensible gamble.

When Dostoevsky wrote his plan for *Crime and Punishment*, he recorded, “The criminal himself resolves to accept suffering and thereby atone for his deed” (Williams 7). Raskolnikov’s resolution for atonement vacillates but that does not mean that Raskolnikov ultimately fails. On the contrary, the grace of conversion communicated especially through Sonya makes up for his weakness. Dostoevsky understands atonement to be taking place in precisely the context of a growing Christian discipleship—personal salvation in the context of universal redemption. Even in the midst of his misery and doubt, Raskolnikov is being called out of darkness into light.

In a letter to his close friend, A. N. Maikov, Dostoevsky refers to his work in progress, *The Idiot*: “I have long been troubled by a certain idea, but I have been afraid to make a novel of it; for the idea is too difficult, and I am not ready for it, although the idea is perfectly alluring and I love it. That idea is—to depict a *thoroughly good man*” (23). Dostoevsky reveals this program to Maikov concerning *The Idiot* a year after the publication of *Crime and Punishment* in 1866. In *The Idiot: An Interpretation*, Victor Terras says that *The Idiot* was a “heroic attempt to introduce a Christ figure into a thoroughly secular and sinful world” (6). It is reasonable to assume that this observation about *The Idiot* may be applied, in some sense at least, to *Crime and Punishment*, since Dostoevsky says, “I have *long been troubled* by a certain idea” (emphasis added). Dostoevsky’s troubling idea surely would have reached back to the time of his writing about Raskolnikov, or perhaps it even began then, especially considering how clearly the idea influenced almost everything else Dostoevsky wrote afterwards. As Ivonov observes, Raskolnikov is not the same sort of idealist as Myshkin (91); nevertheless, Dostoevsky’s attempt in presenting a “good man” in *The Idiot* as well as in his later works including his *magnum opus*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, was already taking shape at least in a latent form in *Crime and*

Punishment. The character of Raskolnikov and his growing relationship with Sonya as an icon of wisdom bears witness to this idea.

Dostoevsky and Bonhoeffer's view of the Holy Scripture, particularly the gospels, as being the inspired Word of God is illuminated by their use of Scripture in their writing. Their alluding to Scripture is radically distinct from any other sort of literary reference, since they treat the Word of God as living and active. According to Dostoevsky and Bonhoeffer, three spiritual senses arise through its literal sense, namely, the moral, the allegorical, and the eschatological. In "The Arts and the Knowledge of Religion," Larry Bouchard says, "Religious dimensionality refers to the way a work in any era encounters, revises, and transmutes religiocultural material in an interplay of form and meaning" (362). An awareness of the particular religious dimensionality of Dostoevsky's art and Bonhoeffer's theology brings about a deeper understanding of the Christian authors' meaning, which especially have to do with the words and example of Christ in the gospels.

The moral sense of Scripture refers to what a Biblical event has to do with the person reading the Scripture. When Sonya reads the account of the raising of Lazarus to Raskolnikov, the narrator depicts this encounter as elusively transformative according to the moral sense of Scripture: "The candle-end had long since burned low in the twisted candlestick, dimly lighting the poverty-stricken room and the murderer and the harlot who had come together so strangely to read the eternal book" (278). The candlestick metaphorically suggests the apparent hopelessness of the situation. If the narration of *Crime and Punishment* had excerpted two pages of Pushkin or Turgenov, the passage would not hold the same sort of weight as the Lazarus account, at least according to Dostoevsky's theology. Both Bonhoeffer and Dostoevsky had a faith in "the eternal book" in a way that holds Scripture as being radically distinct from any other work.

Dostoevsky's passionate belief in Christ and the authority of Scripture paradoxically emerges from an ocean of doubt. By seeking to depict "a good man," Dostoevsky understands the impossibility of it even as he tries to accomplish it. In accordance with his belief in Christ's words to the young man who calls Him "good teacher," Dostoevsky sees that the goodness for which he strives can be found in God alone. Furthermore, Dostoevsky takes Christ at His word that salvation ultimately rests in following Christ, who claims to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life (cf. John 14:6). Raskolnikov's fictional existence continually emerges through Dostoevsky's idea of depicting a good man. This change can be expressed as a kind of existentialism—*being* on the brink of life and death. Williams puts the issue plainly: "Dostoevsky is saying that the question of the context from which we derive values is the most serious, life-and-death question we could possibly articulate" (228). How much Dostoevsky is asking this question in his writing of *Crime and Punishment* is perhaps more ambiguous than in his writing of *The Idiot* or *The Brothers Karamazov*, but that he is asking the question is certain.

Semiotics provides a way of speaking about faith. Although semiotics has to a certain extent separated itself from theology, it has roots in theology as well as in philosophy. In *The Primacy of Semiosis*, Paul Bains proposes, "An understanding of the ontology of relations allows for a compelling account of the action of signs, that is, how things come to stand for something other than themselves" (ix). This semiotic formulation is, in a sense, a reformulation of the philosophical and theological principle of the hierarchy of being. The semiotic formulation, however, emphasizes subjectivity and perception. Bains points out something similar to Eco's notion of intersubjective meaning via John Poinot: "*Poinot treaded a tightrope between Scotism and canonical realist Thomism* by allowing for a semiotic representational theory based on the ontological particularity of relations *not* as being inherent accidents of substances but

rather as having a supra-subjective and potentially ‘intersubjective’ being” [emphasis in the original] (51). Dostoevsky’s theological ideology tends toward a similar sort of *intersubjective being*, through which Raskolnikov finds himself and others simultaneously. In *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*, Robert E. Innis says, “The foundations of semiosis and the foundations of knowledge, both of the self and of the world, are indissolubly joined” (3). For Dostoevsky, Raskolnikov does not exist in a vacuum, but rather exists in relation to God first, and then to a community of persons, which extends to the readers.

Intersubjectivity can be used as a shared lexicon between believers and non-believers in seeking to understand *Crime and Punishment*, since Dostoevsky himself maintains a particular ontology of relations, in which God as Creator is held distinct from that which he has created but at the same time brings about a real union between himself and man through the teaching of Christ. The notion of atonement, which Raskolnikov’s conversion embodies, indicates this emerging unity. The medieval etymological roots of the word are apparent. The OED defines atonement as “the condition of being *at one* with others; unity of feelings, harmony, concord, agreement” [emphasis in the original] (“Atonement”). Raskolnikov’s atonement is by its very nature a reemergence into a community of believers and the acceptance of God.

This dialogic dynamic between belief and non-belief reflects Eco’s notion of intersubjective meaning. Although the intersubjective meaning that the interpretive community agrees upon gains ascendancy over other un-agreed upon interpretations, a certain degree of doubt inevitably remains due to the limitations of subjectivity. Exploring Raskolnikov’s journey to faith in light of Bonhoeffer’s understanding of Christian discipleship provides a first step into the complexities of *Crime and Punishment’s* dialogic, since Bonhoeffer shares Dostoevsky’s belief in the Christ revealed in the gospels. Raskolnikov and the Christian disciple whom

Bonhoeffer describes in *The Cost of Discipleship* have a common beginning and a common end in Christ.

According to Bonhoeffer, one may speak of “faith alone” in a way that ultimately amounts to no faith at all. Faith is authentic only insofar as it is *lived* through obedience. Bonhoeffer observes, “Without the preliminary step of obedience, our faith will only be pious humbug, and lead us to the grace which is not costly” (64). According to Bonhoeffer, authentic Christian virtue and asceticism derive from an understanding that the strength by which man is virtuous comes from Christ. Bonhoeffer’s Christology provides an interpretive lens to view Raskolnikov’s discipleship, since Raskolnikov walks the road of redemptive suffering through Christ’s death and resurrection, which corresponds to the plan that Bonhoeffer gives in *The Cost of Discipleship*.

Intersubjective meaning indicates a pattern of thinking that finally pulls a community to agree upon a given text. Christian semiotics is, in a sense, co-extensive with non-Christian semiotics. The two are deeply inter-related, since faith and doubt form a kind of symbiotic bond in the pursuit of truth. In *Christian Semiotics and the Language of Faith*, Alex Scott says, “Christian semiotics is a metalanguage about Christianity [...] Christians are members of a religious community who share a language of faith. In this sense, they are also members of a linguistic community” (4). Scott’s notion of Christian semiotics as a language that is appropriate only for those who hold the Christian faith, however, is problematic, considering that the fruit of Christian redemption is *for* everyone. In the final analysis, a metalanguage about Christianity is insufficient insofar as it is only for those who share a language of faith. The basic gospel precept that to seek life for one’s own sake ends in death but to seek death *for Christ’s sake* culminates in life complicates the matter. Who has faith and who lacks it is not always readily apparent, but

such ambiguity does not mean that an intersubjective meaning cannot be approached with respect to belief and non-belief.

SECTION 3

Existentialism: a Bridge to Semiotics

Crime and Punishment and Dostoevsky's work in general has appealed to both believers and non-believers alike. Dostoevsky shares the human concern regarding humanity's ontological situation, and his approach concentrates on the study of existence, not only in a traditional sense, but also and especially in a modern way. In *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, Walter Kaufmann asserts, "Existentialism is not a philosophy but a label for several widely different revolts against traditional philosophy" (11). Insofar as Christianity has in a sense gone out of vogue, it has become an existentialist movement in its own right. Kaufmann's anthology of existentialist writings begins with Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*. The first person narrator of *Notes from the Underground* prefigures Raskolnikov. Both characters are existentialists in their bringing the issue of reason and faith to the point of crisis.

Kaufman includes Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche in his list of existentialists. George Pattison observes that Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, and Nietzsche are often placed together as "the three great precursors of existentialist thought" (237). The first two of the foregoing thinkers had their Christianity in common as well. Nietzsche, on the other hand, was at pains to demonstrate his anti-Christian sentiments. Pattison expresses how closely linked Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard were thought to have been by referring to various scholars, such as Lev Shestov (1866-1936) who said that Kierkegaard "comes so close to Dostoevsky that one may say...that Dostoevsky is Kierkegaard's double"⁴ (239). According to Pattison, the two thinkers are linked to one another in their obsession with "*the struggle of faith: a mad struggle for possibility*" (239) and their castigation of "modern man" (239).

Pattison attempts to go beyond this simpler comparison of Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard by showing how the two thinkers also both propose a way out of the nihilism that modern rationalistic thinking prefigures. Pattison suggests that Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard's primary similarity lay not in a "'message' contained within the body of their writing, but an appeal to the reader that the writing constitutes" (252). Pattison also says that the freedom of the reader may be actualized through reading the texts of these two writers only insofar as the reader "takes responsibility for [his] own interpretation of the text" (252). An interpretation of *Crime and Punishment* working through faith is most befitting for the reading of the novel, but one must consider how such an interpretation cannot be achieved; rather, it must be received. Although Dostoevsky allows great latitude within which to play regarding the significance of the text, there is a kind of bedrock, a foundational meaning rooted in his faith in Christ's death and resurrection.

It is helpful to compare Kierkegaard to Dostoevsky, who was less than a decade younger than the Dutch philosopher. The comparison of Nietzsche with Dostoevsky, who was about two decades older than the German philologist, is also instructive, yet seemingly less probable. Kaufman emphasizes the apparent unlikeliness of the coupling: "If, as is often done, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky are included in the fold [of existentialists], we must make room for an impassioned anti-Christian and an even more fanatical Greek-Orthodox Russian imperialist" (11). Dostoevsky and Nietzsche are both intensely concerned with similar themes in their works and lives, although their ontological conclusions are often antithetical to one another.

In *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche recognizes that human suffering is an integral part of ultimate Beatitude. Recalling the ancient Greek distinction between the Apolline and the Dionysiac, he explains that the Dionysiac finally expresses idealistic Apollonian Beauty

specifically in its possession of the tragic profundity of real life (37). Dostoevsky, however, contends that such human suffering alone is utterly insufficient for reaching Beauty. In opposition to Nietzsche, Dostoevsky maintains that human suffering must be offered up and suffered in and through Christ in order to merit Eternal Beatitude. When *Crime and Punishment* was published in 1866, Dostoevsky was forty-five years old and Nietzsche was only twenty-two, but the thinkers' enthusiasm about similar themes is uncanny.

Crime and Punishment's content explores modern motifs of restlessness and despair. It does not, however, ultimately succumb to certain aspects of modernity's crushing influence; rather, it enters into Christ's mystical triumph over death by death. Dostoevsky's aesthetic apparently parallels Nietzsche's, but these two aesthetics ultimately oppose one another. In his *Brief Introduction to the Genius of Nietzsche*, Richard D. Chessick describes the concepts that Nietzsche sought to convey in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Chessick argues that the Apolline represents harmony, measure, and restraint, while the Dionysiac represents the chaotic and drunken frenzy. According to Chessick, the Dionysiac and the Apolline shift their meanings in the work. Chessick points out that toward the end of Nietzsche's intellectual career, Nietzsche merged the Apolline and the Dionysiac into just Dionysus, and "contrasted Dionysus with the crucified Christ" (39). The most important distinction between the aesthetic of Dostoevsky and Nietzsche is that the former embraces Christ, whereas, the latter rejects him.

Chessick says that in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche first raised the important question that was reiterated and developed in Nietzsche's later works, namely the question, "How might we justify life if God is dead?" (40). The answer to this question pierces every aspect of life. When confronted with this prospect of God being dead in human beings and to humanity, the latter either plummets into the absurd or is elevated into the truth. Nietzsche claimed that he

admired Christ for His “simplicity.” Nietzsche’s admiration for the Son of God, however, was based on a flawed notion of Christ’s teaching, at least as Dostoevsky and Bonhoeffer understood it. Nietzsche’s quandary concerning the death of God, however, is intimately related to Dostoevsky’s and Bonhoeffer’s insistence on authenticity in Christian discipleship. Bonhoeffer is especially critical of inauthentic faith which gives rise to what he calls “cheap grace.”

The authenticity of faith forms the context from which the language of both belief and non-belief flows. Alex Scott describes how semiotics aids believers and non-believers, alike, in seeking out faith: “Semiotics can help us to define our beliefs about God by examining our mode of discourse about God” (xiv). The benefit of Christian semiotics is not relegated to believers in Christ, since semiotics extends beyond any particular group. The notion of creating a shared lexicon in terms of intersubjective meaning did not come merely with the development of semiotics in the twentieth century, but the idea became especially prominent then. Mikhail Bakhtin is the most important semiotician with respect to Dostoevsky’s literary works. In the essay “Discourse in the Novel,” Bakhtin describes the nature of ideology and often utilizes Dostoevsky’s novels to illustrate his points. Bakhtin explains that a necessary ambiguity must exist even within the apparent unity of a shared way of speaking: “A unitary language is not something given [*dan*] but is always in essence posited [*zadan*]—and at every moment of its linguistic life it is opposed to the realities of heteroglossia” (270). This notion of heteroglossia is crucial in sifting through what needs to be held onto and what can be discarded with respect to the meaning of any given utterance.

Bakhtin opposes the poetic form to the novel-form, claiming that the language of the novel is fundamentally *dialogic*, whereas the language of the poem is basically *monologic*. He breaks down “the novelistic whole” into five basic types of “compositional-stylistic unities,”

reflecting Aristotle's breakdown of the epic tragedy in *On Poetics*. In contrast to Aristotle's analysis of the poem, where plot holds primacy of place, Bakhtin does not present the unities that compose the novelistic whole hierarchically. He explains, however, that the novelistic unities (e.g. direct authorial literary-artistic narration, the stylistically individualized speech of characters, etc.) are subordinated to "the higher stylistic unity of the work as a whole, a unity that cannot be identified with any single of the unities subordinated to it" (262). The problem with unifying language is that it tends to oversimplify the matter, since "the realities of heteroglossia" are incomprehensible.

The problem with unifying language, however, is paradoxically also its advantage, since it remains, as Bakhtin puts it, "a force for overcoming this heteroglossia, imposing specific limits to it, guaranteeing a certain maximum of mutual understanding and crystalizing into a real, although still relative, unity" (270). A kind of consummate dissatisfaction, therefore, rests with the stability of any shared lexicon. In this sense, words that might seem to connote unity (e.g. "shared," "intersubjectivity," and "synthesis") should bring about—even to a greater degree— notions of unrest, unacceptability, and isolation. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin argues that this kind of polyphonic play is particularly prevalent in Dostoevsky. Bakhtin says, "A genuine polyphony of fully valid voices is the chief characteristic of Dostoevsky's novels" (6). Bakhtin observes, moreover, that the multifaceted nature of Dostoevsky's novels involves both the choices of the protagonists and those of the author. Bakhtin declares, "Dostoevsky's major heroes are, by the very nature of his creative design, not only objects of authorial discourse but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse" (7). Bonhoeffer's notion of Christian discipleship as involving subjects receptive to God's will seems to echo Dostoevsky's artistic choices concerning Raskolnikov, as a fictional character. Dostoevsky's artistic agency, in a sense,

works through Raskolnikov's vacillating will (or rather the will posited into Raskolnikov) with respect to Christian conversion.

Words are always reaching beyond what they are by themselves. In "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin explains the significance of words not only in the sense of their symbolic potential, but more so with respect to their actual weight and implications. He says, "We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a worldview, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a maximum of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life" (271). This weight and magnitude of words, and the utterance of words, cuts both ways in terms of their ontological implications. Semiotics and existentialism, therefore, are linked to one another. The actions of a man both determine and are determined by what he thinks, what he does, and what he says. The problem, however, is that his ability to choose, in one sense, is itself an inability to choose in another.

The question is not *whether* one must choose, for even in thinking that one is not choosing, one is choosing—the question is simply *what* one is choosing. This ontological situation seems purely negative in the sense that one does not choose to be born and then is forced to choose thereafter. There is no time or place when or where one is not choosing. Even his *ennui* is a choice. This presentation of reality gives rise to *nausea* like in the case of Jean-Paul Sartre's novel by that name. In *Nausea*, the protagonist, Antoine Roquentin, proclaims, "My thought is me: that's why I can't stop. I exist because I think... and I can't stop myself from thinking. At this very moment—it's frightful—if I exist, it is because I am horrified at existing. I am the one who pulls myself from the nothingness to which I aspire" (135). For Roquentin as for Sartre, existence is a trap, a trick, and a horror. The last phrase, "the nothingness to which I

aspire,” is crucial in understanding the dilemma. Nothingness is Sartre’s aspiration and the end infects the entire process from its very beginning—from end to beginning, so to speak.

Sartre, who was a contemporary of Bonhoeffer, reflects in his thinking the thoughts of Dostoevsky’s Underground Man. Sartre’s Roquentin cries out, “I am alone in the midst of these happy, reasonable voices. All these creatures spend their time explaining, realizing happily that they agree with each other. In Heaven's name, why is it so important to think the same things all together” (8). In *Notes from the Underground*, the Underground Man goes as far as thinking “two times two equals five” if that is what he has to do to be different. He wonders, “Merciful Heavens! But what do I care for the laws and the fact that twice two makes four?” (63). The Underground Man as a prototype for Raskolnikov is dissatisfied with the *status quo*. It is specifically in this sort of relentless dissatisfaction that these various figures—Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Bonhoeffer—can be tied one to the other.

For the Christian existentialist, in particular, the frightening aspect of this ocean of doubt, so to speak, is that one may be utterly swallowed up and lost, if he finally fails to discover the light of some unifying belief. For the non-believing existentialist, however, the fear of living an empty and meaningless life is also an ever-present and imminent threat. In *Nausea*, Roquentin speaks of this situation in terms of being unwanted. He says, “I want to leave, to go somewhere where I should be really in my place, where I would fit in . . . but my place is nowhere; I am unwanted” (77). This state of being unwanted reflects the condition of the Underground Man. Strangely, Dostoevsky’s poor, wretched protagonist expresses a kind of joy in experiencing alienation. He puts it in terms of having a tooth ache and the moans that accompany it: “The enjoyment of the sufferer finds expression in those moans; if he did not feel enjoyment in them he would not moan” (62). The Underground Man’s satisfaction in suffering and alienation may

not be so foreign as one might expect, since the sufferer typically indulges in an expression of his pain.

In the case of the Underground Man, however, it seems like it is not a mere “sour grapes” situation, in which moaning corresponds to bad circumstances, like a toothache, unless of course, the state of having a toothache is metaphorically extended to man’s ontological situation, his intrinsic condition. What is frightening and exciting at the same time, simultaneously paralyzing and empowering—at least according to all of the thinkers we have been discussing—is that such *is* man’s condition. Recognizing this shared lexicon among these thinkers, however, is really only the beginning of discovering the vast difference between the beliefs of Dostoevsky and Bonhoeffer and those of Nietzsche and Sartre.

SECTION 4

From Discipline to Death

Words are inadequate with respect to expressing the ontological difference between Christian existentialism and agnostic existentialism. The image of true discipleship requires the recounting of a historical fact. The following are the words of the camp doctor who witnessed the execution of Dietrich Bonhoeffer the morning of April 9, 1945 at the Nazi Concentration Camp in Flossenburg, Germany:

I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer... kneeling on the floor praying fervently to God. I was most deeply moved by the way this lovable man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer. At the place of execution, he again said a short prayer and then climbed the few steps to the gallows, brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds. In the almost fifty years that I worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God. (Bethge 927)

Bonhoeffer's living obedience to Christ even unto death, as the camp doctor describes it above, is a powerful expression of Bonhoeffer's commitment to his understanding of Christian discipleship. Bonhoeffer's witness conveys his awareness that the most basic meaning of religion has to do with relationship, the relationship between God and man. Bonhoeffer believed in the faithfulness of God, which in turn spurred him on in discerning and following God's specific call on his life. At a 1967 lecture at Coventry Cathedral in England, Bonhoeffer's close friend and biographer, Eberhard Bethge, lamented, "The isolated use and handing down of the famous term 'religionless Christianity' has made Bonhoeffer the champion of an undialectical shallow modernism which obscures all that he wanted to tell us about the living God" (Metaxas 466).

Bonhoeffer's central ideas about Christian discipleship show that Bonhoeffer's notion of "religionless Christianity" is not a call to retreat from religion but rather an admonition to commit oneself wholly to the grace of Christian discipleship.

Like Raskolnikov's need to surrender himself to Christ and thereby embrace Christ, Bonhoeffer's theological approach is highly Christological. Unlike Dostoevsky's own brush with death, however, Bonhoeffer's stay in prison actually culminated in his execution. Bonhoeffer wrote a wedding sermon from his prison cell in May of 1943. In the letter he encourages the couple to be heroically steadfast in their love for one another, but at the same time Bonhoeffer stresses the importance of loving one another specifically in the way that Christ leads them. Bonhoeffer says to the couple regarding the task of their vocation to marriage: "You yourselves know that no one can create and assume such a life from his own strength, but that what is given to one is withheld from another; and that is what we call God's guidance" (42). Raskolnikov's crime in fact springs from a profound rejection of doing good according to God's specific calling on his life. Raskolnikov's rejection of his particular vocation to alleviate poverty through personal care of the poor and downtrodden in his community leads him, instead, to a perverse attempt of eliminating poverty through murdering the pawnbroker and Lizaveta. By means of grace, however, Raskolnikov's crime and his punishment are redirected, as it were, in a way that reopens Raskolnikov to his true vocation as a Christian disciple.

Bonhoeffer's *Cost of Discipleship* presents a coherently radical program for Christian discipleship: "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die" (89). Bonhoeffer's book is an antidote to the notion that Christian discipleship is either escapism or fanaticism. He speaks into the drama through which hope is illuminated by an authentic faith rooted in obedience. He emphasizes the inter-connectedness between obedience and faith when he says, "The following

two propositions hold good and are equally true: *only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes*” [emphasis in the original] (63). In a sense, Bonhoeffer agrees with the notion that religion is detrimental insofar as it is of man’s own making—if, in other words, it is a religion without authentic faith. Stanley Stowers’s notion of “political religion” as often conflicting with authentic faith speaks into the cultural context of Nazism that Bonhoeffer is, in particular, castigating (10). Religion can be used as a rhetorical device to promote propaganda, which in effect kills its authenticity.

In contrast to inauthentic faith, Bonhoeffer says that the Christian’s life is a long and arduous road, which necessarily entails suffering, but because of Christ’s redemptive work within each man, this suffering is ultimately a cause for rejoicing for the Christian disciple. Although perhaps less evidently than *The Brothers Karamazov*, *Crime and Punishment* likewise expresses that faith in and grace from Christ is what makes religion alive. Bonhoeffer sees suffering as “the badge of true discipleship” because it shows that the man following Christ is following the true Christ, the Christ who suffered and died for man’s redemption. Bonhoeffer states, “Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering Christ, and it is therefore not at all surprising that Christians should be called upon to suffer. In fact it is a joy and token of his grace” (90). Bonhoeffer affirms that suffering has to be endured because it is something transient. This endurance of suffering is not stoicism because it does not recognize the suffering, in itself, as worth anything. For Bonhoeffer and Dostoevsky, it is Christ’s suffering that produces lasting fruit and has redemptive efficacy.

In order to bring the proper order of faith and religion into focus, Bonhoeffer alludes to Christ’s parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field” (Matthew

13:44). For the Christian disciple, “the treasure in the field” is the promise of salvation. The Christian disciple is a student of Christ in a way that excludes any other form of discipleship—he is the disciple of Christ, alone. Dostoevsky expresses this radical sort of discipleship to Christ through his narrative art. Dostoevsky does not employ an epigram in *Crime and Punishment* like he does in *The Brothers Karamazov*. The epigram of the latter is from the Gospel of John: “Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds” (John 12:24). Considering the pragmatic context of Raskolnikov’s conversion, a fitting epigram for *Crime and Punishment* might have been from the beginning of John: “In Jesus was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:4-5). For both Dostoevsky and Bonhoeffer, the context of the Word being made flesh and culminating in Christ’s death and resurrection brings about a fundamentally new meaning with regard to being human.

At the heart of language is the communication of persons. In *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*, Eco says concerning language, “The sign is a *gesture* produced with the *intention of communicating*, that is, in order to transmit one’s representation or inner state to another being” [emphasis in the original] (16). The gesture of faith, however, does not always bear fruit. Bonhoeffer observes that one may speak of “faith alone” in a way that ultimately amounts to no faith at all, in which case, the intended communication of the word “faith” has failed. Faith is authentic only insofar as it is lived through obedience. Bonhoeffer states, “Without the preliminary step of obedience, our faith will only be pious humbug, and lead us to the grace which is not costly” (64). This proclamation reflects a similar expression by the Catholic theologian, Hans Urs Von Balthasar, who observes, “Man is not giving thanks properly when he freezes, as it were, in the act of looking backward in reverent thanksgiving. No, he must

show that he has understood God's gesture of gift-giving by taking it over and becoming a giver" (129). The passing on of the gift of God's love is a gesture of faith/obedience. Bonhoeffer describes the action not as two but as one, since faith without obedience is no faith at all. The intersubjective meaning that an interpretive community agrees upon has an element of activity, which flows from the shared lexicon.

Bonhoeffer and those who believe in Christ with him base their belief in Christ as the only true teacher upon Christ's words communicated in the gospel. For Christians, the words of Christ concerning His identity as the Word of God acquire "a privilege over any other possible interpretation"—to use Eco's way of speaking (40). Christ says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Bonhoeffer's idea of Christ's primacy does not exclude from authentic discipleship those who seek truth, since for Bonhoeffer Christ *is* Truth. This understanding of Christ's pre-eminence as *the* teacher is not new. In the 4th century treatise called *De Magistro* ("The Teacher"), for instance, St. Augustine speaks about Christ as the "true teacher." According to Augustine, since Christ is God, Christ is the only one who can impart eternal wisdom: "For [the disciple] is taught not by words, but by the realities themselves made manifest to him directly by God revealing them to his inner self" (40). Augustine echoes this conviction about Christ's authority in *De Doctrina Christiana* ("On Christian Teaching"). Augustine declares that insofar as the Son of God becomes merely a fabrication of the mind, Christ no longer has power or authority. In other words, Christian discipleship becomes a sham—Christianity in name only, but actually a kind of Christianity without Christ, so to speak.

SECTION 5

Raskolnikov's Conversion Narrative

Raskolnikov's own atonement follows this trajectory of an emerging awareness of God's revelation in Christ. According to Bonhoeffer, the true disciple simply obeys, whereas the sinner "persists in disobedience and seeks consolation by absolving himself" (70). Raskolnikov postpones accepting this invitation to repent and change by living in the fantasy that he is good on his own. Raskolnikov is like the young man in the gospel, who seeks from Christ the secret to being good (cf. Matthew 19). Bonhoeffer echoes Christ's injunction that poverty of spirit is the first step toward salvation. Bonhoeffer says, "Discipleship is the end, voluntary poverty the means" (75). Raskolnikov's poverty, however, keeps him from union with Christ because Raskolnikov lives poverty on his own terms.

For Dostoevsky as for Bonhoeffer, the Christian message requires a radical and exclusive commitment to Christ; however, the careful observation of Christ's teachings ultimately brings about personal fulfillment. In "Paradoxical Dostoevsky," Gary Saul Morson's insight about Dostoevsky's employment of paradox to a certain extent applies to Bonhoeffer's European Christology. Morson says, "Dostoevsky's paradoxes come in many forms, as they do in the history of European thought and literature" (471). Bonhoeffer's idea of Christ's primacy echoes a long tradition of the Christian West's invitation to authentic discipleship. According to Bonhoeffer, the quest to create a discipleship without Christ is a misleading reaction to a fraudulent form of Christianity. Bonhoeffer is intensely concerned with proclaiming the same sort of discipleship Christ demands—one that is rooted in the promise of God's perfect love. He contrasts this kind of "costly grace", which is the fruit of faith and obedience, to the imposter "cheap grace," which is man-made. He says, "Cheap grace is grace without discipline, grace

without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate” (45). For Bonhoeffer, then, to love Christ according to one’s own preferences is not to love Him at all.

Bonhoeffer speaks about “costly discipleship” also in his *Ethics*, except he uses different terminology. In *Ethics*, Bonhoeffer calls the relationship with Christ and what every Christian disciple seeks to attain in Christ “the Ultimate.” Everything else, “the Penultimate,” finally serves man in attaining Christ: “It is for the sake of the Ultimate that we must now speak of the Penultimate” (125). For Bonhoeffer, nothing but Christ and humankind’s relationship with Him, ultimately matters, but Christian conversion does not thereby reject the Penultimate. In *Ethics*, Bonhoeffer uses Dostoevsky’s Ivan Karamazov as an example of an unhealthy form of radicalism, in which the Christian rejects God by rejecting God’s creation. Bonhoeffer says with regard to Ivan’s radicalism, “It is Christ’s gift to the Christian that he should be reconciled with the world as it is, but now this reconciliation is accounted a betrayal and denial of Christ” (129). Alyosha tries to persuade Ivan to reverse his denial of Christ through accepting God’s creation, which Ivan has rejected. A similar dynamic occurs between Sonya and Raskolnikov throughout *Crime and Punishment*, and Raskolnikov’s eventual reconciliation with Sonya is the greatest mark of his Christian conversion.

Returning to *The Cost of Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer explicates the drastic shift that takes place in the one who embraces Christian discipleship: “The disciple is dragged [...] from a life which is observable and calculable (it is, in fact, quite incalculable) into a life where everything is unobservable and fortuitous (that is, into one which is necessary and calculable)” (58). Raskolnikov needs to be dragged from his preoccupation with his “calculations” and feeling like he is in control in order to be redeemed. The real death that takes place in the disciple is finally for the sake of redemption in Christ. Bonhoeffer is speaking about the paradox that Christ,

himself, proclaims. He uses the same verse as Dostoevsky uses for the epigram of *The Brothers Karamazov* to explain the paradox of Christianity: “Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds” (58). The crucial element that unites Bonhoeffer’s belief with that of Dostoevsky is that transcendence is guaranteed only through the cost of Christian discipleship.

For the most part, Dostoevsky does not provide a positive example of Christian discipleship through Raskolnikov, but Dostoevsky often employs this *via negativa* mode of discourse in his novels. Joseph Frank observes, “The works [of Dostoevsky] do, after all, grippingly portray criminal impulses and criminal deeds, and nobody depicted the horror of the murder of an innocent more unsparingly than Dostoevsky in *Crime and Punishment*” (207). Frank goes on to say, however, that the reader is not meant to indulge in Raskolnikov’s criminality but rather to desire Raskolnikov’s restoration (207). The narrator of *Crime and Punishment* says that as Raskolnikov is contemplating murder, “Raskolnikov had become superstitious” (54). Raskolnikov’s way of thinking is, indeed, fraught with delusional ideas of greatness that haunts him ceaselessly. Without directly naming the idea of murder, the narrator masterfully employs indirect reader discourse by describing Raskolnikov’s obsession with grotesque imagery: “A strange idea seemed to be pecking away in [Raskolnikov’s] head, like a chicken emerging from the shell, and all his attention was fixed on it” (54). The narration quickly shifts its focus to an outside conversation between a student and an officer concerning the old pawnbroker and Lizaveta. The student expresses the idea to the officer to kill the pawnbroker. The narrator says that the idea seems to replicate Raskolnikov’s own. The student says:

A hundred, a thousand, good actions and promising beginnings might be forwarded and directed aright by the money that old woman destines for a

monastery...Kill her, take her money, on condition that you dedicate yourself with its help to the service of humanity and the common good: don't you think that the thousands of good deeds will wipe out one little, insignificant transgression? For one life taken, thousands saved from corruption and decay! One death, and a hundred lives in exchange – why it's simple arithmetic! (56)

The dramatic irony of Raskolnikov thinking that this coincidence is somehow providential—“something fateful and fore-ordained about it” (57)—consists especially in the fact that God's will for Raskolnikov not only precludes all intrinsic evil such as murder but also involves Raskolnikov's discernment of the particular good deeds that God has fore-ordained especially for him. Without the willingness to be good as God sees fit, Raskolnikov dooms himself to wretchedness, even in his attempt to do good according to his own designs.

For Bonhoeffer, discipleship according to one's own design is to be no disciple at all. He says that it is like the man who says *yes* to his master but does not ultimately obey. The one who says *no* yet obeys, on the other hand, is Christ's disciple. Bonhoeffer proclaims unequivocally, “The gulf between a voluntary offer to follow and genuine discipleship is clear” (60). Bonhoeffer says that a man's futile pursuit of Christ and Christianity according to his own designs is worse than rejecting Christ outright. Bonhoeffer reminds the disciple that with Christ lays not just *most* of the authority, but *all* of it. The authority that Christ gives to the disciple ever remains in Christ, since the authority given always flows from Christ. Bonhoeffer says, “Discipleship is not an offer man makes to Christ. It is only the call which creates the situation” (63). The situation that Bonhoeffer refers to is the situation of redemption, for which Raskolnikov so desperately longs. He expresses his longing for atonement especially to Sonya in terms of alienation. Before turning himself in to Porfiry for murder, he enigmatically confesses to Sonya, “We are not alike” (349).

Immediately following, however, Raskolnikov cries out, “I came here for one thing—that you should not leave me. You won’t leave me, Sonya?” (349). Raskolnikov’s ambivalent longing for and mistrust of community simultaneously keeps him from and disposes him to obeying God.

Bonhoeffer is not interested in exploring tangents that do not have to do with the ever-pressing issue—genuine faith in Christ. He provocatively addresses the reader: “You are trifling with the subject. If you believe, take the first step. It leads to Jesus Christ. If you don’t believe, take the first step all the same, for you are bidden to take it” (67). To illustrate his point, Bonhoeffer presents a scenario where a pastor is helping a member of his church. The pastor says, “You cannot hear Christ because you are willfully disobedient. Somewhere in your heart you are refusing to listen to his call. Your difficulty is your sins” (69). According to Bonhoeffer, the man’s sinful response, however, is persistence in his disobedience with a generous self-absolution to ease his conscience (70). Raskolnikov, likewise, cannot take the initial step of confronting his guilt. He dodges his culpability through understanding his actions in terms of seeking to serve humanity.

According to Bonhoeffer and Dostoevsky, religion refers primarily to man’s relationship with God. God has revealed Himself. When Bonhoeffer tells Bethge in a letter that now is the time for ‘religionless Christianity,’ he is reiterating a shift in emphasis—not to abandon religion, not to abandon God. No, it is to take Christ at his word: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last” (John 15:16). For Bonhoeffer, to question the role of religion, though it is secondary, is to denigrate the primary role of following Christ. Accordingly, Bonhoeffer expresses religion and relationship as two sides of the same coin: “Here is the sum of the commandment—to live in fellowship with Christ” (75). Bonhoeffer stresses the particular nature of true discipleship without undermining the role

of Christian obedience. He says, “Discipleship without Jesus Christ is a way of our own choosing. It may be the ideal way. It may even lead to martyrdom, but it is devoid of all promise” (59). Bonhoeffer’s discipleship led him to martyrdom, after all, but it was a martyrdom that was filled with promise, for Christ led the way.

Raskolnikov’s conversion requires not only intense focus but also openness of mind. According to Bonhoeffer, living out faith is different from clinging to ideology, since the notion of ideology by itself is insufficient when it comes to effecting change. In a sense, ideologies are impractical because they are to some extent delusional. Bakhtin puts this understanding of ideology in terms of *monologic* as opposed to *dialogic*. According to Bakhtin, an ideology is a kind of *monologic* that makes what is, in fact, too complex to comprehend *seem* to be comprehensible. The grotesque materializes from this kind of recalcitrance. Ideologies, nevertheless, are to some degree always operative in any action, and Bakhtin suggests that this characteristic is not entirely negative, since some sort of unified vision is necessary for any dialogue to occur (*Dialogic* 271). Analogously speaking, the human psychosomatic structure reflects how a teleological approach is more effective than merely focusing on what is immediately proximate. For instance, it is difficult for a person to keep an arm extended if he merely focuses on keeping the arm extended. When, however, he focuses on keeping his finger pointed at a remote but visible object, he has the capacity to keep his arm held high for a much longer time.

This phenomenon that has to do with translating psychic energy into real action, namely keeping one’s arm raised, is like discipleship; nevertheless, it is insufficient in itself to convey Christian discipleship in its entirety. The Christian’s concentration on Christ points to the belief that God, alone, can fulfill the human heart’s deepest desires and reveal any person’s truest

identity. The Word of God becomes the word speaking into the human heart. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson prefer the word *discourse* for the Russian *slovo* in their translation of Bakhtin's "Discourse on the Novel." In "Mikhail Bakhtin, Vyacheslav Ivanov, and the Rhetorical Culture of the Russian Third Renaissance," Filipp Sapienza points out that *slovo* can be properly translated into the Greek word *logos*, which is used in the Gospel of John to denote Christ, "the Word of God" (135). The *slovo* that Bakhtin uses in "Discourse on the Novel" indirectly refers to the gospel via Dostoevsky's art. Raskolnikov's growing awareness of God's Word in his life is concurrent with his continuing discourse with Christ's mercy. In Christian discipleship, the creative power of the disciple is secondary to that of his object, for his object is the Eternal Word. This unique kind of intersubjectivity that exists between the heart of man and the heart of God-made-man is no less true for *Crime and Punishment's* protagonist.

Far from undermining the integrity of the story, the epilogue reinforces the dynamic of Raskolnikov's faith-journey as ongoing. Christ saves Raskolnikov from being a tragic mock-hero, and raises him up, instead, to a lofty station. Raskolnikov finally confesses his crime to Porfiry before the epilogue begins, but his confession is only the first step to his resurrection. The other criminals at the jail do not understand Raskolnikov—they reject him, and he continues to cling to the illusion that he is not just another "louse." He still has not embraced his suffering, but rather, continues to love it, strangely, like the Underground Man does. He persists to some degree in his rejection of the paradox of Christianity; nevertheless, Sonya stays by his side, never abandoning hope. Sonya's perseverance in Christ pays off. Raskolnikov's movement to conversion is dramatically portrayed. Raskolnikov repeats the action that he had done in her apartment when they together read the gospel account of the raising of Lazarus. He throws

himself at her feet, but this time his love for her is authentic. Raskolnikov commits himself to Christian discipleship.

At the beginning of the novel, Raskolnikov has an intuition that somehow he is meant to be great, but he cannot find the true seed of that greatness. Without knowing what he ultimately desires, he does not know in which direction he should go. His moral paralysis derives from a crucial lack in the realm of *metaphysics*, the branch of philosophy that deals with principle questions concerning where man came from and where he is going. Raskolnikov, however, is to a certain extent philosophical in his thinking. As a thinker, he ponders to himself: “I wonder what men are most afraid of... Any new departure, and especially a new word—that is what they fear most of all” (2). Bonhoeffer says, “The word of cheap grace kills the joy of discipleship” (55). Raskolnikov has killed the joy of discipleship precisely in his insistence on going his own way.

SECTION 6

Raskolnikov: Finding a Lost Soul

Despite its ostensibly inauspicious start, there is a latent hope with regard to Raskolnikov's spiritual regeneration even at the beginning of the novel. The first hope is that Raskolnikov will not commit the crime because he is ambivalent with respect to whether he ought to do it, or even whether he *can* do it. This hope, however, is not realized. Raskolnikov does, indeed, commit the crime. The second hope—the greater hope—is that Raskolnikov will participate in the redemption that Christ has already won for him. According to Dostoevsky's aesthetic which coincides with Bonhoeffer's notion of Christian discipleship, Raskolnikov is no different than any other man insofar as he is a child of God who has, in the words of St. Paul, "fallen short of the glory of God" (Roman 3:23). Raskolnikov's Christian discipleship not only reflects that of past Christians but also prefigures the Christian struggle that would emerge in the twentieth century.

Bonhoeffer's notion of discipleship is authentically Christian in the sense that it invites all people but it also demands real and living faith. Although both sinners and saints are called to have faith, the more wretched a man has become, the greater opportunity he has to live in and through faith toward intersubjectivity. Representative of this Christian aesthetic, St. Paul says, "I am convinced that...neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39). Raskolnikov's story emerges in light of this purging and purifying light of Christ, not despite but rather precisely because of his rejection of that holy light from the beginning of the novel.

In "Crimes without Any Punishment at All: Dostoevsky and Woody Allen in Light of Bakhtinian Theory," Olga Stuchebrukhov makes an interesting comparison between films

directed by Woody Allen and *Crime and Punishment*. Stuchebrukhov says that the films “Match Point” and “Crimes and Misdemeanors” are inspired by Dostoevsky’s novel, but that Allen “removes the punishment from the crime-and-punishment scenario” (142). Such a removal of punishment may work for Allen’s intents and purposes, but it *cannot* in the story of Raskolnikov. Like Dostoevsky, Bonhoeffer sees suffering as “the badge of true discipleship” because it shows that the man following Christ is following the true Christ: “Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering Christ, and it is therefore not at all surprising that Christians should be called upon to suffer. In fact it is a joy and token of his grace” (90). What Raskolnikov must learn is that, as Bonhoeffer puts it, “Suffering has to be endured in order that it may pass away” (92). Bonhoeffer points out that this endurance of suffering is not stoicism because it does not recognize the suffering, in itself, as worth anything. It is Christ’s suffering, rather, that produces lasting fruit and has redemptive efficacy, since Christ invites his disciples not only to die with Him but also to rise with Him.

This principle of redemptive suffering is at work in Raskolnikov, but the redemptive aspect of that suffering is not readily apparent to Raskolnikov. The apostle Paul says, “Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church” (Colossians 1:24). Paul is speaking in personal terms, but the communal aspect of his suffering in Christ allows for participation from others and for others. There is also room for a man to reject such participation in redemptive suffering. No choice is available with regard to whether one suffers, but there is a choice with regard to how and why one suffers. Raskolnikov’s story forms the crux of this fundamental option between life in Christ and death in sin. Raskolnikov’s conversion to Beauty,

however, might better be described as a conversion *toward* Truth. It is not a matter of “once saved, always saved.”

In the context of redemptive suffering in Christ, Raskolnikov and the Christian disciple whom Bonhoeffer describes in *The Cost of Discipleship* are, in as sense, the same man. Bonhoeffer asserts, “It is becoming clearer every day that the most urgent problem besetting our Church is this: How can we live the Christian life in the modern world?” (55). Bonhoeffer’s identification of the problem is just as true for Raskolnikov as it is for each person in the Church, now. Bonhoeffer’s lays before his reader two mutually exclusive options: “cheap grace” or “costly grace.” This fundamental option is a modern recasting of Jeremiah’s call to repentance to the people of Israel: “Furthermore, tell the people, ‘This is what the Lord says: See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death’” (Jeremiah 21:8). This choice between the way of life and the way of death, upon which Bonhoeffer expounds, is at work in Raskolnikov’s conversion narrative, but in a way that is not fully apparent. Rather, the dynamic of Raskolnikov’s conversion more reflects Bakhtin’s “realities of heteroglossia.”

Raskolnikov’s conversion to Christian faith is particularly Russian. It is important to recognize some of the ancient historical context of this nineteenth century novel, since Dostoevsky is drawing not only from Russia’s Christian roots but also from Russia’s pre-Christian roots. Russia was not always a Christian land. Before becoming Christian more or less around the tenth century, Russians practiced a religion that in many ways resembles the pre-Christian religions of the West, like Nietzsche’s recalling of the Greek *Apolline* and *Dionysiac*. Russians worshipped “the god of the sun” or “the god of the earth.” Russia’s conversion to Christianity took place from the top down, but its conversion ties together many different levels, which to a certain extent are at odds with one another. Raskolnikov’s conversion, in a certain

sense, embodies this—to again employ Bakhtin’s terminology—*polyphony* of individual experiences and approaches.

The year 899 is when Russia was made Christian at least by name, but the actual event of her conversion to Christianity is multifaceted and ongoing. The pre-Christian roots of Russia influence the particularity of her Christianity. This specific history of the Russian people is significant especially for two reasons: First, Christianity was brought to the region much later than it was brought to the West. Its A.D. and B.C., so to speak, does not correspond directly to the West’s A.D. and B.C. Second, the relative nearness of Russia’s pre-Christian religion alters to some extent the framework of her Christianity. In “A Christian Revolution in Russian Literary Criticism,” Victor Terras observes, “Russian scholars now joyously proclaim the Christian message of Dostoevsky’s life and works” (770). Dostoevsky’s protagonist, Raskolnikov, struggles with doubt and faith in the Christian God, as the Western man does, and his being Russian plays a considerable part in the trajectory of the struggle.

Crime and Punishment utilizes the concept of “direction” to suggest metaphorically the journey that takes place in his soul. The first sentence of the novel immediately shows direction being used in such a way: “Towards the end of a sultry afternoon in July a young man came out of his little room in Stolyarny Lane and turned slowly and somewhat irresolutely in the direction of Kamenny Bridge” (1). Dostoevsky uses real places—Stolyarny Lane, where Raskolnikov’s apartment is marked in St. Petersburg today, and Kamenny Bridge, a famous stone bridge built in Moscow in the late 17th century—but in the original writing, these places are marked by S... and K... respectively. Dostoevsky writes realistically, but simultaneously, the narration is idealistic. The “young man’s” name reflects this struggle between the realistic and the idealistic. According to Sidney Monas, Raskolnikov comes from the Russian *raskolnik*, meaning “schismatic” or

“divided.” Thus, Raskolnikov turned “somewhat irresolutely.” The ideal is that what one knows to be true is done faithfully, but the reality of man’s propensity toward grasping at his own happiness causes vacillation instead. Raskolnikov’s irresolution from the very beginning metaphorically suggests his reluctance with respect to final conversion; nonetheless, such reluctance toward final conversion does not preclude a eu-catastrophe, rather it provides the conflict that makes the meat of this conversion narrative.

The third person narration directs the gaze of the reader to that which is outside the narrow “I” of Raskolnikov. The theme of conversion and transcendence is amplified by the motifs of “direction” and “road.” Using stairs, the omniscient narrator extends the metaphor of direction to include verticality: “He was not really afraid...to have to stop on the stairs.” This symbolic language of conversion, however, is a kind of infernal inversion. Rather than being converted to the truth, at this point, Raskolnikov is being lured into hell. Raskolnikov’s almost paranoid concern about the conspicuousness of his hat is humorous, and rather significant. Referring to the hat, he says, “A piece of stupidity like this, an insignificant trifle, might wreck the whole affair” (3). The “affair” that he is referring to has to do with his unrealized and ambiguous plans for murder. The insignificance of the hat juxtaposed to and interfering with the significance of Raskolnikov’s crime magnifies the ambivalence and absurdity that is raging in Raskolnikov’s psyche.

Raskolnikov’s conversion to Christianity at the end of the novel is inversely portrayed at the beginning of the novel with his confused turning toward malevolence and irrationality. In “Converts, Uncertainty, and the Novel,” Stewart Justman correctly observes that “a novel is not a closed system like a hostile system of interpretation” (371), but at the same time a good novel’s newness is not without a foundation. Raskolnikov’s ultimate destiny of being in a relationship

with his Creator does not mean *Crime and Punishment* has failed as a novel, since the process by which Raskolnikov is redeemed maintains a kind of necessary ambiguity. Raskolnikov's salvation has really only begun in the epilogue. The narration at the beginning of the novel metaphorically suggests Raskolnikov's vacillating spirit: "Raskolnikov hesitated only for a moment and then went down the steps" (7). The narrator employs the language of conversion in describing Raskolnikov's degradation: "Something as it were new had been accomplished in his soul, and with it had come a thirst for society" (8). This "newness" is not that of regeneration; Raskolnikov's "thirst for society" is not the zeal of faith but rather an absurd fanaticism. To use Bonhoeffer's way of speaking, Raskolnikov has embraced the "cheap grace" that cannot ultimately fulfill.

SECTION 7

Fools and Prophets

Sonya's father, Marmeladov, is a kind of foil for Raskolnikov's self-righteous indignation. Marmeladov is no picture of virtue. On the contrary, he entertains an almost suicidal melancholy. Marmeladov, nevertheless, has an awareness of his wretchedness that Raskolnikov lacks. In *Dimensions of Laughter in Crime and Punishment*, John Spiegel observes that the final situation regarding Marmeladov's relationship with his daughter, Sonya, indicates a movement toward mercy and forgiveness rather than alienation and vengeance. Despite his being in a sense the cause of Sonya's degradation, Spiegel points out that Marmeladov "dies in Sonya's loving embrace, to all intents and purposes a forgiven sinner" (99). Marmeladov's reconciliation with Sonya at his literal death, despite his wretched behavior particularly toward Sonya, anticipates the reconciliation that takes place in the epilogue. Raskolnikov's death is of a metaphorical nature, yet it is just as real and necessary as Marmeladov's death, in order to begin anew Raskolnikov's life as a Christian.

The narrator gives a decidedly longer physical description of Marmeladov than of Raskolnikov, who is in a more-or-less offhanded manner described as "a strikingly handsome young man, with fine dark eyes, brown hair, and a slender well-knit figure, taller than the average" (2). The intricate details about Marmeladov's pathetically poor circumstances emphasize the importance of context, and particularly that Christ is especially in the poorest of poor. Raskolnikov's meeting with Marmeladov ironically presents an image of Christ's infinite mercy and love even in the midst of sin and dysfunction. Spiegel observes how Marmeladov's name, being derived from "marmalade," suggests that his weakness is not of a hard and incalcitrant nature but rather one that remains open to faith. Spiegel says, "Marmeladov may be a

traitor and yet, as his story unfolds, it becomes clear that his disloyalty is more akin to Peter's wavering than to Judas's treason" (102). Marmeladov's openness to faith becomes the hope for Raskolnikov. As Bonhoeffer points out, openness to faith in Christ brings about an internal transformation that is primarily effected by God rather than man.

Although Marmeladov might not seem to be a reliable source of Christian doctrine due to his drunken and wretched behavior, he actually speaks from the heart of the Church in the moments leading up to his death: "And [Christ] shall judge all men, and forgive them, the good and the evil, the wise and the humble... And when he has done with all men, then shall he summon us also: 'Come forth,' He will say, 'ye also, ye drunkards, ye weaklings, ye infamous, come forth!'" (19). Marmeladov describes the universal nature of redemption corresponding to the universality of man's wretched condition without such redemption. As St. Paul says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Christ will, indeed, forgive "the good and the evil, the wise and the humble," insofar as they ultimately put their faith in Him. Marmeladov's depiction of the last judgment alludes to St. John Chrysostom's depiction of the same in the latter's Orthodox Paschal Homily: "Enter all of you, therefore, into the joy of our Lord, and, whether first or last, receive your reward. O rich and poor, one with another, dance for joy! O you ascetics and you negligent, celebrate the day!" (Chrysostom). Bonhoeffer reflects on asceticism in a similar way. Authentic Christian virtue and asceticism derive from a fundamental understanding that the strength by which a person is virtuous is not primarily his own; rather, Christ's mercy brings about reconciliation.

Bonhoeffer represents the strength that Christ provides in humankind's weakness as something of universal import rather than being available to only a select few. He says, "By and large, the fatal error of monasticism lay...in the extent to which it departed from genuine

Christianity by setting up itself as the individual achievement of a select few, and so claiming a special merit of its own” (47). This flaw of claiming merit based on one’s own work is not only indulged within groups but also within the individual. Raskolnikov takes on this kind of self-righteousness in his isolation, but in his physical isolation as a kind of hermit, he is actually participating in a larger coalition of self-righteous human beings. Marmeladov, even in his drunken state, performs a prophetic role for Raskolnikov. Marmeladov’s prophetic role ties him to a long tradition of “holy fools” in Russian literary tradition. In “Divine Folly in Old Kievan Literature: The Tale of Isaac the Cave Dweller,” Natalie Challis and Horace W. Dewey tell the tale of a monk, whom they say is “Russia’s earliest surviving story about a holy fool” (255). Unable to justify himself, Marmeladov abandons himself to God’s mercy in an act of divine folly (*jurodstvo*). Juxtaposed to Marmeladov’s foolishness, Raskolnikov’s haughty effort to justify himself is futile because Raskolnikov seeks justification of his own making; rather, he needs Christ’s judgment and mercy.

When Raskolnikov receives a letter from his mother explaining Dunya’s upcoming marriage to Luzhin, Raskolnikov ignores his condition of being a “sinner” and instead plays God. Speaking to himself, he anguishes, “No Dunechka, I see it all, and I know what it is you have such a lot to say about to me; I know too, what you were thinking of, while you paced the room all night, and what you prayed for, kneeling before the icon of Our Lady...The way to Golgotha is hard” (34). At once, Raskolnikov recognizes that to follow Christ is to suffer, and at the same time, Raskolnikov rejects this demanding truth. Along with Steven Cassedy, Rowan Williams observes that Dostoevsky is “not presenting us with a religious system” (37). Williams proposes that Dostoevsky, instead, presents in his works “some of the ways in which human beings experience and speak about faith” (37). Raskolnikov’s own journey, which includes

violent expressions of doubt and betrayal, does not finally cut him off from faith, even though such aberrations seriously complicate his ability to receive and to share faith.

Raskolnikov's refusal to accept the truth of humanity's inadequacy in the face of destruction is like Ivan Karamazov's rejection of God via the denunciation of man's fallen condition. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Ivan cries out to his brother, Alyosha, "Imagine that you are creating a fabric of human destiny with the object of making men happy in the end... but that it was essential and inevitable to torture to death only one tiny creature ... And to found that edifice on its unavenged tears: would you consent to be the architect on those conditions? Tell me, and tell me the truth!" (226). With Alyosha, Raskolnikov is forced into responding in the negative—a refusal that neither begins with Raskolnikov nor ends with Alyosha. As Williams puts it, "From the Underground Man to the Inquisitor, the persistent theme is that truth 'outside' of Christ requires lying about the human condition" (30). Like Ivan and Alyosha, Raskolnikov is struggling with the reality of evil. Raskolnikov loves his sister, Dunya, and he does not want her to "sell herself" for his sake. Raskolnikov has doubt because, like Ivan and even Alyosha to a certain extent, he fails to confront having an "Architect" who allows the way of redemption to pass through the way of the cross. The tragedy of Ivan and Raskolnikov's lack of faith/obedience is that they, in effect, separate themselves from God's grace, saving the renewal of reconciliation. Bonhoeffer uses 2 Corinthians 5:10 to describe the result of persisting in such doubt and presumption: "Only the sanctified community will be delivered from wrath in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ, for 'the Lord will judge every man according to his works, and will have no respect of persons'" (295). Once again, Bonhoeffer explains that Christ's judgment is about having faith in and obedience to the revelation of Christ's mercy.

Raskolnikov has a personal revelation of Christ's mercy, but paradoxically, its significance is bound up in the horror of Raskolnikov's situation *without* Christ. Raskolnikov's dream of the horse being beaten provides a prophetic image of his wretched situation. Before describing the dream, the narrator comments that "a sick man's dreams are often extraordinarily distinct and vivid and extremely life-like" (46). The narrator in *Crime and Punishment* goes on to say that the setting and presentation are "so artistically in harmony with the whole picture that the dreamer could not invent them for himself in his waking state, even if he were an artist like Pushkin or Turgenev" (46). It is hardly an accident that Dostoevsky mentions the two famous Russian visionaries, Pushkin and Turgenev, since Raskolnikov's dream will have become the famous image of senseless nihilism in the 20th century. In "Dostoevsky: Prophet and Psychologist," William Henry Chamberlin discerns the uniquely *Russian* way that Dostoevsky writes even while maintaining a "universal quality in his genius" (35). Among many universal themes that Dostoevsky engages, Chamberlin says that Dostoevsky treated the problem of punishment and redemption with "burning intensity." Not only through Raskolnikov's entire conversion narrative but also more precisely through his dream of the mare, Dostoevsky's own artistic imagination contributes to the prophetic voice in which Bonhoeffer will have also participated less than a century later.

In the dream, Raskolnikov is a child of only seven years old, and he is with his father. The dreamer's father is dead, but Raskolnikov has returned to a time of innocence—he is only seven and his father is alive. The dish of "rice boiled with sugar and raisins" that Raskolnikov and his parents would bring to the cemetery where his dead grandmother and his little brother lay represents in the Russian Orthodox Church the sweet food of heaven that every true Christian shall come to enjoy in heaven. In contrast to this pious activity, Raskolnikov has a vision of

“Mikolka’s wagon” drawn by the poor mare that is being crushed by the activity. The child immediately recognizes that the mare is being beaten to death, and his father calls him away:

“They are drunk and playing the fool, the brutes. Come away; don’t look!” (48). The boy who is so infuriated by the senselessly brutal treatment of the horse and who will not be held back from stopping the abuse—it must be remembered—is Raskolnikov.

When Raskolnikov awakes from his dream in a fever, he makes a strange deduction. He wonders at the possibility of his murdering Alyona Ivanovna, the moneylender: “Is it possible, that I really shall take an axe and strike her on the head?” (51). Shortly afterwards, Raskolnikov offers up a prayer: “Lord, show me the way, that I may renounce this accursed...fantasy of mine” (51). Raskolnikov is tormented by doubt and restlessness. Like the boy in the dream, he desires justice, but the adult Raskolnikov desires justice at a price that he cannot pay. Raskolnikov is a freedom fighter of sorts, but insofar as he is fighting without hope, he remains lost. His prayer to know “the way” becomes a blasphemy to the extent that he engages in his mind the very murderous action he ostensibly desires to escape, as if it is his ineluctable destiny. Raskolnikov’s freedom is turned into license, since he will not submit to suffering according to the call of Christ the teacher; rather, Raskolnikov takes the meaning of his suffering into his own hands.

According to Bonhoeffer, no one is exempt from the way of Christian discipleship in terms of the way of the cross. Bonhoeffer does not excuse his own fellow Lutherans from the demand for authentic Christian discipleship: “We Lutherans have gathered like eagles round the carcass of cheap grace, and there we have drunk of the poison which has killed the life of following Christ” (53). Bonhoeffer makes the important observation that man’s fundamental inability to comprehend reality is an inadequate excuse to shirk one’s duties. Bonhoeffer quotes Faust’s confession, “I now do see that we can nothing know,” but then goes on to say, “As

Kierkegaard observed, it is quite a different thing when a freshman comes up to the university and uses the same sentiment to justify indolence” (51). According to Bonhoeffer, man simply *cannot* comprehend God insofar as God is infinite and incomprehensible by definition, but one *can* comprehend God in the sense of “attaining” to Him because of the rewards of salvation. Bonhoeffer says that to deny such access to this essential relationship with God is to deny grace. Raskolnikov denies God’s grace through trying to comprehend God’s plan for his life in a way that excludes the mystical nature of this divine design. Bonhoeffer delineates what such blessedness in Christ’s promise means for the modern man: “Happy are they who...by following Jesus Christ are so assured of their heavenly citizenship that they are truly free to live their lives in this world” (56). According to Bonhoeffer, true Christian discipleship—rigorous though it may be—is worth attaining to because it is Christ, whom the disciple ultimately attains.

SECTION 8

The Idea of Freedom

Hugh Mercer Curtler's insight that good novels are not "philosophical treatises" does not apply to the narration of Raskolnikov's conversion in the epilogue for the same reason that it does not apply to his conversion throughout the course of the entire narration, which in both cases maintains artistic ambiguity. If, as Curtler claims, Dostoevsky were trying in the epilogue to relegate the complexity of Raskolnikov's story to the mere "idea of freedom" (1), then *Crime and Punishment* would be, indeed, an artistic failure. Dostoevsky's concern for the "idea of freedom" in the epilogue, however, remains in the context of a much more aesthetically robust narrative, namely that of Christian discipleship and conversion. Metaphorically speaking, the Christian gospel that the novel offers is a *polyvalent* vaccine against various strains of evil. The epilogue is not philosophically asserting the "idea of freedom" as much as it is exploring further the multi-dimensional nature of Christian discipleship. The "message" that Dostoevsky explores is finally a theological mystery, not a philosophical principle, and it contains many and diverse words.

Dostoevsky and Bonhoeffer's expression of the Christian message stresses its nature as not only "informative" but also "performative." The gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known; rather, the gospel makes things happen and is life-changing. Dostoevsky inversely communicates this interconnection between faith and action through Raskolnikov's crime. Just as Raskolnikov's faith in the gospel brings about the fruit of mercy in his life, so also his passive rejection of the gospel brings about an idleness that culminates in the horror of Raskolnikov's crime. Raskolnikov's overhearing of the two students' discussion about killing Alyona, the pawnbroker, is really a continuation of his folly and confusion with respect to

the nature of true compassion. The “old nag” in Raskolnikov’s dream was beaten to death in front of a tavern. Now, the students speak about murdering the “old nag,” Alyona. They put it in terms of “service of humanity.” The kind of “service” that the students advocate defy the gospel message of mercy and forgiveness, which is the fruit of Bonhoeffer’s notion of Christian discipleship.

Raskolnikov has chosen an intense way of suffering. His feverish attempts to convey his misery to Sonya are filled with a kind of pathos, but they are void of efficacy or meaning as long as Raskolnikov cannot share his suffering. *Crime and Punishment* concerns Raskolnikov’s journey to and finally within Christian discipleship. Raskolnikov discovers through his terrible and murderous experiment the subtle yet infinitely grave difference between death and life. Raskolnikov’s search for truth is tragic in the sense that it involves his turning away from the teachings of Christ. Raskolnikov’s life would be a complete tragedy if Christ—acting particularly through Sonya—had not redeemed him in the end. Although it is done primarily through hints and indirection, Dostoevsky sends a clear message of hope in *Crime and Punishment*. Despite its ostensibly desperate and hopeless tone, the novel is ultimately about how Christ, who has crushed death by his death, can resurrect even the worst of sinners, if only that sinner has obedient faith in Him.

In his first examination of Raskolnikov after the murder, Porfiry Petrovich asks Raskolnikov, in three successive questions, if he believes in the New Jerusalem, in God, and in the raising of Lazarus. Raskolnikov responds that he believes in each of them. Then, Porfiry Petrovich follows his last question concerning the raising of Lazarus with the seemingly strange inquiry, “You believe in it literally?” to which Raskolnikov again responds in the affirmative (221). Porfiry’s last question and Raskolnikov’s answer to the question are Scripturally

significant. Believing in God's ability and desire to bring the dead back to life on merely a figurative level is worlds apart from *really* believing in it as Christ teaches. In the gospel Martha seems to make the same mistake as Raskolnikov. Christ tells her that Lazarus will rise, but Martha takes Christ's word on merely a figurative level. She agrees that Lazarus will rise *on the last day*. Then, Christ asks her if she believes that he (Christ) is the resurrection and the life. He proclaims that whoever believes in him will never die. Martha tells him that she believes.

In the Christian tradition of both the East and the West, Martha stresses the active life, while her sister, Mary, accentuates the contemplative life. In semiotic terms, Martha's spirituality corresponds to pragmatics, while her sister Mary's spirituality is directed toward the foundational meaning, i.e. the truth that is conveyed—semantics. In Luke's gospel, Mary's sitting at the feet of Christ, however, does not culminate in spiritual malaise. Mary's holy desire to contemplate the face of Christ is the call to authentic Christianity. The Lord confirms this primacy of contemplation when he admonishes Mary for rebuking her sister for sitting at the feet of Christ: "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42). Raskolnikov's desire for greatness is like Martha's unnecessary anxieties.

Raskolnikov's obsession with accomplishing "great things" becomes an unholy ambition insofar as he seeks to accomplish things according to his own understanding and upon his own strength.

Raskolnikov's lack of Christian contemplation leads him into a disordered pursuit of the good in his activities. In contrast to Raskolnikov's mistaken view of goodness, Bonhoeffer is concerned with proclaiming the same sort of discipleship that Christ demands—one that is rooted in the promise of God's perfect love, that is to say, one that is *in* Christ. Christ tells his disciples: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and

bear fruit—fruit that will last” (John 15:16). In contrast to cheap grace, Bonhoeffer says, “Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it man will gladly go and sell all that he has” (45). Bonhoeffer alludes to Christ’s parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field” (Matthew 13:44). Christian discipleship transmutes from century to century and from decade to decade, but it remains the treasure hidden in the field. Wai Chee Dimock’s “theory of resonance” regarding the “diachronic object” of any given literary text has its limits. Raskolnikov’s seeking after authentic Christian discipleship forms a kind of *leitmotif* running throughout the polyphony of Dostoevsky’s tale. Although *Crime and Punishment*’s “treasure in the field” remains the promise of salvation, the novel encourages, using Dimock’s words, “a kind of semantic democracy” (1067).

The promise of salvation, obscured by Raskolnikov’s notion of greatness, leads to a warped view of sadness and suffering. Persisting in his messianic complex, Raskolnikov confesses to Porfiry, “It seems to me, truly great people experience an immense sadness while on earth” (219). The truly great person, according to the gospel, is he who lays down his life for a friend, and his immense sadness springs from the sacrifice of love that he offers up to God (cf. John 15:13). Without love, man can neither be great nor can he truly suffer. Christ tells his disciples to avoid ruling like the Gentiles, whose “great men” lord over others. He tells them instead, “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant...even as the son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26-28). Christ turns Raskolnikov’s notion of greatness on its head—a catastrophe that does, indeed, open up a world of suffering for Raskolnikov, but not the kind of suffering he was anticipating and for a different end than what he was expecting.

The nature of Christian discipleship as a pattern of death and resurrection is conveyed not only through the content of Dostoevsky's art but also through his literary form. Vyacheslav Ivanov argues that the only way that Dostoevsky could write was through approximating the "novel-form to the prototype of tragedy;" in other words, "the inner structure of [Dostoevsky's] creative genius was tragic" (7). For this reason, Ivanov suggests that Dostoevsky did not dabble with any other genres, such as plays or poetry, but expressed his intense thoughts through the epic-narrative style, while always abiding by the laws of tragedy. According to Ivanov, Dostoevsky's work is the most poignant example in literature of form and content becoming one, where *content* refers to "original intuitive perception of life" and *form* means the transfer of content into "a new world of entities" by means of art (7). Ivanov says that all of Dostoevsky's novels are guided by a certain tragic catastrophe that ultimately brings about a "tragic purification." Dostoevsky is able to employ the tragic laws applying to epic poetry because, as Ivanov explains, Dostoevsky's "novel-tragedy" is turned into poetry by its rhythm of "contrasts and gradations of light and shade" (20). Raskolnikov's regeneration follows this pattern of "light and shade." His conversion is multifaceted and complex, even as it is drawn to a point through the lens of Christian discipleship.

Ivanov refers to Aristotle's notion of "catharsis," and how it was through the "Dionysiac purification" of the ancient Greeks that the reader of the tragedy would become more perfect. Ivanov says that Dostoevsky's tragic novels evoke from the reader precisely the same elements of the Greek tragedy that brought about catharsis, namely "fear and tormenting pity" (13). Ivanov, however, points out that tragedy can also lead to a willful self-alienation from God, a fatal wound instead of life-giving purification. Dostoevsky's aesthetic in *Crime and Punishment*, in a sense, reflects Bonhoeffer's theological insistence on the necessity of suffering in order to

partake in Christ's transcendence. Ivanov points out, Dostoevsky's "mode of presentation conveys an impression of morbidity" (19). This "morbidity" in Bonhoeffer's way of speaking is the "costliness of grace." For both Bonhoeffer and Dostoevsky, the Christian disciple is striving for faith in God via a real participation in Christ's suffering and death.

SECTION 9

The Good Man and the Extraordinary Man

Contrary to Christ's teachings, and in a sense, by a usurpation of Christ's role as teacher and redeemer, Raskolnikov tells Porfiry, "The 'extraordinary' man has the right...I don't mean a formal, official right, but he has the right in himself to permit his conscience to overstep...certain obstacles, but only in the event that his ideas (which may sometimes be salutary for all humankind) require it for their fulfillment" (220). Raskolnikov employs obsequious language to hide the corruption of his statement. Razumikhin, who is incredulous that Raskolnikov actually believes in such nonsense, elucidates the actual meaning of Raskolnikov's words. Razumikhin, whose name according to Monas means "good sense," reasonably expostulates: "This, therefore, is the main idea of your article. This *moral* permission to shed blood is...seems to me more terrible than official, legal, license to do so..." (223). Zametov poses Raskolnikov's idea even more bluntly, saying, "Wasn't it a future Napoleon who last week dispatched our Alena Ivanovna with an axe?" (225). Raskolnikov, who thinks his own view is original, persists in his flawed notion of freedom even until the very end of *Crime and Punishment*, but another force is at work in Raskolnikov simultaneously drawing him out of his hardness of heart.

The gospel account of Lazarus, whom Christ raises from the dead, metaphorically suggests Raskolnikov's own passing from death into life. After he murders Alena Ivanovna and severs his ties to his family, Raskolnikov visits Sonya. Before he forces her to read the Lazarus account to him, Raskolnikov, in a fit of emotion, stoops down to kiss Sonya's feet. Sonya instantly seeks out his motive saying, "Why, why do you do that? To me!" Raskolnikov answers rising, "I prostrated myself not before you, but before all human suffering" (272). Spiegel points out Bakhtin's treatment of the significance of ground kissing in Dostoevsky's novels, and this

instance of Raskolnikov's kissing the ground before Sonya plays into Bakhtin's understanding. Spiegel says that Bakhtin "finds such juxtapositions of extreme diametrically opposed incongruities to be far more archaic, and he traces them to the Minnippean satires and beyond, to the timeless folk tradition of carnival, whose roots may reach into the depths of the so-called collective unconscious" (107). Raskolnikov's kissing of Sonya's feet also plays into Bakhtin's notion of "dualistic ambivalent rituals" (*Dostoevsky's Poetics* 124), where elements of the sublime and the grotesque are simultaneously portrayed.

Although the incident of Raskolnikov's kissing the feet of Sonya enters into this more ambivalent realm of "the timeless folk tradition of carnival," it also refers to the gospel story of Mary, the sister of Lazarus. In the gospel, Mary kisses Christ's feet during a meal at which her resurrected brother, Lazarus, is present. Raskolnikov, thus, mimics Mary's prostration before Christ, but Raskolnikov is not giving himself over to Christian discipleship, since his *inward intention* reflects that of Judas, who betrays Christ to be crucified. The juxtaposition of the sublime and the grotesque that Bakhtin alludes to with reference to the carnival is also present with regard to Raskolnikov's choice to follow Christ's teachings or instead rely on his own understanding. Judas says that the perfumed oil that Mary pours over Christ's feet could have been used to help the poor, but Christ rebukes Judas. Christ says, "Leave her alone. Let her keep this for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me" (John 12:7-8). Christ's words seem directly applicable to Raskolnikov's situation. Raskolnikov, like Judas, gravely errs by seeking to take into his own hands the redemption of the poor and the lost. By having Raskolnikov continue treading down the road of suffering according to his own designs, the narration of *Crime and Punishment* draws into suspense the question of whether Raskolnikov's conversion to Christian discipleship is truly taking place.

Like in Bonhoeffer's *Cost of Discipleship*, the great paradox of Raskolnikov's Christianity is that he is called to serve Christ in the poor and the suffering, but in so doing Raskolnikov is not serving weakness per se. More precisely, Raskolnikov follows Christ, whose infinite power redeems him through solidarity in suffering. When Mary informs Christ of Lazarus's illness, he reaffirms her saying, "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it" (John 11:4). In like manner, Sonya has hope that Raskolnikov's illness in all of its many forms will not be "unto death." In "Love, Forgiveness, and Meaning: On the Relationship between Theological and Literary Reflection," Vittorio Montemaggi observes, "The study of literature can be seen as sharing important defining characteristics with theological enquiry" (79). The story of Sonya's hope for Raskolnikov's bodily and spiritual restoration specifically shares in Christological reflection. The heart of the gospel is in a sense proclaimed: Eternal Wisdom [*sofia*] seeks to reconcile divided man [*raskolnik*]*—*the man divided from himself, others, and God. The genius of Dostoevsky's art is that he has this cosmic reconciliation portrayed in the humble setting of a bible study between a murderer and a prostitute, bringing to mind the pharisaical complaint against Christ for eating with the sinners and tax collectors (cf. Matthew 9:11, Mark 2:16, and Luke 5:30).

Raskolnikov's conversion to Christ and through Christ follows the same pattern of discipleship as every man—the pattern of death and resurrection. When Raskolnikov faces the reality of his sinfulness, he can only choose one of two options, both of which are made up of a binary. Insofar as he chooses *himself*, he chooses both to reject the gospel and to cling to worldly ambition. Insofar as he chooses Christ, he chooses both to die to himself and to live in Christian discipleship. This dynamic of conversion is not so much an imperative as it is a description. Life *in* Christ is like a series of zeros and ones, so to speak, but so is life *outside* Christ. In Christian

discipleship, the zeros are so many “deaths to self” that have to occur in order to receive new life in Christ. The ones in this binary code represent the positive embrace of Christ. The unique sequence of deaths and resurrections according to God’s will compose the unrepeatable characteristic of each Christian disciple; nevertheless, all Christian discipleship requires an ongoing *no* to self and at the same time, an ongoing *yes* to Christ. The line of zeroes and ones is put in its proper order to bring about a beautiful and meaningful conversion by grace in and discernment of God’s will. Raskolnikov finds himself inverting the binary code—saying *yes* to himself and *no* to God—when he seeks to be a good man according to his own whims.

When Raskolnikov visits Sonya again, he confesses to the murder. Sonya responds empathetically saying, “How you are suffering!” Raskolnikov begs her for guidance, and she tells him to confess his sin before the world and to embrace his suffering. Raskolnikov refuses to obey because he says that no one would understand, and he wonders if perhaps he is not just a “louse” after all. Sonya offers Raskolnikov her small wooden cross. She says that she will wear a brass cross that used to belong to Lizaveta, whom Raskolnikov has murdered. Sonya had traded an icon for it. This is an instructive moment for Raskolnikov because he is called to bear his own cross, the cross of his guilt. Instead he wears Sonya’s wooden cross, while she wears his cross. Raskolnikov’s soul remains in jeopardy insofar as he is not willing to take up his own cross, yet Sonya’s kindness keeps the door to conversion open for Raskolnikov.

In the Orthodox tradition, the icon of Christ is the real image of Christ—it is like a window into heaven. In a similar way, Sonya is the real image of Christ and a window into heaven for Raskolnikov. Sonya says to Raskolnikov, “We are going to suffer together, we will bear the cross together” (356). Sonya’s invitation to suffer together flips on its head Raskolnikov’s command to take the suffering on ourselves. When Raskolnikov says that she

should give the icon—i.e. the cross—to him later, Sonya tells him that she will give it to him when he accepts his suffering—when he chooses to love again. Thus, Sonya decides to wear both the wooden cross and the brass cross. Sonya carries Raskolnikov's cross for him, just as Bonhoeffer explains that Jesus bears the sin of the world for all humankind.

Raskolnikov finally confesses his crime to Porfiry before the epilogue begins, but his confession is only the first step to his resurrection. The other criminals at the jail do not understand Raskolnikov—they reject him, and Raskolnikov continues to cling to the illusion that he is not just another “louse.” In “A House Divided against Itself: Dostoevsky and the Psychology of Unbelief,” Stephen Bullivant discusses the paradoxical nature of Raskolnikov's agnosticism, which is really an ambivalent desire toward Christian conversion. Raskolnikov does not want to take the next step toward Christian discipleship through uniting his suffering to the suffering of Christ, but as Bullivant suggests, Raskolnikov betrays his anti-Christian sentiment through a participation in the theological virtues (16). Raskolnikov to a certain extent persists in his rejection of the Christian paradox; nevertheless, together with Sonya, he does not abandon the hope of dying to himself in order to live in Christ. Sonya's perseverance pays off. Raskolnikov finally chooses to love. He repeats the action that he had done in her apartment so long ago, throwing himself at her feet, but this time his love is authentic. Thus, Raskolnikov both begins and continues his restoration back to life. He recognizes that the “truly great man” is not born every one in a hundred thousand, nor does he emerge even among millions. For Raskolnikov, Christ is the only truly great man, yet Christ lives in the “louses” of the world. In contrast to the solipsistic ideology that brought about his murderous crime, Raskolnikov comes to believe that Christ is particularly close to weak and lost people who unite their suffering to the cross of Christ.

SECTION 10

The New Jerusalem

Although Raskolnikov's conversion to Christ involves a renewal of mind and heart, the final destination that he is traveling towards cannot be reached in his lifetime in an absolute sense. At their first interview, Raskolnikov tells Porfiry, "In short, for me all men have completely equivalent rights—'long live perpetual war'—until we have built the New Jerusalem, of course!" (221). Raskolnikov's notion of intersubjectivity is closely tied to his personal belief. As he enters a kind of atonement through Christian discipleship, his notion of intersubjectivity is refigured accordingly. The meal where Mary anointed the feet of Christ took place six days before Christ and his disciples entered Jerusalem for the Passover to purify themselves. As Mary prostrates herself before Christ, Raskolnikov prostrates himself before Sonya and confesses his sins at the crossroads. He has a growing belief that only Christ can raise the dead back to life, purify the hearts of human beings, and "build the New Jerusalem." The notion of a final destination, which is expressed in Scriptural terms as the New Jerusalem, holds together Raskolnikov's belief and his non-belief, even though the means seem diametrically opposed. When speaking to Porfiry, Raskolnikov refers to a New Jerusalem of his own making rather than through Christian discipleship.

The New Jerusalem metaphorically suggests the perfection of human communication, which is unattainable on earth in an absolute sense. Eco says something similar with regards to semiosis: "Semiosis is unlimited and, through the series of interpretants, explains itself by itself, but there are at least two cases in which semiosis is confronted with something external to it" (38). The first thing outside the purview of semiosis involves an act of indication. Eco gives the example of a person pointing his finger to "a given object of the world" and saying *this*. Eco

says, “It is irrefutable that in the act of indication, indices are in some way linked to an item of the extralinguistic or extrasemiotic world” (38). Raskolnikov’s experience of conversion is, in a sense, outside the purview of semiosis. Its conveyance can only be suggested through the fruit of his actions, but the internal movement of the heart remains hidden. In the final analysis, Raskolnikov can only point to it and say *this*.

The second case that Eco references as being outside the semiotic world is what he calls a “Dynamic Object.” Eco explains, “The Dynamic Object cannot be a piece of the furniture of the physical world but it can be a thought, an emotion, a motion, a feeling, a belief” (38). The etymological barrier from understanding a Dynamic Object is not, however, absolute. The Dynamic Object can be understood to a certain extent through means of its apparent trajectory. This hidden movement of the heart applies not only to Raskolnikov but also to Dostoevsky. Eco explains, “We can say that a text can be interpreted independently of the intention of its utterer, but we cannot deny that any text is uttered by somebody according to his/her actual intention” (39). The nature of Raskolnikov’s belief as well as that of Raskolnikov’s maker, Dostoevsky, thus remains inaccessible in an absolute sense. Through the presence of what is available in Raskolnikov’s semiotic world, however, the reader is invited to see to some extent the nature of the character’s personal conversion to Christ.

As Bonhoeffer points out, the dynamic of conversion is one in which the sinner is ever renewed, yet ever remains the same in his personhood. The Christian disciple thus becomes, in a sense, that which he always was meant to be. Raskolnikov’s episodic conversion to faith reflects this basic pattern. The narrator portrays it in terms of feeling, but the feeling is the expression of a profound reality: “He could only feel. Life had taken the place of logic and something quite different must be worked out in his mind” (464). Nothing can guarantee Raskolnikov’s

faithfulness to the gospel. He must go forth in fear and trembling, but certainly he believes the bountiful mercy of God has saved humankind. Raskolnikov keeps a New Testament with him in the prison camp. It is not just any New Testament; it is Sophia's—"the very [New Testament] from which she had read to him the raising of Lazarus" (464). In Scripture, the raising of Christ's friend to new life prefigures the resurrection of Christ to divine life, but further, it heralds the resurrection of Christ's disciples to divine life. The New Testament is, so to speak, the pragmatic context in which Raskolnikov finds himself. Thus, the end of the epilogue is "the beginning of a new story—the story of the gradual renewal of a man, of his gradual regeneration, of his slow progress from one world to another, of how he learned to know a hitherto undreamed-of reality" (465). The end is the beginning. All that is described about "the gradual renewal of a man" has already, in a sense, been accomplished in Raskolnikov, but simultaneously Raskolnikov has only begun to live his new life in Christ.

Dostoevsky employs a kind of theology, which not only his theological language but also his narrative structure reflects. To deny this theological dimension in critical analysis of *Crime and Punishment* seriously limits the interpretive community's ability to engage the work as a whole. Notwithstanding the cultural distinctions, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Cost of Discipleship* provides an interpretive lens that is consistent with Dostoevsky's understanding of Christian conversion and Christian discipleship. Focusing on the episodic revelation of Raskolnikov's conversion to Christian discipleship reopens the dialogue concerning the influence that Dostoevsky's own Christianity had on his writing of *Crime and Punishment*. Semiotics, and more specifically the pragmatic context of Raskolnikov's story, allows for a shared lexicon by which the interpretive community can enter into a kind of unified view with respect to this great novel. In some sense, this being drawn into a common intersubjective meaning concerning the

critical interpretation of *Crime and Punishment* reflects Raskolnikov's own journey toward atonement.

Notes

1. This thesis examines the work of a Lutheran pastor and that of a Russian Orthodox writer. Thus, I have chosen to use the NRSV translation, since the NRSV was written with ecumenism especially in mind. The website for the NRSV says, “The RSV was the only major translation in English that included both the standard Protestant canon and the books that are traditionally used by Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians (the so-called ‘Apocryphal’ or ‘Deuterocanonical’ books). Standing in this tradition, the NRSV is available in three ecumenical formats: a standard edition with or without the Apocrypha, a Roman Catholic Edition, which has the so-called ‘Apocryphal’ or ‘Deuterocanonical’ books in the Roman Catholic canonical order, and The Common Bible, which includes all books that belong to the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox canons.”

2. Having disciples was not unique to Christ. There is a long tradition of master/disciple relationships both in Judaic and non-Judaic cultures, e.g. Socrates and his disciples. Christ does, however, claim to be unique as a teacher who not only teaches truth but also who *is* the Truth.

3. From Dostoevsky’s 1854 letter to Natalya Fonvizina (full text in *Pol’noe sobranie sochinenii*, 30 vols. [Leningrad: Nauka, 1972-1990] 28.2: 176), as found in Williams, *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction*, p. 15.

4. From *Kierkegaard and the Existential Philosophy* by Lev Shestov, as found in Pattison, *Dostoevsky and the Christian Tradition*, p. 239.

Works Cited

- Aristotle. *On Poetics*. Eds. Seth Benardete, and Michael Davis. South Bend. Indiana: St. Augustine Press, 2002. Print.
- “Atonement.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press. n.d. Web. 25 March 2013.
- Augustine. *On Christian Teaching*. Trans. R. P. H. Green. New York: Oxford UP, 1997. Print.
- . *The Teacher*. Trans. Peter King. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1995. Print.
- Bains, Paul. *The Primacy of Semiosis: An Ontology of Relations*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006.
- Bakhtin, M. M. “Discourse in the Novel.” *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson. Austin: University of Texas, 1981. 259-422. Print.
- . *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*. Trans. Caryl Emerson, and Wayne C. Booth. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984. Print.
- Bethge, Eberhard, and Eric Mosbacher. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: a biography*. New York: Harper Collins, 2000. Print.
- Bloom, Harold. *Bloom’s Notes: Fyodor Dostoevsky’s Crime and Punishment*. Broomall, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 1996. Print.
- . *Fyodor Dostoevsky*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005. Print.
- . *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*. New York: Harcourt, 1994. Print.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. Trans. Neville Horton Smith. New York: Touchstone, 1995. Print.
- . *Ethics*. Trans. Neville Horton Smith. New York: Touchstone, 1995. Print.

- . *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Ed. Eberhard Bethge. New York: Macmillan, 1979. Print.
- . *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Ed. Robert Coles. New York: Orbis, 1998. Print.
- Bouchard, Larry. "The Arts and the Knowledge of Religion." *The Journal of Religion* 70.3 (1990): 353-367. Web.
- Bullivant, Stephen. "A House Divided against Itself: Dostoevsky and the Psychology of Unbelief." *Literature & Theology* 22.1 (2007): 16-31. Web.
- Cassedy, Steven. *Dostoevsky's Religion*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2005. Print.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*. New York: Doubleday, 1994. Print.
- Challis, Natalie and Horace W. Dewey. "Divine Folly in Old Kievan Literature: The Tale of Isaac the Cave Dweller." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 22.3 (1978): 255-264. Web.
- Chamberlin, William Henry. "Dostoevsky: Prophet and Psychologist." *Russian Review* 7.2 (1948): 53-71. Web.
- Chessik, Richard D. Introduction. *The Birth of Tragedy*. By Nietzsche, Friedrich. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1967. Print.
- Chrysostom, John. *Paschal Homily*. (c. 480). www.orthodoxchristian.info/pages/sermon.htm. Web.
- Curtler, Hugh Mercer. "The Artistic Failure of Crime and Punishment." *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 38.1 (2004): 1-11. Print.
- Dimock, Wai Chee. "A Theory of Resonance." *PMLA* 112.5 (1997): 72-85. Print.
- "Disciple." *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press. n.d. Web. 25 March 2013.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov*. Trans. Constance Garnett. New York; Barnes and Noble, 1995. Print.

----. *Crime and Punishment: The Coulson Translation, Backgrounds and Sources, Essays in Criticism*. Trans. Jessie Senior Coulson. Ed. George Gibian. New York: W.W. Norton, 1989. Print.

----. *Dostoevsky's Complete Letters*. Trans. David Lowe. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1991. Print.

----. *Notes From the Underground*. Trans. Mirra Ginsburg. New York: Bantam Classics, 1983. Print.

Eco, Umberto. *The Limitations of Interpretation*. Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1990. Print.

----. *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984. Print.

Frank, Joseph. *Between Religion and Rationality: Essays in Russian Literature*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2010. Web.

Gibson, Boyce. *The Religion of Dostoevsky*. Westminster: Westminster Press, 1974. Print.

Guiraud, Pierre. *Semiology*. Trans. George Grass. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975. Print.

Innis, Robert E. *Semiotics: An Introductory Anthology*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985. Print.

Ivanov, Vyacheslev. "The Novel-Tragedy." *Freedom and the Tragic Life*. London: Harvill Press, 1952. 7-22. Print.

Justman, Stewart. "Converts, Uncertainty, and the Novel." *Philosophy and Literature* 32.2 (2008): 359-72. Web.

Kaufmann, Walter. *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*. New York: Penguin, 1976. Print.

Metaxas, Eric. *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010. Print.

Monas, Sidney. Translator's Preface. *Crime and Punishment*. By Fyodor Dostoevsky. Trans.

Monas Sidney. New York: Signet Classics, 2006. Print.

Montemaggi, Vittorio. "Love, Forgiveness, and Meaning: On the Relationship between

Theological and Literary Reflection." *Religion and Literature* 41.2 (2009): 79-96.

Web.

Morson, Gary. "Paradoxical Dostoevsky." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 43.3 (1999):

471-494. Web.

The New Oxford Annotated Bible: With the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, New

Revised Standard Version. Michael D. Coogan, editor. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

Print.

New Revised Standard Version. [Colorado Springs]: Biblica, 2011. BibleGateway.com. Web.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random

House, 1967. Print.

Pattison, George. "Reading Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky together." *Dostoevsky and the*

Christian Tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 237-253. Print.

Sapienza, Filipp. "Mikhail Bakhtin, Vyacheslav Ivanov, and the Rhetorical Culture of the

Russian Third Renaissance." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 37.2 (2004): 123-42. Print.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Nausea*. Trans. Hayden Carruth. New York: New Directions, 1964. Print.

Scott, Alex. *Christian Semiotics and the Language of Faith*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2007. Print.

Shestov, Lev. *Kierkegaard and the Existential Philosophy*. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 1969. Print.

Spiegel, John. *Dimensions of Laughter in Crime and Punishment*. London, Susquehanna UP,

2000. Print.

Stowers, Stanley. "The Concepts of 'Religion', 'Political Religion' and the Study of Nazism."

Journal of Contemporary History 42.1 (2007): 9-24. Web.

Stuchebrukhov, Olga. "Crimes without Any Punishment at All: Dostoevsky and Woody Allen

in Light of Bakhtinian Theory." *Literature Film Quarterly* 40.2 (2012): 142-154. Print.

Tarasti, Eero. *Existential Semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2000. Print.

Terras, Victor. "A Christian Revolution in Russian Literary Criticism." *Slavic and East*

European Journal 46.4 (2002): 769-76. Print.

----. *The Idiot: An Interpretation*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, (1990). Print.

Van Dijk, Teun A. "Pragmatics, Presuppositions, and Context Grammar." n (1976). 54-82.

[www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Pragmatics, Presuppositions, and Context](http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Pragmatics,Presuppositions,andContextGrammars.pdf)

[Grammars.pdf](http://www.discourses.org/OldArticles/Pragmatics,Presuppositions,andContextGrammars.pdf). Web.

Von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *Mary: The Church at Its Source*. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005. Print.

Williams, Rowan. *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith, and Fiction*. Waco, TX: Baylor UP, 2008. Print.

