

Arden

THEATRE CO.

SUPPLEMENTARY STUDY GUIDE
for

Crime and Punishment

Philadelphia Premiere
By FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY
Adapted by MARILYN CAMPBELL & CURT COLUMBUS
Directed by AARON POSNER
On the Arcadia Stage
October 12 - December 10, 2006
EXTENDED BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Additional copies of this study guide are available online at www.ardentheatre.org.

THEATRE

An Educational Tool

Theatre has the power as an educational tool to offer students a view into time periods, personal psyches and social contexts that they would not otherwise have the chance to experience. The theatre is a place of observation and reflection where students are able to actively immerse themselves in their education. When approached with an open mind and respect, theatre presents an opportunity for all of us to learn and grow.

It is our goal to give students and teachers an educational window into the world of theatre with the hope of encouraging a beneficial experience for everyone. Topics covered within the study guide:

- Historical background
- Prevalent social issues
- Information on the playwright
- Student discussion questions

This study guide is also available online at www.ardentheatre.org.

Please contact Sally Wojcik at 215.922.8900 x20 with any questions or concerns.

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Performance Policies and Procedures

WHEN TO ARRIVE AT THE THEATRE We recommend you arrive at the theatre at least 30 minutes prior to the performance to allow time for seating. This is a professional theatre production and will start at the scheduled time.

BUS DROP OFF AND PARKING Buses may load and unload on 2nd Street in front of the theatre. Enclosed is information regarding bus parking.

SEAT ASSIGNMENTS (10 am matinees only) Due to the number of students attending each student matinee performance, we will not print tickets. Schools will be seated as a group. We ask that chaperones come prepared with a count of the number of students seeing the performance that day. For reasons of safety, efficiency and courtesy, we request that students do not trade seats. We also request that chaperones and teachers do not sit together but sit evenly distributed throughout the students within your block.

LATECOMERS Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the House Management staff. Students or chaperones that leave during the performance may not be able to rejoin their group due to accessibility.

BACKPACKS, CAMERAS, AND WALKMANS Backpacks, cameras, and walkmans are strictly prohibited in the theatre. We request that these items be left at school or on the bus, as the Arden has no storage facility available.

FOOD, DRINK, CANDY, AND GUM There is absolutely no food, drink, candy, or gum allowed in the theatre. Please leave snacks and lunches on the bus. Students will be asked to leave the theatre to remove any food items or the items will be taken and not returned. We do not have the facilities for groups to eat lunch before or after the performance.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE Student performances can be the most demanding and rewarding audiences an acting ensemble can face. A theatre performance requires audience behavior different from that in a movie theater. Please review theatre etiquette with your students before attending the performance. If any student is being so disruptive as to interfere with the performers or other audience members, the chaperone will be asked to remove that student.

- A theatre performance is a time to think inwardly, not to share your thoughts aloud. Talking during the performance can be very disruptive. Please be respectful. Also turn off any watches, cell phones or anything that might make noise during the performance.
- Theatre is a community experience. Let the performers know you enjoy the show by applauding and laughing at appropriate times.

The show runs approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes.

There will be a brief informal discussion with the cast immediately following all 10 am performances. This is a great time to share questions or thoughts you developed during the performance.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

By FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY
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Directed by AARON POSNER
On the Arcadia Stage

CAST



CODY NICKELL
Raskolnikov



CHRISTOPHER DONAHUE
Porfiry and others



JULIANNA ZINKEL
Sonia and others

DIRECTION AND STAGE MANGEMENT

AARON POSNER

Director

ANNELIESE VAN ARSDALE

Assistant Director

PATRICIA G. SABATO

Stage Manager

ERIN READ

Assistant to the Stage Manager

DESIGNERS

DANIEL CONWAY

Set Designer

JAMES LEITNER

Lighting Designer

CHARLOTTE CLOE FOX WIND

Costume Designer

KEVIN FRANCIS

Sound Designer

About the Writer

Dostoevsky was the second of seven children born to Mikhail and Maria Dostoevsky. (Origins from Polish Szlachta family Dostojewski CoA Radwan). Shortly after his mother died of tuberculosis in 1837, he and his brother Mikhail were sent to the Military Engineering Academy at St. Petersburg. In 1839 they lost their father, a retired military surgeon and a violent alcoholic, who served as a doctor at the Mariinsky Hospital for the Poor in Moscow. The figure of his domineering father would exert a large effect upon Dostoevsky's work.



As a child, Dostoevsky's physical environment did little to lift the sense of gloom. The hospital sat in a neighborhood of squalor, one of the worst areas in Moscow. The landmarks included a cemetery for criminals, a lunatic asylum, and an orphanage for abandoned infants. The hardships of this urban landscape made a lasting impression on the young Dostoevsky, whose interests in and compassion for the poor and oppressed tormented him.

Dostoevsky was sent to the St. Petersburg Academy of Military Engineering, an environment in which he was taught much about mathematics, a subject he despised. However, he mostly studied literature by Shakespeare, Pascal, Victor Hugo and E.T.A. Hoffmann. It is quite impressive that even though focusing on different areas than the one he was taught, he did well on the exams and received a commission in 1841. A translation into Russian of Balzac's novel *Eugenie Grandet* in 1843 brought little or no attention and Dostoevsky, who was determined to be famous, started to write his own fiction in late 1844 after leaving the army. In 1845, his first work, the epistolary short novel, *Poor Folk*, published in the periodical "The Contemporary" was met with great acclaim by the editor of the magazine, the poet Nikolai Nekrasov who said upon walking into the office of the influential liberal critic Vissarion Belinsky, "A new Gogol has arisen!" Belinsky, his followers and many others agreed and after the novel was fully published in book form at the beginning of the next year, Dostoevsky was a literary celebrity at the age of 24.

Much of his work after *Poor Folk* was met with few positive reviews and it seemed that Belinsky's prediction that Dostoevsky would be one of the greatest writers of Russia was mistaken.

Dostoevsky was arrested and imprisoned on April 23, 1849 for engaging in revolutionary activity against Tsar Nikolai I. On November 16 that year he was sentenced to death for anti-government activities linked to a liberal intellectual group, the Petrashevsky Circle. After a mock execution in which he and other members of the group stood outside in freezing weather waiting to be shot by a firing squad, Dostoevsky's sentence was commuted to four years of exile performing hard labor at a katorga prison camp in Omsk, Siberia.

His first recorded epileptic seizure happened in 1850 at the prison camp. It is said that he suffered from a rare form of temporal lobe epilepsy, sometimes referred to as "ecstatic epilepsy." It is also said that upon learning of his father's death before the elder could reply to a letter of criticism from Fyodor, the younger Dostoevsky experienced his first seizure. Seizures then recurred sporadically throughout his life, and Dostoevsky's experiences are thought to form the basis for his description of Prince Myshkin's epilepsy in the *The Idiot*. He was released from prison in 1854, and was required to serve in the Siberian Regiment. Dostoevsky spent the following five years as a private (and later lieutenant) in the Regiment's Seventh Line Battalion stationed at the fortress of Semipalatinsk, now in Kazakhstan. While there, he began a relationship with Maria Dmitrievna Isaeva, the wife of an acquaintance in Siberia; they married in February 1857, after her husband's death.

Dostoevsky's experiences in prison and the army resulted in major changes in his political and religious convictions. He became disillusioned with 'Western' ideas, and began to pay greater tribute to traditional Russian values. Perhaps most significantly, he had what his biographer Joseph Frank describes as a conversion experience in prison, which greatly strengthened his Christian, and specifically Orthodox, faith (the experience is depicted by Dostoevsky in *The Peasant Marey* (1876)). In line with his new beliefs, Dostoevsky became a sharp critic of the Nihilist and Socialist movements of his day.

In December 1859, he returned to St. Petersburg, where he ran a series of unsuccessful literary journals, "Vremya" (Time) and "Epokha" (Epoch) with his older brother Mikhail. The latter had to be shut down with its coverage of the Polish Uprising of 1863. That year Dostoevsky traveled to Europe and frequented the gambling casinos. There he met Apollinaria Suslova, the model for Dostoevsky's "proud women", such as Katerina Ivanovna in both *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoevsky was devastated by his wife's death in 1864, followed shortly thereafter by his brother's death. He was financially crippled by business debts and the need to provide for his wife's son from her earlier marriage and his brother's widow and children. Dostoevsky sank into a deep depression, frequenting gambling parlors and accumulating massive losses at the tables.

Dostoevsky suffered from an acute gambling compulsion as well as from its consequences. By one account *Crime and Punishment*, possibly his best known novel, was completed in a mad hurry because Dostoevsky was in urgent need of an advance from his publisher. He had been left practically penniless after a gambling spree. Dostoevsky wrote *The Gambler* simultaneously in order to satisfy an agreement with his publisher Stellovsky who, if he did not receive a new work, would have claimed the copyrights to all of Dostoevsky's writing.

Motivated by the dual wish to escape his creditors at home and to visit the casinos abroad, Dostoevsky traveled to Western Europe. There, he attempted to rekindle a love affair with Apollinaria (Polina) Suslova, a young university student with whom he had had an affair several years prior, but she refused his marriage proposal. Dostoevsky was heartbroken, but soon met Anna Grigorevna Snitkina, a twenty-year-old stenographer to whom, shortly before marrying her in 1867, he dictated *The Gambler*. This period resulted in the writing of his greatest books. From 1873 to 1881 he vindicated his earlier journalistic failures by publishing a monthly journal full of short stories, sketches, and articles on current events — the *Writer's Diary*. The journal was an enormous success.

In 1877 Dostoevsky gave the keynote eulogy at the funeral of his friend, the poet Nekrasov, to much controversy. In 1880, shortly before he died, he gave his famous Pushkin speech at the unveiling of the Pushkin monument in Moscow. From that event on, Dostoevsky was acclaimed all over Russia as one of her greatest writers and hailed as a prophet, almost a mystic.



In his later years, Fyodor Dostoevsky lived for a long time at the resort of Staraya Russa which was closer to St Petersburg and less expensive than German resorts. He died on January 28 , 1881 of a lung hemorrhage associated with emphysema and an epileptic seizure and was interred in Tikhvin Cemetery at the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, St. Petersburg, Russia. Forty thousand mourning Russians attended his funeral. His tombstone reads "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." from John 12:24, which is also the epigraph of his final novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fyodor_Dostoevsky

About the Adapters

CURT COLUMBUS joined Trinity Rep as artistic director in January 2006. He was the associate artistic director of Steppenwolf Theater Company from 2000-2005, where his translations of *Cherry Orchard* and *Uncle Vanya* were presented in the Upstairs Theatre. Other Steppenwolf credits include translating *Maria Arndt* and directing *The House of Lily*, *Division Street: America* and *Our Town*. He was also the artistic director of Chicago Park District's Theater on the Lake and an artistic associate at Victory Gardens Theater from 1990-2006. His adaptation of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (with Marilyn Campbell), which was presented by the Gamm Theater and Writers' Theatre in Glencoe, Illinois, was awarded a Joseph Jefferson Award for best new adaptation and is published by Dramatists' Play Service. Curt's new translations of Anton Chekhov's plays have been published by Ivan R. Dee, including a volume of translations called *Chekhov: The Four Major Plays*. From that collection, *Seagull* premiered at Writers' Theatre in September 2004, and *Three Sisters* premiered at Strawdog Theatre in October 2005. Curt was honored with a 2005-2006 Joseph Jefferson Citation for New Adaptation for his translation of *Three Sisters*. Curt has also been director of University Theater at the University of Chicago, where he lectured in the Humanities



MARILYN CAMPBELL is an award winning actress, published playwright, producer, teacher and co-founder and artistic associate of the Writers' Theatre in Glencoe, Illinois. Her co-adaptation (with Curt Columbus) of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* won Chicago's 2003 Joseph Jefferson Award for "Best New Adaptation" and was subsequently published by Dramatic Publishing and Tri-Quarterly Magazine (Northwestern University Press). Other full length plays include: *My Own Stranger*, a co-adaptation with Linda Laundra based on the writings of Pulitzer Prize winning poet, Ann Sexton, which had its world premiere at the Provincetown Playhouse in New York and was awarded a *Villager Downtown Theatre Award* as one of the Outstanding Productions of the 1981 Off Broadway Season. *My Own Stranger* was subsequently produced at Writers' Theatre in 1994, directed by Michael Halberstam and again in 2003 directed by Kate Buckley. In September 2006 *My Own Stranger* was chosen to be a part of Shakespeare and Company's Studio Festival of Plays, directed by Dan McCleary; *The Beats*, based on the writings of the 1950's beat poets, which the *Chicago Sun-Times* named as one of the outstanding productions of the 1997 Chicago theatre season; and *The Gospel According to Mark Twain*, a co-adaptation based on the later writings of Mark Twain, which had its world premiere at the Edinburgh Festival, Edinburgh, Scotland. Currently she is collaborating with Chicago director Jessica Thebus on a new retelling of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and co-authoring and performing an original work with her daughter Maria Merrin entitled *Mixing It Up*.



PLOT SYNOPSIS

The play begins in St. Petersburg as the former student Raskolnikov is being questioned by the policeman, Porfiry. He asks Raskolnikov if he believes in the Biblical story of Lazarus, who was raised from the dead by Jesus Christ. Raskolnikov does not understand at first, but then admits it's possible. Porfiry asks him if he believes in God. Raskolnikov says he does, but wonders if it matters. Porfiry replies that it might.

Raskolnikov wants to know if he's being held by the police officially. Porfiry tells him they only want him to make a statement since he'd heard about the murder he's investigating. He wonders why he thought the police would hold him. Raskolnikov cites his many debts as a reason; he can only claim the things he sold to the murder victim when he has the money. He is also sick, which Porfiry comments on.

Suddenly, Sonia enters and we are now in Raskolnikov's room. She introduces herself, but he already knows who she is; he saw her when he brought her dying father up to her family's apartment from the street the day before. She is there to thank him. Without his kindness, they would not be able to bury her father. They discuss what she will do to support her stepmother and her siblings. She says she will continue to prostitute herself, and will use the money Raskolnikov gave them wisely. Sonia realizes how poor Raskolnikov is; she is embarrassed to have taken his money and starts to leave. He tries to tell her that God gives human beings nothing, and so his gift was needed.

Porfiry re-enters the scene, and they are back in the interrogation room. Porfiry asks the former student to tell him exactly what happened when he last visited this pawnbroker, Alyona Ivanovo. Alyona appears, and we are again transported to her apartment. She is hesitant to give him any more money because the last item he lent to her is still in her possession. She is only willing to give him a ruble and a half, a very small amount for the goods he is leaving with her. He is curious if her sister, Miss Lizaveta, is ever around during her business hours. She says he is too suspicious and he leaves.

He then re-enters the scene with Porfiry, who wants to know why he asked about the sister; he assumes Raskolnikov is sensitive as well as intelligent. He tells the former student that he's read one of the articles he published while he was in school. He found Raskolnikov's ideas about crime interesting. Raskolnikov believes that the perpetration of a crime is justifiable if the person committing it is extraordinary. An extraordinary person can act above the law because their crimes will benefit the whole of society. Porfiry believes Raskolnikov is an original thinker. He again asks Raskolnikov if he believes in the story of Lazarus and in God.

Sonia then reappears. She answers Raskolnikov's question about God granting peace. She says God grants peace to everyone who puts their trust in him. Raskolnikov wonders how she can say that since she is a fallen woman. She tells him it was the only work she could find. He reveals that her father maintained that she gave her family more than enough. She counters that her father abandoned them after getting his old job back; she only saw him again when Raskolnikov brought him home five days later.

Her father then appears. He begins to talk to Raskolnikov and confess his shortcomings. He tried to petition someone hopelessly for a financial loan. He knows he can't pay the loan back, so he's not surprised he didn't receive it, but he would have liked compassion. He disappears, and Raskolnikov says he understands her father. Sonia wants to know why he's helped her family pay for her father's funeral. Raskolnikov refuses to tell her anything about his motives, and orders her to leave. She does.

Porfiry reappears. He too wants to know if he gave Sonia the money he'd taken from the pawnbroker. He says he did, and that he also gave her money that his mother had sent him. On the same day, his landlady had brought a complaint against him. Porfiry wonders why he gave all his money away

when he needed it to pay his rent. Raskolnikov's mother then appears and reads the letter in which she enclosed the money he'd asked from her. She is worried he no longer believes in and trusts God. He tries to reply to her letter, but he cannot find the words necessary.

Everyone else disappears, and Raskolnikov is alone. He recounts a dream in which he and his father are walking past his family's graves. They also pass an old carthorse that is being beaten to death because it won't continue walking down the town square. Raskolnikov is young, and cries about the horse. His father tells him it died because people are people and that's none of their business.

Miss Lizaveta enters, and we are taken to a scene in the past. She wanted to check up on him. She confesses that she's going out without her sister that night. He remembers that he has something to do, and she excuses herself. Alone, and in the present again, he asks for forgiveness. He grabs his coat and starts to leave his apartment, mumbling along that the way that he was the one ...

Porfiry enters and thanks Raskolnikov for coming to see him at the police station. He tells Raskolnikov that he may help him solve his case because most crimes are poorly concealed. Raskolnikov agrees, but believes an extraordinary person would be able to hide their guilt. Porfiry wonders if Raskolnikov considers himself extraordinary. Raskolnikov says he does not. Raskolnikov cites prisons and work camps in Siberia as suitable punishment. The average criminal will have a guilty conscience and will eventually confess. Extraordinary men may pity their victims, but they will not be completely sorry. Porfiry exits, and Raskolnikov tries to continue his letter to his mother. He cannot.

He goes to Sonia's apartment to tell her what he's done. He tells her that her father would have bent down on his knees if he had known her suffering. She still believes that God will provide, and he calls her a "religious idiot." He grabs her Bible, a present from Lizaveta, and has her read the story of Lazarus to him. After she does, he tells her that he wants her to run away with him because they are both sinners and lost to heaven. She tells him they could never forget what they've done; others would remind them. He admits he knows who killed Alyona; he will come back the next day and reveal the identity of the murderer.

Sonia disappears and Alyona comes in; Raskolnikov has come to the pawnbroker to sell her a silver cigarette case. It is the day of the murder, and she thinks Raskolnikov looks awful. He gives her the case he promised her. She turns his back to him, and he takes out an axe and attacks her as she enters another room. Her sister Lizaveta enters, and he murders her, too. He hears voices in the hall and slams the outer door shut.

Raskolnikov is now in his apartment, waiting. Porfiry knocks and enters. He wants to be up front with the man. He tells Raskolnikov that one of the painters, Nikolai, has confessed to murdering Alyona and Lizaveta, but, he thinks Raskolnikov is the murderer. Porfiry believes that this was a "modern murder," one motivated by theories but executed just as sloppily as any other crime. He proposes that Raskolnikov give himself up; his punishment will be lighter if he admits his guilt. Raskolnikov refuses. Porfiry tells him not to disdain life—suffering could help him regain his hope. He will not arrest Raskolnikov for a few days, so he has time to think about what he wants to do.

Raskolnikov finally finishes his letter to his mother. In his letter, he confesses he gave away her money. He informs her that he is going far away and won't be in touch with her for a while. He begins to address the audience, asking them to understand why he did what did; he plans to serve humanity with her money. He hears music from the street and goes to the window to see what it is. He enjoys it, but he still feels that man "is a disgusting creature."

Sonia appears and asks him if he believes in Lazarus and God. It is the next day. He supposes that he believes in God, but he wonders if it makes a difference. She says it might. She wants to know

why he helped her father out of the street. He tells her he is the killer, and asks her not to torture him with her pity. She embraces him and kisses him and begins to cry. She promises to follow him wherever he goes—even to Siberia, to the work camps. He doesn't want to go to Siberia; she doesn't understand why he's done what he's done when he had the opportunities of an educated man. He finally confesses that he did it to have some direct power over his life. She thinks God has given him over to the devil; she wants him to confess. He says he is going to confess; he falls to his knees to do so, but he can't.

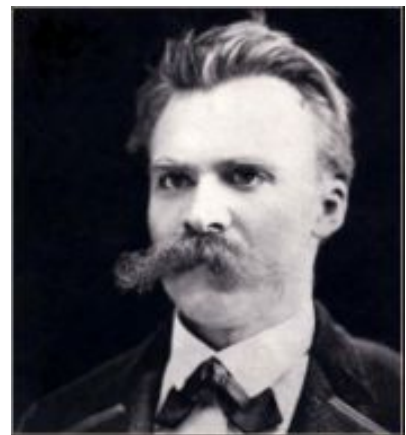
Porfiry appears; Raskolnikov has gone to the police station. He confesses to his murders. Sonia appears and she and Porfiry interchangeably ask him if he believes in God and the story of Lazarus. Raskolnikov asks again if it matters; Sonia replies that it might. The play ends.

CONCEPTS OR THEORIES FROM THE PLAY

An *Übermensch*, (sometimes translated as "Overman", or "superman") is a concept expounded by philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He argues that a man can become an *Übermensch* (*homo superior*; the common equivalent English translation would be 'super-human' through the following steps:

1. By his *will to power*, manifested *creatively* in overcoming nihilism and re-evaluating old ideals or creating new ones.
2. By his *will to power*, manifested *destructively* in the rejection of, and rebellion against, societal ideals and moral codes.
3. By a continual process of *self-overcoming*.

The *Übermensch* was contrasted by Nietzsche with the exemplar of the *Last Man*, who is the antithesis of the *Übermensch*. Whereas Nietzsche considered there to be no examples of an *Übermensch* in his time, he declared there were many examples of *Last Men*. He assigned to today's civilization the task of preparing the venue of the *Übermensch*. In the understanding of this concept, however, one has to recall Nietzsche's ontological critique of the individual subject whom he claimed is a "grammatical fiction". Nietzsche thus criticized both the concepts of soul, personal consciousness and the "ego". Therefore, the *Übermensch* has also been interpreted as a temporary state of the



Friedrich Nietzsche circa 1875.

multiple wills to power composing this individual "fiction". Following this interpretation, the *Übermensch* is not an individual nor a substance, but something more like the process of overcoming oneself and nihilism.

Nihilism is a philosophical position which argues that the world, and especially human existence, is without objective meaning, purpose, comprehensible truth, or essential value. Nihilists generally believe all of the following: There is no reasonable proof of the existence of a higher ruler or creator, a "true morality" is unknown, and secular ethics are impossible; therefore, life has no truth, and no action is known to be preferable to any other. Nihilism is often more of a charge leveled against a particular idea, movement, or group, than a position to which someone overtly subscribes. Movements such as Dadaism, Deconstructionism, and punk have been described at various times as "nihilist". Usually this simply means or is meant to imply that the beliefs of the accuser are more "*substantial*" or "*truthful*", whereas the beliefs of the accused are nihilistic, and thereby comparatively amount to "*nothing*".

Nihilism is also a characteristic that has been ascribed to time periods: for example, Baudrillard has called postmodernity a nihilistic epoch, and some Christian theologians and figures of authority assert that modernity and postmodernity represent the rejection of God, and therefore are nihilistic.

Prominent philosophers who have written on the subject of nihilism include Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger. Nietzsche described Christianity as a nihilistic religion because it evaded the challenge of finding meaning in earthly life, creating instead a spiritual projection where mortality and suffering were removed instead of transcended. He believed nihilism resulted from the "death of God", and insisted that it was something to be overcome, by returning meaning to a monistic reality (he sought instead a "pragmatic idealism," in contrast to the prominent influence of Schopenhauer's "cosmic idealism"). Heidegger described nihilism as the state where "there is nothing left of Being as such," and argued that nihilism rested on the reduction of Being to mere value.

Retrieved from Wikipedia, Inc. (2006) at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Übermensch> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nihilism>

HISTORY OF POVERTY IN RUSSIA



Serfdom was not the original status of the Russian peasant. It was one of the consequences of the Tartar devastation during the 13th century when peasants became homeless and settled on the land of wealthy Russians. By the end of the 16th century the Russian peasant came under the complete control of the landowner and during the middle of the 17th century serfdom became hereditary. Their situation became comparable to that of slaves and they could be sold to another landowner in families or singly.

By the 19th century it was estimated that about 50 per cent of the 40,000,000 Russian peasants were serfs. Most of these were the property of the nobility but large numbers were owned by the Tsar and religious foundations.

The Crimean War forced Alexander II realize that Russia was no longer a great military power. His advisers argued that Russia's serf-based economy could no longer compete with industrialized nations such as Britain and France. Alexander now began to consider the possibility of bringing an end to serfdom in Russia. The nobility objected to this move but as Alexander told a group of Moscow nobles: "It is better to abolish serfdom from above than to wait for the time when it will begin to abolish itself from below."

In 1861 Alexander issued his Emancipation Manifesto that proposed 17 legislative acts that would free the serfs in Russia. Alexander announced that personal serfdom would be abolished and all peasants would be able to buy land from their landlords. The State would advance the money to the landlords and would recover it from the peasants in 49 annual sums known as redemption payments.

To give the land (to the serfs) meant to ruin the nobility, and to give freedom without land meant to ruin the peasantry. The state treasury impoverished by the vast expenses of war, could not afford to indemnify either party. There lay the problem. Could the serfs made to pay for their freedom? Could the serf-owners be granted loans on the security of their estates? Would not twenty-two million slaves suddenly set free combine to take matters into their own hands.

The position of most large landowners was this. They lived in St. Petersburg or some other great city. They did not farm their estates. They had stewards who administered their property and collected their revenue. They had numbers of serfs paying a handsome annual tribute for their partial freedom, a tribute which the landowners' agents strove incessantly to increase. It was their slaves rather than their land which brought them income.

From 1840 onwards, the need for serious reform does begin to be apparent: agricultural production is poor, grain exports low, the growth of manufacturing industry slowed down through the shortage of labor; capitalist development is being impeded through aristocracy and serfdom.

It is a perilous situation, which is given a fairly astute solution in the act of "liberation" of 19th February 1861, abolishing serfdom. With a population of sixty-seven million, Russia had twenty-three million serfs belonging to 103,000 landlords. The arable land which the freed peasantry had to rent or buy was valued at about double its real value (342 million rubles instead of 180 million); yesterday's serfs discovered that, in becoming free, they were now hopelessly in debt.

Retrieved from Michael Lynch's *Reactions and Revolutions: Russia, 1881-1924* (2005) at <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/RUSserfs.htm>.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

1. This play deals heavily with Christianity. Early on in the play, Raskolnikov says, "God grants peace to the dead, doesn't He, Sonia. But the living...just keep on living. God grants *us* nothing." How is this opinion expressed in Raskolnikov's actions? Why does Raskolnikov want to hear the story of Lazarus? Do his feelings about Christianity change during the play?
2. Two of the actors play multiple roles in the play. Were you able to keep track of who was playing who? How did the actors use vocal and physical changes to portray different characters?
3. In the examination room, Raskolnikov is the criminal and Porfiry is the detective. What other relationships do they have as characters?
4. The play uses flashback to tell the story, unlike the novel, in which the story happens in linear order. Is flashback an effective way to tell the story? How does it affect the play's suspense and dramatic tension?
5. Why does Raskolnikov kill Aloyna? Is the murder justified?
6. How do you feel about Raskolnikov's theory of the "Extraordinary Man?" Do you believe that Raskolnikov is an "Extraordinary Man?" Which of the punishments he faces is worse: being sent to Siberia or his psychological suffering? Do you believe he should have confessed?
7. What is the significance of Raskolnikov's dream? What does the horse represent to him?

8. The play focuses on redemption and whether it is possible. Sonia says, near the end of the play, "I want to help you find your way." Do you think she can help Raskonikov? Does he have any hope of redemption after all?

9. What role does suffering have in the characters and in the play? How does each character suffer and feel about suffering? Who suffers the greatest in the play?