

CLINT WALKER

University of Montana

On Serfdom, Sickness, and Redemption: The Peter the Great Subtext in *Crime and Punishment*

...литература все мешалась на
том: нужно ли выкупать душу или уж
так отпустить на покаяние?

N. A. Dobroliubov¹

The present study aims to shed new light on the inner symbolic architecture of *Crime and Punishment* by focusing on the relationship between Raskolnikov's sickness and the cultural legacy of Peter the Great. Despite Dostoevsky's belief in the historical necessity of Peter, who he felt stimulated the development of Russia's national self-consciousness, by the mid-1860s he nonetheless concurred with the Slavophiles that the Petrine cultural inheritance represented a kind of national "sickness" from which educated Russians still needed to free themselves.²

¹ In an article published in *The Contemporary (Sovremennik)* in January 1859, Dobroliubov is sarcastically reflecting on recent debate in Russian periodicals about the conditions under which the serfs should be freed. A relatively literal translation might be, "...literature was all astir [last year] about this: is it necessary to redeem a soul, or just to release it for penitence?" The phrase *otpusit' dushu na pokaianie* figuratively means "to let someone go in peace;" the use of "soul" (*dusha*) here refers specifically to a serf, but Dobroliubov is playing off both meanings, "soul" and "serf," just as he is playing off various connotations of the word "redeem" (*vykupat'*). N. A. Dobroliubov, "Literaturnye melochi proshlogo goda," *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh* (Moskva: Gos. Izd-vo Khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1950-52), vol. 2, 45.

² See, for example, his 1862 article "Two Camps of Theorists." Defending what he calls the overall idea behind Peter the Great's reforms, Dostoevsky is nevertheless predominantly negative in his evaluation of Peter's reign, methods and legacy: "But as a fact Peter was in the highest degree counter to the *narod*." He faults Peter in particular for the despotic manner in

For Dostoevsky, the Emancipation of 1861 liberated the serfs from external or legal bondage, but it did not free the educated class from the spiritual bondage and national guilt that were byproducts of the Petrine reforms. Dostoevsky explores the figurative “psychic serfdom” of the educated class in *Crime and Punishment*, where Raskolnikov’s sickness is symbolically linked to a loss of will (*volia*) and, at the subtextual level, to an instance of Biblical possession. Raskolnikov thus “pawns” far more than material goods when he visits the pawnbroker—he also figuratively pawns his free will. Dostoevsky highlights Raskolnikov’s need to exorcise the “demon” of the Petrine spirit through a carefully encoded allusion to a passage from Mark 9, where Jesus drives a demon from a possessed son. Raskolnikov desires to redeem the suffering he sees around him, but he fails to recognize that he must first redeem himself spiritually from the psychic serfdom he has involuntarily inherited as a figurative child of Peter. In order to liberate himself from his spiritual serfdom, Raskolnikov needs to drive out this Petrine cultural demon and redeem (*iskupit*) himself through suffering and reunion with the *narod*.

Readers of *Crime and Punishment* have traditionally associated Raskolnikov and his theory with Napoleon, not Peter the Great, and the text—at least on the surface—appears to support such an interpretation. Excessive attention to Napoleon has obscured the significance of Peter the Great and his legacy at the deeper, subtextual layers of the novel. Close attention to the drafts of *Crime and Punishment* reveals that during the conceptual phase Peter the Great was central to the shape of the future novel. In a surviving fragment from Dostoevsky’s notebooks that has been linked to *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky foregrounds the Petrine era as a kind of watershed leading toward inactivity, amorality and drunkenness in his day:

which he carried out his reforms, which were “primarily directed toward the external” and were a “betrayal of the national spirit,” since “despotism is not at all in the spirit of the *narod*.” The piece ends with the hope that it is the capacity of Russians for examining their “ulcers” in full view that is a pledge (*zalog*) of future renewal from the national sickness. The term Dostoevsky uses for pledge here carries connotations of a security deposit and is associated with the pawning of goods (*otdat’ v zalog*, “to pawn; *vykupit’ iz zaloga*, “to redeem pawned goods.” The word Dostoevsky uses in *Crime and Punishment*, *zaklad*, is formed from the same verb pair as the word *zalog* (*zakladyvat’/zalozhit’*). More will be said on the significance of metaphors related to pawning and redemption in the body of the paper, but for the present I would emphasize their appearance in the “Two Camps of Theorists” article in conjunction with Dostoevsky’s negative evaluation of Peter the Great.

THE DRUNKARDS

- We drink because we have no activity (*dela net*).
- You're lying—[it's] because we have no morals (*nravstvennosti net*).
- But that's why we have no morals—we haven't had any activity for a long time (150 years).³

The reference to one hundred and fifty years seems to imply a causal link between the Petrine era and the drunkenness and moral depravity in the Russia of Dostoevsky's day. In *Crime and Punishment* Razumikhin expresses similar sentiments during an argument with *Pyotr Petrovich* Luzhin: “we have been educated to steer clear of any kind of activity for about two hundred years now.”⁴ Luzhin's humorously inept counterarguments end with the proclamation, “In a word, we have irrevocably cut ourselves off from the past, and that, in my opinion, is already activity....” Significantly, Luzhin's remark echoes the thoughts of Raskolnikov on the Nikolaevsky Bridge shortly after the murders, when he feels “as if he had cut himself off ... from everyone and everything.”⁵ The reprehensible Luzhin, who implicitly functions as the defender of Peter's legacy in the exchange with Razumikhin, is one of the many symbolic “children of Peter” (*Petrovich, Petrovna*) in the novel. Dostoevsky likely uses the patronymic *Petrovich/Petrovna* so frequently in order to highlight the idea that the majority of the present-day populace would qualify as figurative “children” of Russia's first Father of the Fatherland. Characters with a patronymic symbolically linking them to Peter the Great include: *Pyotr Petrovich* Luzhin, *Porfiry Petrovich*, *Ilya Petrovich*, *Nastasya Petrovna*, and *Marfa Petrovna*.

Dostoevsky's *Writer's Notebooks* from 1864-1865 contain multiple references to Peter the Great. A drawing made in his *Notebooks* in the summer of 1865 depicts two contrasting portraits of Peter the Great. The top portrait is a sharply defined image of Peter's head; it is based on the mechanical “wax figure” prepared by Rastrelli using Peter's death mask. In the apt phrasing of Konstantin Barsht, the darker, more finished sketch

³ PSS, VII, 5, fn. 1. *The Drunkards* is typically linked to chapters of the novel featuring Marmeladov.

⁴ А мы чуть не двести лет как от всякого дела отучены, PSS, VI, 115.

⁵ Одним словом, мы безвозвратно отрезали себя от прошедшего, а это, по-моему, уж дело-с, PSS, VI, 115; он как будто ножницами отрезал себя сам от всех и всего в эту минуту, PSS, VI, 90.

at the top resembles “a face-mask frozen in its deadly immobility.”⁶ Dostoevsky’s darker image of Peter is balanced by a second, far less distinct sketch directly below it. The lower image is only faintly outlined, as if Dostoevsky were less certain of his vision. These contrasting portraits of Peter convey in condensed pictorial form the duality at the heart of Dostoevsky’s evaluation of Peter’s legacy. The split image of Peter’s head, with the darker image dominant, also suggests the possibility of a link to the split in Raskolnikov, whose tormented psyche continually appears to shift between poles of selfless kindness and spiteful loathing. In the words of Razumikhin, at times it is “as if there really were two opposing characters in him, changing places with each other.”⁷

The drafts and notebooks for *Crime and Punishment* suggest Peter the Great was intended as a primary inspiration for Raskolnikov’s theory of the extraordinary individual. The notebooks for the third and final draft contain the following notes regarding Raskolnikov’s first meeting with Sonia: “But I needed to take the first step. I need power...I don’t want to dream, I want to take action. I want to take action myself. (The Dutchman Peter).”⁸ The first person speaker who “needs power” and wants to “take action” (*delat’*) is Raskolnikov, but the parenthetical remark about the “Dutchman Peter” is Dostoevsky’s own characterization of Raskolnikov’s remark. Thus for Dostoevsky Raskolnikov’s desire for power is characteristic of “The Dutchman Peter.” Raskolnikov’s link to Peter the Great returns several times in the drafts, most often during meetings between Sonia and Raskolnikov. Sonia urges him to be patient, and he replies, “Why should I be patient. The Dutchman.”⁹ Thus it would appear that even at late stages in Dostoevsky’s work on the novel (i.e., in his notes for the final draft) the associations with Peter the Great are still conscious on the part of Raskolnikov, since it is he who refers directly to “The Dutchman” in answer to Sonia’s plea for patience. This interpretation is confirmed by a notation from the notebooks, labeled “NB Of

⁶ Konstantin Barsht, *Risunki v rukopisiakh Dostoevskogo* (Sankt-Peterburg: Formika, 1996), 54; 57. Without attempting to read too deeply into the significance of the darker drawing, I would note the associative ties of Rastrelli’s “wax figure” with mechanism, masks, and especially death.

⁷ PSS, VI, 165.

⁸ Но мне нужно было первый шаг сделать. Мне власти надо...Я не мечтать хочу, я делать хочу. Я сам делать хочу. (Голландец Петр), PSS, VII, 153.

⁹—Вы тоже не богаты. И не в университете. Терпеть надо.—Зачем терпеть. Голландец, PSS, VII, 189. Compare Raskolnikov’s impatience to Dostoevsky’s assertion in “Two Camps”: “This was Peter’s mistake, that he wanted everything at once” (PSS, XX, 14).

utmost importance,” in which Dostoevsky plans that Raskolnikov will tell Sonia about “the Holland method” in order to prepare her for his subsequent confession.¹⁰

The presence of multiple transparent references to Peter the Great in the drafts raises a crucial question—why did Dostoevsky decide to remove explicit references to Peter in the final version? I propose that Dostoevsky decided to submerge Raskolnikov’s likeness to Peter the Great deep within the *subtextual* layering of the novel in order to suggest Raskolnikov’s inability to recognize, on a conscious level, his inheritance of the “sickness” of the educated classes. Although it is still implied symbolically and through literary allusions, Raskolnikov never demonstrates a fully *conscious* awareness of his link to Peter. Instead, this knowledge remains buried deep within Raskolnikov’s *subconscious*.¹¹ In this way Raskolnikov’s situation parallels the Slavophiles’ discussion of the educated class, who are said to carry the “sickness” of Petrine culture in them unconsciously as an inherent part of their cultural education. Although not consciously aware of it, Raskolnikov’s psyche is literally “possessed” by the Petrine spirit; he is “infected” and spiritually “torn” by the nefarious *dukh* of Peter the Great. Raskolnikov’s despotic desire for power, coupled with his hubris and scorn for the *narod* and his rational plan to test an abstract theory on living flesh—all these traits trace to the spiritual legacy of Russia’s first “Father of the Fatherland”.

For Dostoevsky, the “Tsar-Liberator” Alexander II fulfilled a major obligation towards the people on 3 March [19 February O.S.] 1861—the external or legal obligation of emancipating the serfs—thereby putting an end to the abominable, state-sponsored institution the Slavophiles associated primarily with Peter the Great. The Emancipation Manifesto ushered in the chance for a genuine “exodus” (*iskhod*) from the vicious circle of Petrine cultural enslavement.¹² Yet it still remained for the

¹⁰ NB *Главнейшее* В это *первое* свидание он ей рассказывает про голландский метод и приготовляет ее к пониманию *завтрашнего* признания, PSS, VII, 190, italics in original.

¹¹ Dostoevsky buries Raskolnikov’s inherited “disease” in the *subtextual layering* of the novel, where he implies Raskolnikov’s inheritance of the Petrine cultural mantle through a web of intertextual, Biblical, and cultural allusions. In a similar manner, Dostoevsky submerges Raskolnikov’s cognizance of his illness and need for redemption (*iskuplenie*) deep within Raskolnikov’s *subconscious*. Raskolnikov may faintly sense that he is ill, but he nonetheless remains unable to fathom the root causes of the disease or how seriously it is damaging his psyche.

¹² Dostoevsky’s use of the “exodus” metaphor likely traces to the Slavophiles. In 1865 pieces for *The Day* Ivan Aksakov singles out France as the paramount embodiment of the Petrine “state principle” in modern times, thereby implying a clear analogy between Peter the

educated class to free itself from the spiritual bondage or “psychic serfdom” that was a byproduct of Petrine cultural reform. In this regard it is vital to bear in mind that the verb “to redeem” (*vykupať/vykupit’*), which Dostoevsky employs in relation to Raskolnikov’s pawned goods, is likewise a term commonly used in post-Emancipation Russia to describe how newly liberated peasants purchased the land from their landlords.¹³

Great and Napoleon. According to him, the French people continue to sacrifice their “inner freedom” to this “idol (*kumir*), by which he means the underlying “state principle”; as a result, they “suffer and are sick, but they do not see a way out” (*iskhod*; in Russian the word suggests both a way out and an ‘exodus’; Aksakov, II, 277-278). In *Crime and Punishment* Raskolnikov reflects, “...a real master, for whom everything is permitted ... forgets his army in Egypt...and they erect monuments (*kumiry*) to him... No, these people do not have a body, but are of bronze!” Petersburg is thus a symbolic “urban desert” from which the “psychic slave” Raskolnikov must seek an exodus. Raskolnikov dreams of an oasis “in Egypt” where he is “drinking water, directly from a stream,” but it is precisely water, with its connotations of baptism and Christian rebirth, that he refuses throughout the novel. “Can it really be that I wished to fix everything with Razumikhin alone and to find a way out (*iskhod*)...” he reflects shortly before committing the crime. Then while contemplating suicide in the canal: “‘Well, so that is a way out (*iskhod*)!’ he thought. ‘Nonetheless, I’ll end it, because I want... Yet is that really a way out (*iskhod*)?’” The term reappears ironically in reference to Sonia: “‘Can it really be that she is awaiting a miracle? And probably she is. Is that not a sign of madness?’ He paused stubbornly on this thought. He liked this way out (*iskhod*) even more than any other.” Finally the term again appears in relation to Sonia, but this time without irony: “Coming to Sonia, he felt that all of his hope and his entire way out (*iskhod*) was in her.” Significantly, Sonia is associated with St. Mary of Egypt, a prostitute who converted to Christianity and withdrew to the Egyptian desert.

Dostoevsky purchased the first volume of K. Aksakov’s collected works in 1862-1863: see Boris Tikhomirov, “Knigi, kuplennye Dostoevskim v 1862-1863 gg. v knizhnom magazine A. F. Bazunova,” *Dostoevskii i mirovaia kul’tura*, No. 18 (2003): 158-169. This volume, which blames Peter for introducing 150 years of national guilt into Russia via the state-sponsored institution of serfdom, is one of the most negative evaluations of Peter’s reign and influence in print; it ends with the following pithy pronouncement:

We [educated Russians] are like the Egyptians who saw Egypt; we will not see Palestine, but [we will see] a blessing if we find a way out of Egypt and free ourselves from the Egyptian work given to us by the West! [Konstantin Aksakov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol I (Moskva: Tipografiia P. Bakhmeteva, 1861): 232]

Compare K. Aksakov’s analogy to the following sentiments from Dostoevsky’s *Writer’s Diary*:

Yet we still have a right to be concerned about *our reeducation and our exodus from the land of Egypt*. For it is we who have created from Europe a kind of spiritual Egypt for ourselves. (*A Writer’s Diary*, II, 1373; my italics)

¹³ Debate in journals about how the serfs should be liberated and how *vykup* should function began in advance of 1861, often in Aesopian language. Chernyshevsky and Dobroliubov were largely disillusioned by the actual manifesto and the terms of *vykup*. In “Vnutrennee obozrenie” Dobroliubov, speaking in Aesopian language, laments, “I know our

The noun *vykup* refers specifically to the redemption payment to the landlord for the calculated cost of the land, but it was used as a shorthand term for the entire complex process by which serfs were to be freed. Since the peasants had no money, the government acted as a mediator, paying the landlords on behalf of the peasantry. The serfs were then expected to pay back the “loan” through redemption payments, plus interest, or *protseynty*—another vital component in this system reflected in *Crime and Punishment*. Serfs officially received their external liberation from the Emancipation Manifesto, but this legal “liberation” (*volia*) was still dependent on the process of *vykup*.¹⁴

In the opening section of *Crime and Punishment* we observe Raskolnikov promising “to redeem” (*vykupit'*) the goods he brings to pawn, including his father's watch,¹⁵ with all of its symbolic potential in

climate (*klimat*) is not of the kind to help a consumptive return to health (*chtoby pomoch' chakhotochnomu vyzdorovet'*). In Dobroliubov's Aesopian language the term “consumptive” functions as a metaphor for the peasantry, while *klimat* refers to the political and social climate in the country. N. A. Dobroliubov, “Vnutrennee obozrenie,” *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Vol. 5 (Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1941), 209. Dostoevsky's use of the consumptive trope in the person of Katerina Ivanovna may well be an intentional inversion of Dobroliubov, since in *Crime and Punishment* Katerina Ivanovna is a member of the educated class who suffers from consumption. Her hubristic delusions of her own importance are at once comical and tragic, and if Dostoevsky's inversion of the trope is indeed intentional, it underlines his essential disagreement with Dobroliubov about who the real “unhealthy one” is, the peasantry or the educated class. Dostoevsky's use of the consumptive trope, if intentional, would add considerably more depth to the rather one-sided caricature of “liberal” views that we find in the person of Lebeziatnikov.

¹⁴ My understanding of the process of *vykup* is based on a consultation of various sources including, but not limited to: E. P. Tolmachev, *Aleksandr II i ego vremia*, vol 1 (Moscow: TERRA-Knizhnyi klub, 1998); *Krest'ianskaia reforma v Rossii 1861 goda: sbornik zakonodatel'nykh aktov*, ed. K. A. Sofronenko (Moscow: Gos. Izd-vo Iurid. Literatury, 1954); L. N. Voronov, *Krest'ianskaia reforma. 19-go fevralia 1861-1911* (Moscow: Kommissiia po organizatsii obshcheobrazovatel'nykh chtenii..., 1911). For a recent overview in English of the process, the events leading up to it, and the aftermath of the reforms, see: David Moon, *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia, 1762-1907* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2001). Dostoevsky is using metaphors related to the entire post-Emancipation process in order to explore concerns that are less visible and therefore more of a danger—1) the need for Russian society to heal itself (and liberate itself) from the guilt associated with the national crime of serfdom; 2) the need for the educated classes to liberate their “minds and hearts from the kind of serfdom in which Europe held [them] for two centuries” (Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary: Volume 2, 1877-1881*, tr. Kenneth Lantz, p. 1358).

¹⁵ The image of the watch may suggest a kind of apocalyptic “clock” that is ticking in relation to the “sickness” suffered by Raskolnikov (i.e., his final dream of a great plague, which will be discussed towards the end of this essay). The watch also recalls the Enlightenment notion of “God the watchmaker.”

relation to the Tsar-Father¹⁶ and God. He tells the pawnbroker, who is, significantly, also literally a “percent-taker” (*protsentshchitsa*), “I will redeem [it, the watch is] my father’s” (“*Vykupliu, ottsovskie [chasy]*”).¹⁷ When she replies that he must pay the interest (*protsent*) in advance, Raskolnikov seems taken aback. Given the historical context behind Dostoevsky’s novel, the metaphors in this exchange resonate powerfully with those involved in the Emancipation process. The pawnbroker’s reply is terse but meaning-laden: “*Vasha volia*,” she says, holding out the watch. Conversationally her response might be rendered, “As you wish,” but such a translation fails to convey the metaphorical connection of *volia* to the emancipation of the serfs. *Volia* likewise contains strong existential connotations and can thus be rendered as both “freedom” and “will.”¹⁸

Raskolnikov’s action in the opening of the novel suggests, in symbolic microcosm, what he wishes to do on a much larger scale—to “redeem” the suffering and injustice he sees around him by gaining access to a large sum of money.¹⁹ What he does not consciously recognize, however, is that as a member of educated society, he is already in a state of “psychic serfdom,” due to his inheritance of the Petrine legacy. Moreover, by looking for a “way out” through immoral means, he is trying to redeem himself and others in a manner that apes the despotic

¹⁶ Peter the Great was the first tsar to take on the titles Emperor and Father of the Fatherland in 1721. On one level Raskolnikov is clearly a kind of son figure rebelling against Peter and the tsar-fathers (i.e., *tsar-batiushka*) in the manner of Pushkin’s Evgenii, but he is also called “father” (*batiushka*) throughout the novel by the pawnbroker and Porfiry Petrovich. Significantly, Katerina Ivanovna appeals for mercy to the Tsar-father, but he is notably absent from the action, as is Raskolnikov’s own father, whom we only see briefly in a dream.

¹⁷ *PSS*, VI, 9. Dostoevsky does not use the term *protsentshchitsa* in the opening scenes, but he employs it no less than eight times. He does use the terms *protsent* and *protsenty*, however, where they appear in close proximity to the verb *vykupit’* and the noun *volia*. References to percentages and calculations are scattered throughout the novel.

¹⁸ The term *volia* is used in Russian translations of the German term for *Wille*, as in Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Idea* (1818) and *On the Freedom of the Will* (1839). Thus Dostoevsky symbolically loads his opening scene at the pawnbroker’s with embedded allusions to a concrete historical event—the 1861 Emancipation—but his tropes still retain the potential to signify in philosophical, religious and existential terms.

¹⁹ Svidrigailov serves as an example of the inability to bring forth spiritual redemption using monetary or material means. Although he does use his money to do “good deeds” just prior to committing suicide, his relations with Marfa Petrovna, who “redeemed him” from his gambling debts in the hope of reforming him, did not bring the results she had hoped for. Their “contract” meant nothing to Svidrigailov—an indication that legal reforms alone cannot bring lasting redemption. Svidrigailov’s relation to the theme of redemption deserves separate consideration, but it is also clear that Dostoevsky consciously intertwines his use of *vykupat’/vykupit’* in relation to both Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov.

Peter the Great: he oversteps moral law in an impatient attempt to acquire the material means for realizing his plan while testing his theory, one rooted in the idea that masses of human beings can justifiably be treated like material by extraordinary individuals. Yet what Raskolnikov and the educated class need in order to bring about real transformation is not redemption through economic means, not *vykuplenie*, but inner spiritual “redemption,” or *iskuplenie*. They need redemption from the sickness that plagues the educated class of Russia. The verb *iskupit’* is closely connected to Christ as the spiritual “Redeemer” (*Iskupitel’*); Raskolnikov’s mother asks in her letter, “Do you still believe in the goodness of the Creator and our Redeemer?” In section IV of Part Five Sonia tellingly urges Raskolnikov he must accept suffering and “redeem himself by means of it” (*iskupit’ sebia im*). Finally, at the end of the novel we are told that Raskolnikov “now knew with what endless love he would redeem (*iskupit’*) all of [Sonia’s] suffering.”²⁰

When the pawnbroker retorts, “It is your will” (*Vasha volia*) whether Raskolnikov accepts her terms, it is as if she [and through her, Dostoevsky] is hinting that ultimately the choice to “test a theory” or not belongs to Raskolnikov—because he has the free will to determine his own fate. Raskolnikov’s sickness clouds his spiritual judgment, making him feel as if he has no choice, or as if he is a “psychic slave” to unseen forces: “he felt as if someone had taken him by the hand and pulled him along irresistibly, blindly, with unnatural force and without objection. As if a piece of clothing had fallen into the wheel of a machine and it had begun to drag him into it.”²¹

In Pushkin’s heavily charged formulation from *The Bronze Horseman* Peter “hacked a window through to Europe” (*v Evropu prorubil okno*), a gesture the Slavophiles interpreted as leading toward a deep-seated split within Russian society and in the minds of the educated class. Pushkin’s metaphoric transformation of Algarotti’s phrase evokes Peter’s legendary skill with an axe, a connotation echoed in *Crime and Punishment* when Raskolnikov runs into a human “obstacle” in the person of Lizaveta

²⁰ PSS, VI, 34, 323, 422.

²¹ PSS, VI, 58. Note the metaphor of clothing caught in a machine, which echoes Raskolnikov’s “retailoring” of his overcoat and recalls the idea of Peter the Great as a tailor of the cultural superstructure. The machine imagery that permeates *Crime and Punishment* (e.g., the adverb *mekhanichieski* in this passage and the phrase *pochti mashinal’no* during the first murder) can in turn be linked to Enlightenment metaphors of machines as well as to Hobbes’ metaphor in *Leviathan* of the modern state as a human-engineered machine. The “state principle” and the Enlightenment’s entry into Russia are negatively associated with Peter the Great in the writing of the Slavophiles.

Ivanovna, whose forehead is “*hacked through*” with the sharp end of Raskolnikov’s axe (*Udar...srazu prorubil vsiu verkhniu chast’ lba*). Raskolnikov’s action thus resonates with Peter the Great’s infamous gesture in Pushkin’s masterpiece. The dual murder leaves Raskolnikov feeling “as though he had *cut himself off* from everyone and everything, *as if with scissors*,” recalling Peter’s role as the figurative tailor of the Russian body politic (e.g., the tailor Petrovich as a parodic “son of Peter” in Gogol’s “The Overcoat”).²² Dostoevsky’s subtle allusions to Pushkin and Gogol are not isolated echoes, however; they are integrated into the texture of the novel. Let it not be forgotten that in order to carry out his preconceived plan, Raskolnikov meticulously *retailors his overcoat* in order to hide his murder weapon by sewing a loop in the lining with a needle and thread that he “had made ready long ago.”²³ Multiple allusions to sewing and stitching during the preparation of the coat for the murder seem intended to recall Gogol’s “The Overcoat”—and hence imply a link between Raskolnikov’s preparations for his crime and Peter the Great’s cultural “retailoring” of Russian society.²⁴ In a manner paralleling, or perhaps aping, Peter the Great, but on a greatly reduced scale, Raskolnikov can be said to undertake a kind of *ideological retailoring* by figuratively stitching together pieces of imported European theories, refashioning them into an ideological “overcoat” that masks the bloodshed hidden under the ornate, “word-woven” facade of theory.

²² PSS, VI, 65, 90.

²³ Raskolnikov’s retailoring of his overcoat and its links to Gogol merit more detailed analysis. Janet Tucker draws attention to the importance of clothing as a symbolic marker in *Crime and Punishment*, but she does not discuss links to Gogol’s “The Overcoat” or the implied connection to Peter the Great as a tailor of the body politic. See: Janet Tucker, “The Religious Symbolism of Clothing in Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*,” *SEEL*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2000): 253-265. See also Boris Christa’s “Raskolnikov’s Wardrobe: Dostoevsky’s Use of Vestimentary Markers for Literary Communication in *Crime and Punishment*,” *Dostoevsky on the Threshold of Other Worlds: Essays in Honor of Malcolm V. Jones*, ed. Sarah Young and Lesly Milne (Ilkeston, Derbyshire: Bramcote Press, 2006), 14-20.

²⁴ During the actual process of Raskolnikov’s retailoring of his coat Dostoevsky downplays the link to Gogol by referring to the coat as a *pal’to*, but in key scenes that follow he highlights his earlier metaphorical play by referring to the same coat as a *shinel’*. Raskolnikov tries to hide scraps of bloody cloth under his *shinel’*, for example, in response to Nastasia’s quip that he sleeps with them as if they are some kind of treasure. The narrator also refers to Raskolnikov’s coat as a *shinel’* after Raskolnikov returns from his whipping on the Nikolaevsky Bridge. “Shuddering like an overdriven horse,” Raskolnikov “pulls his overcoat over him” (*natianut na sebia shinel’*). Taken together, these multiple allusions to Pushkin and Gogol’s Petersburg leave little doubt that although Raskolnikov fancies himself an extraordinary individual rebelling against injustice, in reality he is merely a “little person” in the tradition of Evgenii from *The Bronze Horseman* and Gogol’s heroes from his *Petersburg Tales*.

Significantly, Razumikhin specifically calls Raskolnikov a “foreign translation” (*perevod s inostrannogo*)—as if his ideas are not truly his own, but are based on translations.²⁵

The implicit counterweight to Raskolnikov’s bold theory and course of action is Sonia’s meek, childlike faith and spirituality. In order to highlight this contrast, Dostoevsky tellingly has Sonia rent her room from a *tailor* with the speaking name *Capernaum-ov-a* transparent allusion to the town closely associated with Christ in the Gospels. Sonia’s answer to Raskolnikov about “what is to be done” represents a spiritual path toward redemption (*iskuplenie*)—in contrast to Raskolnikov’s thirst for money and secular power. Rather than an external or financial “retailoring,” Raskolnikov needs to “retailor” his inner self.

Raskolnikov is ultimately “punished” on the Nikolaevsky Bridge, where he is whipped in a scene recalling his dream of the mare as well as the lashing of Evgenii in *The Bronze Horseman*. Instead of saving the mare, it is as if Raskolnikov symbolically changes places with it. Although there are no transparent references in the Nikolaevsky Bridge scene to the famous equestrian monument to Peter I or to Pushkin’s poem that features it, both are implied in a number of ways, as Valentina Vetlovskaiia convincingly demonstrates: “Raskolnikov can see distinctly every adornment on St. Isaac’s Cathedral, but resolutely does not notice the monument to Peter, which is bigger than any of these adornments, and closer to him.”²⁶ The monument is mentioned explicitly in draft versions of this scene, but in the final version only “the square” [i.e., Senate Square] is alluded to directly. Yet as Vetlovskaiia remarks, “[The monument] is all the more noticeable for not being named...it is, to use Tacitus’s phrase, conspicuous by its absence.”²⁷ Given Raskolnikov’s whipping, his position on the bridge, placing the monument in full view,

²⁵ In an exchange with Raskolnikov, Razumikhin says, “I announce to you, that all of you, to the last, are babblers and braggarts. A little suffering comes along and you fuss about like a chicken with an egg. Even here you steal from foreign authors (*voruete chuzhykh avtorov*)... So if you weren’t a fool, a banal fool, a fool stuffed to the gills, a foreign translation (*perevod s inostrannogo*)... You see Rodya, I admit, you are a smart little fellow (*ty maliy umnyi*), but you’re a fool!” (*PSS*, VI, 130). There are a number of elements linking Raskolnikov to German and French culture, such as his hat and his literary pedigree, which traces to Pushkin’s *Germann*, as well as his obsession with Napoleon and Razumikhin’s offer of work in the form of translations from the German.

²⁶ Valentina Vetlovskaiia, “Dostoevsky and Pushkin: Petersburg Motifs in *Crime and Punishment*,” *Dostoevsky on the Threshold of Other Worlds: Essays in Honor of Malcolm V. Jones*, ed. Sarah Young and Leslie Milne (Ilkeston, Derbyshire: Bramcote Press, 2006): 21-39. The citation appears on p. 30.

²⁷ Vetlovskaiia, “Dostoevsky and Pushkin,” 31.

and especially the description of him “seeming to fly upwards,” leaving his past “in some kind of deep gulf far below him,” the entire scene evokes strong analogy with Evgenii’s fateful confrontation with and punishment by the Bronze Idol. It is as if he has been punished by the nefarious spirit of Peter, who continues to guard his city and legacy.

Every time Raskolnikov crosses the bridge on his way home from the university, he is struck by an “inexplicable coldness” that seems to waft outward from the magnificent view. For him this panorama is always “filled with a mute and deaf spirit.” He has long been intrigued by this strange sensation, but “not trusting himself,” he always puts off trying to puzzle out his lingering unease.²⁸ As one might suspect from Dostoevsky’s use of quotation marks in the drafts, and as scholars including Valentina Vetlovskaiia, Simonetta Salvestroni, and Boris Tikhomirov have pointed out, the phrase “mute and deaf spirit” (*Dukh nemoi i glukhoi*) is a quotation from Mark 9: 25 and occurs in a passage in which Jesus drives a demon out of the son of a man.²⁹ At the heart of

²⁸ Когда он ходил в университет, то обыкновенно—чаще всего, возвращаясь домой,—случалось ему, может быть раз сто, останавливать именно на этом же самом месте, пристально вглядываясь в эту действительно великолепную панораму и каждый раз почти удивляться одному неясному и неразрешимому своему впечатлению. Необъяснимым холодом веяло на него всегда от этой великолепной панорамы; духом немым и глухим полна была для него эта пышная картина... Дивился он каждый раз своему угрюмому и загадочному впечатлению и откладывал разгадку его, не доверяя себе, в будущее. PSS, VI, 90. All of the major draft versions contain this scene in some form, and even a superficial comparison reveals how carefully Dostoevsky worked on this passage. The keystone is the phrase describing the panorama as “filled with a mute and deaf spirit.” In the first draft the phrase occurs in quotation marks and is modified a number of times, from “spirit of muteness and silence” (*Dukhom nemoty i molchaniia*) to “spirit mute and deaf” (*dukh nemoi i glukhoi*) to the final version as it appears in the novel, “filled with a mute and deaf spirit” (*Dukhom nemym i glukhim polna...*). In the earliest drafts the spirit is “poured out along this entire panorama” (*razlit po vsei etoi panorame*; PSS, VII, 39-40), as if it is liquid. Moreover, the description of the view is darker and is strongly associated with death. “There is in [this view] a certain quality that destroys everything, mortifies everything (*vse mertvit*), turns everything to nothing, and this quality is utter coldness and deathliness (*mertvennost*)” (PSS, VII, 39).

²⁹ Note the father-son connection in the Biblical passage, which resonates in important ways with Raskolnikov as a figurative son of the Tsar-Father. I will cite the passage from Mark 9 in full from the Russian translation published in St. Petersburg in 1823, which, as far as I have been able to determine, was the only full Russian translation available to Dostoevsky. I have modified the Russian slightly to conform more closely to modern orthography.

17) Один из народа сказал в ответ: Учитель! я привел к Тебе сына моего, одержимого духом немymi. 18) Всякий раз, когда схватывает его, *терзает*; и он *испускает пену*, и *скрежещет зубами и сохнет*. Я просил учеников Твоих, чтобы выгнали его; но не могли. 19) Иисус, ответствуя ему, говорит: о род неверный! доколе буду с вами? доколе

the passage is the motif of the *son's spiritual possession* and his subsequent release, or *liberation*, from this state by the intercession of Christ. Raskolnikov appears on the verge of sensing the presence of this spirit while on Nikolaevsky Bridge, but the narrator highlights his ultimate failure to fathom the full significance of his impression: “not trusting himself,” he always put off solving his puzzling impression “for the future.”³⁰

буду терпеть вас? приведите его ко Мне. 20) И привели его к Нему: и когда *бесноватый* увидел Его; тотчас *дух потряс его: он упал на землю, и валялся, испуская пену.* 21) И спросил Иисус отца его: как давно это ему приключилось? Он сказал: с младенчества; 22) и многократно *бросал его, то в огонь, то в воду, чтобы погубить его;* но если можешь сколько-нибудь, умилосердись над нами, помоги нам. 23) Иисус сказал ему: если можешь сколько-нибудь веровать, все возможно верующему. 24) И вдруг отец отрока того возопил со слезами: верую, Господи! помоги моему неверию. 25) Иисус, видя, что сбегается народ, *запретил духу нечистому, сказав ему: дух немой и глухой! Я тебе повелеваю, выйди из него, и впредь не входи в него.* 26) И *дух, вскричав, и сильно потрясши его, вышел; и он сделался как мертвый, так что многие говорили: он умер.* 27) Но Иисус, взяв его за руку, поднял его; и он встал. 28) И как вошел Иисус в дом; то ученики спрашивали Его наедине: почему мы не могли выгнать его? 29) Он отвечал им: *сей род ничем не может быть выгнан, как токмо молитвою и постом.* [my emphasis]

I am grateful to one of my reviewers for making me aware of Tikhomirov's insightful discussion of this passage, which in many ways dovetails with my reading. For Tikhomirov's discussion of the Nikolaevsky Bridge scene, see: Boris Tikhomirov, “Lazar’! Griadi von’’: Roman F. M. Dostoevskogo “*Prestuplenie i nakazanie*” v *sovremennom prochenii. Knigakommentarii* (Sankt-Peterburg: Serebrianyi vek, 2005): 152-157. His discussion can also be found in: B. N. Tikhomirov, “Peterburgskii kommentarii k romanu ‘Prestuplenie i nakazanie’ (Prostranstvo, vremia, realii, reministsentsii),” in *Dostoevskii: Dopolneniia k kommentariiu*, ed. T. A. Kasatkina (Moskva: Nauka, 2005): 75-79. Vetlovskaiia appears to be the first to identify the source of the “mute and deaf spirit” allusion in a footnote. See: V. E. Vetlovskaiia, “Analiz epicheskogo proizvedeniia. Logika polozhenii (“tot svet” v Prestuplenii i nakazanii),” *Dostoevskii: Materialy i issledovaniia*, Vol. 14, p. 127, fn. 12. Simonetta Salvestroni's monograph, *Dostoevskij e la Bibbia*, which appeared in Italian in 1998, also discusses the “mute and deaf spirit” passage. I have consulted the Russian translation of her monograph, which Salvestroni appears to have done herself. See: Simonetta Salvestroni, *Bibleiskie i sviatootecheskie istochniki romanov Dostoevskogo* (Sankt-Peterburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2001). For her discussion of the “mute and deaf spirit” passage, see especially pp. 35-37.

³⁰ PSS, VI, 90. Dostoevsky's psychological description of Raskolnikov's soul in the Nikolaevsky Bridge scene underlines the way in which the “demon” of Peter's spiritual legacy is now in possession of Raskolnikov's psyche—it literally inhabits this space, and the reader is intended to recognize this possession of Raskolnikov's soul, but this recognition remains outside Raskolnikov's conscious grasp. Instead, this knowledge flits teasingly around the edges of Raskolnikov's consciousness, leaving him unable to puzzle out the reasons for his lingering sensation of coldness and a “mute, deaf spirit.” Dostoevsky shatters Raskolnikov's demonically-inspired image of himself flying above creation and his past, which seemingly lies “in a deep gulf” but “under his feet,” when he involuntarily squeezes the alms he has been given on the bridge, where he was whipped in a manner recalling “poor, poor Evgenii” in *The*

Motifs from Mark 9 are interwoven throughout *Crime and Punishment*, making the Biblical possession subtext central to understanding Raskolnikov's psychic sickness. In the 1823 Russian translation the mute and deaf spirit is described as "tearing at" (*terzaet*) the son so that he "foams at the mouth" (*ispuskaet penu*), "gnashes his teeth" (*skrezheshchet zubami*), and "becomes parched" (*sokhnet*; the King James has "pines"). Moreover, the boy's body is "rent" and "shaken" (*potrias*; *potriasshi ego*). Raskolnikov emits foam from his lips, which often feel parched, grinds his teeth on a number of occasions, and suffers from mild convulsive twitching. Prior to the murder he sees a foppishly dressed man preying on a drunken girl. "Hey you, Svidrigailov!" he yells, clenching his fists and "laughing with lips foamy from spite," while shortly after his whipping on the Nikolaevsky Bridge, he "spitefully gnashes his teeth." Later, reflecting on "Napoleon, the pyramids, Waterloo," Raskolnikov comes to the conclusion that he is a louse; he makes this confession to himself while "gnashing his teeth." During one of his interviews with Porfiry Petrovich Raskolnikov is overcome by a sudden urge to strangle him. "Even while entering, he was afraid of this spite. He sensed that his lips were completely parched, his heart was pounding, and foam was covering his lips." During Porfiry's final visit "small convulsive twitches" pass over Raskolnikov's entire face, causing Porfiry to remark, "Your lip is trembling again, like that other time."³¹

In nearly every instance in which Raskolnikov's "demon" manifests itself, it is in response to spite (*zloba*), a word built on the root for "evil" (*zlo*). "Spitefully" (*zlobno*), "spiteful" (*zlobnyi*), "spite" (*zlost'*, *zloba*) and "evil" (*zlo*) occur with an almost relentless frequency in the novel, a root that likewise permeates *The Bronze Horseman*, where "spite" traces to Peter's rationale for founding his city: "to spite the haughty neighbors" (*na zlo nadmennomu sosedu*). It is as if Peter's spite in turn breeds the spiteful counterattacks of the "furious" Neva River, which rings in Evgenii's ears until it finally provokes him to challenge Peter's bronze

Bronze Horseman. Raskolnikov's "demon" thus causes him to fancy himself in the role of a Peter the Great, but Dostoevsky consciously deflates his hero and undercuts these delusions of grandeur through embedded allusions to Raskolnikov as a "little person" and through the demonic possession subtext.

³¹ ...смеясь своими запенившимися от злобы губами; ...злобно заскрежетал и защекал зубами. *PSS*, VI, 40, 89; ...скрежеща зубами, *PSS*, VI, 211; Он, еще входя сюда, этой злобы боялся. Он чувствовал, что пересохла его губы, сердце колотится, пена запеклась на губах. *PSS*, VI, 262; Мелкие конвульсии вдруг прошли по всему его лицу.—Губка-то опять, как и тогда, вздрагивает,—пробормотал как бы даже с участием Порфирий Петрович. *PSS*, VI, 349.

idol: “Good (day), wonderworking builder!”/He whispered, *trembling with spite,—*“Just you wait!” (*Dobro, stroitel’ chudotvornyi!/Shepnul on, zlobno zadrozhav,—/Uzho tebe!*).³² Raskolnikov confesses, “Sonia, I have an evil heart,” and he is continually overcome by a sense of his “limitless spite.”³³

Like the possessed son in Mark 9, Raskolnikov’s ordeal leaves him spiritually “dead”—a condition Dostoevsky highlights through allusions to the raising of Lazarus.³⁴ Yet Raskolnikov cannot merely “roll away the stone” of Petrine culture—he must wear away its ossifying effects over a long period of suffering and humiliation, while the healing waters of spiritual redemption will be shared with him by Sonia, who is symbolically connected with water and well imagery and, as Henry Russell notes, serves as a “midwife” for the rebirth of Raskolnikov’s soul.³⁵

Vetlovskaja has noted Raskolnikov’s links to Pushkin’s Evgenii, but Raskolnikov’s stance on the bridge [“He stood and looked off into the distance” (*On stoial i smotrel vdal’*)] simultaneously causes the passage to resonate with the opening to *The Bronze Horseman*, where Peter the

³² Note how Pushkin juxtaposes *dobro* and *zlo*: it is as if Evgenii’s challenge is intended as a reminder to the tsar about goodness.

³³ ...вдруг опять беспредельная злоба блеснула в глазах его. *PSS*, VI, 267.

³⁴ Scholarship on motifs associated with the novel’s embedded Lazarus text is too vast to outline here. For a refreshingly new approach to the theme, see: Tat’iana Kasatkina, “Lazarus Resurrected: A Proposed Exegetical Reading of Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*,” *Russian Studies in Literature*, vol. 40, no. 4, Fall 2004, 6-37.

³⁵ Henry M. W. Russell, “Beyond the will: Humiliation as Christian necessity in ‘Crime and Punishment’,” in *Fyodor Dostoevsky’s “Crime and Punishment”*, ed. Harold Bloom (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2004), 240. Water imagery is often connected with spiritual renewal in the novel, but Raskolnikov repeatedly refuses a drink of water. When Nastas’ia is chiding him for brooding instead of tutoring children, she tells him “Don’t spit in the well” (*A ty v kolodez’ ne pluii; PSS*, VI, 27), meaning that he shouldn’t belittle his tutoring because it feeds him. Her remark is an unfinished proverb implying that you should not spit in a well that you may need to drink from. Yet in figurative terms, the “well” that Raskolnikov mocks early in the novel but eventually “drinks from” is Sonia, who is connected with both water imagery and the Holy Spirit. After hearing of her fate from Marleladov, Raskolnikov sarcastically equates her situation to “gold mining,” noting that she will eventually become “bankrupt” from it. “What a well (*Kakoi kolodez’*), however, they have managed to dig! And they use it!” he muses. In the “Epilogue” Raskolnikov and Sonia are “resurrected by love, the heart of one contained endless sources (*istochniki*) of life for the heart of the other” (*PSS*, VI, 421). A primary meaning of the word *istochnik* is a spring. In symbolic terms, love is thus a kind of figurative “water” (with an implied connection to the Holy Spirit). As Raskolnikov muses prior to his confession in the police station, “Water wears down stone” (*Voda kamen’ tochit, PSS*, VI, 402). Stone imagery in the novel is not only connected with the rolling away of Lazarus’ stone, but also with the figurative stone of Peter the Great, his cultural legacy, and his “stone city” of Petersburg.

Great first appears “looking off into the distance” (*Stoial On/Dum velikikh poln/i vdal’ gliadel*). In Pushkin’s masterpiece Peter the Great is “filled with great thoughts” that seem to radiate outward in space, where they eventually solidify into the hard stone of his future capital. In *Crime and Punishment* the magnificent panorama is “filled with a mute and deaf spirit”—the spirit of the Petrine legacy. Dostoevsky can be said to realize Ivan Aksakov’s metaphors from lead pieces in *The Day*, where Aksakov claims: “the arm of Peter (*dlan’ Petra*) is still extended over Russia, the spirit of Peter rushes outward” (January 1864); “all of this [scorn for the people] flows directly and unmediated from the principle carried into our historical life by Peter I, all of this has more or less eaten into the flesh and blood of our educated society [...] All of it is one and the same spirit” (13 March 1865).³⁶ *Crime and Punishment* represents Dostoevsky’s attempt to bring this cultural disease to the surface in the hope that it might lead toward national healing and renewal, for as he notes in “Two Camps of Theorists”:

It is not a sickness that is in the full view of all that is dangerous...but one which lies deeply hidden, one which has still not come to the surface It is the same in society...

Dostoevsky’s grappling with Russia’s cultural disease did not end with *Crime and Punishment*; the subsequent appearance of *Demons* and *The Brothers Karamazov* suggests that he found the malady far more pernicious, widespread and deep-rooted than he at first suspected.

³⁶ Given the degree of resonance between Ivan Aksakov’s lead articles from *The Day* and motifs in *Crime and Punishment*, it should hardly come as a surprise that Dostoevsky’s notebooks from 1865 contain a direct reference to Aksakov’s 1865 piece “On the Despotism of Theory Over Life”:

With Peter’s reforms and European life we took into ourselves the bourgeois form of life and separated ourselves from the people, as in the West. From this [action] consciousness and self-analysis developed, but material for [living] knowledge (directly from the life of the people) continually grew less and less (*The Day*, No. 5, 1865) *PSS*, XX, 194.