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2009, Form B. Many works of literature deal with political or social issues. Choose a novel or play that focuses on a political or social issue. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author uses literary elements to explore this issue and explain how the issue contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Raskolnik - means dissenter from orthodox church. Which is why sonia believes rasky did the crime - because he left god and was possessed by the devil. This is another social cleavage.

Razum - means reason

Irony - former law student doesn’t believe in the law

**Analyze how author uses literary elements to explore political and social issues:**

Thesis: With setting, characterization, and character dilemmas, Dostoevsky explores the social issue of the large wealth and class divide in society.

-setting - There is a huge wealth and social gap. There is a conflict between capitalist ideas or ‘every man for himself’ and ideas of generosity and socialism. This is why rasky is always in a conflict about generosity versus living for himself - describe squalid conditions of area, poverty that katerina lives in, bad environment for rasky. There is a conflict between caring for others and minding your own capitalism. But rasky is always in conflict about handing out wealth, which explains why he feels regret about handing money for drunk woman in cab and handing money to katerina. And, Luzhin says giving money to dounia’s family is poor economics, and marmeladov hopes that there can be passion in economics so he can get a generous loan from the bank. Rasky rejects the idea of helping others for his personal gain. Rasky uses the social issue to justify his crime, but eventually rejects this for personal gain.

-characterization and foil: author explores social issue further when it comes to how characters redeem themselves. Because of the wealth divides, there are two primary ways to redeem yourself - provide money and provide dignity. Rasky gives money to polenka. Rasky gives back dignity to sonia by acknowledging her humanity - sharing his confession with her means he knows she is capable of empathy, which humanizes her, which directly contrasts and tries to make up for how she is objectified during prostitution. Marfa leaves 3k in her will to dounia, and spends her whole life showing Dounia’s letter to the village to show everyone that dounia is good. But there is also great divide between dignity and money itself.

-dilemmas between dignity and money: accepting money versus not marrying Svid, Dounia accepting wealth versus losing pride by marrying Luzhin, prostituting versus dignity for family- She should have dignity in the fact that she is doing this for her family, but consistently apologizes for it to her father at his death bed. She was forced into sex labor by her (step?) mother. paying for funeral versus pride- As a woman who had pride before marrying Marmeladov, she still carries this pride when she uses practically all of her money for the funeral expenses. Not for her husband, or the sanctity of marriage, but for her pide.

**Crime and Punishment:**

**Haley McGraw, Anna Moore, Nicholas Zimmerman, Sarai Daniels**

**Prompt (1988):** Choose a distinguished novel or play in which some of the most significant events are mental or psychological; for example, awakenings, discoveries, changes in consciousness. In a well-organized essay, describe how the author manages to give these internal events the sense of excitement, suspense, and climax usually associated with external action.

1. Introduction:
   1. Meaning of work as a whole- An individual’s environment shapes their psychological processes, influencing their actions and perspectives.
   2. Thesis- In Crime and Punishment, written by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Raskolnikov experiences a variety of changes in consciousness and internal conflicts leading up to the crime and following his crime.
   3. Include: title, author, background information (AVOID too much summary)
2. Body # 1: Raskolnikov ‘s internal conflict in the beginning of the novel about if he should kill the pawnbroker.
   1. Topic sentence: Raskolnikov is tormented by an internal conflict as to whether or not to kill the pawnbroker in order to “benefit” society.
   2. Main points: subconsciousness, premurder, internal conflicts, living in poverty stricken area, very chaotic, messy thoughts, Raskolnikov’s dual nature
   3. Textual Evidence: “how could such an atrocious thing come into my head? What filthy things my heart is capable of.”, “Raskolnikov was not used to crowds, and, as we said before, he avoided society of every sort, more especially of late.”, “I knew it, he muttered in confusion, ‘ I thought so! That's the worst of all! Why a stupid thing like this, most trivial details might spoil the whole plan” (hes v paranoid and worries about his hat), “sinking heart and a nervous tremor”,
3. Body #2: Raskolnikov’s internal conflict after he commits the murder of the pawnbroker.
   1. Topic Sentence: Once Raskolnikov voluntarily breaks the law for what he believes is his innate right, he falls into a spiral of self-destruction as guilt and regret consumes him.
   2. Main points: post murder, discovery of what will happen, his guilt and sickness, his dreams, possibly connect to the symbol of yellow (equating to poverty), ordinary vs. extraordinary
   3. Textual Evidence: “he positively smiled at himself” “I have been worrying myself, I shall get well and I shall not worry… but what if I don’t get well at all?” Porfiry claim that individuals nature is shaped by environment
4. Body # 3: Raskolnikov’s psychological change after he confesses to the crime and is extradited to Siberia
   1. Topic Sentence: After Raskolnikov turns himself in, his exile from St. Petersburg to Siberia places him in a new environment that allows him to recollect himself.
   2. Main Points: confession and punishment, spiritual awakening, siberia is in the middle of nowhere, connects with nature, gets his sanity back
   3. Textual Evidence: refer to the epilogue
5. Conclusion (without redundancy): The harsh Russian government and impoverished environment shape Raskolnikov’s actions, eventually leading to his choice to murder the pawnbroker and endure internal conflicts, self-discoveries, and awakenings about himself and his subconscious.
   1. Tie back to the MOWAW
   2. Restate Raskolnikov’s overall psychological state- stable?

**Side Notes (keep in mind throughout the essay)**

\*Environment= poverty (communism/socialism)

\*Love and forgiveness

\*Role of Fate (Landlady’s axe is unreachable)

\*Dreams v.s. Reality

**Prompt: 2002 Form B**

Often in literature, a character’s success in achieving goals depends on keeping a secret and divulging it only at the right moment, if at all. Choose a novel or play of literary merit that requires a character to keep a secret. In a well-organized essay, briefly explain the necessity for secrecy and how the character’s choice to reveal or keep the secret affects the plot and contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. You may select a work from the list below, or you may choose another work of recognized literary merit suitable to the topic. Do NOT write about a short story, poem, or film.

**Outline:**

1. Introduction
   1. Background (book, author, plot)
   2. Thesis
      1. In order to stay above the law as an extraordinary person, Raskolnikov keeps the secret of his murder until his guilt accumulates to the point where he confesses as a chance to atone for his sins.
2. Crime/reason for secrecy
   1. Mental state
      1. Monomania (obsession with one thought)
      2. Misanthropic and self-absorbed
   2. Crime
      1. Murders a pawnbroker and her sister
      2. He believed that he could do more good with their money but didn’t end up robbing them
   3. Reason:
      1. Extraordinary Man theory (believes he is above the law and above being caught)
      2. Wanted to continue to live after witnessing woman committing suicide
   4. Poor and wanted to do with the money what he thought was best
3. Accumulation of guilt
   1. Fainting at police station when they were talking about the murder
   2. Razumihin trying to advocate for Nikolay’s innocence
   3. Dreams
      1. Nightmare about horse getting beaten
      2. Nightmare about woman (pawnbroker kept laughing in face)
   4. Constant thoughts of confession and suicide
      1. Returning to the flat and asking about the blood
      2. Talking to Zametov and basically revealing that he could be the murderer
      3. Tries to confess to Porfiry before Nikolay comes in and confesses
   5. Paranoia
      1. Believes that Porfiry and Zametov thinks he is the murderer
      2. Man that shouts “Murderer” at Raskolnikov in the street
4. Confession
   1. Porfiry knows he guilty but gives him chance to confess so that the court will be easier on him
   2. Sonia
      1. Convinces Raskolnikov to confess
      2. Her presence helps him confess after he has second thoughts
   3. Atonement for sins
      1. Religious
      2. Sonia gave him a necklace with a cross similar to hers
   4. Dounia forgave him and said that she would support him
   5. Prison sentence
      1. 8 years in Siberia
      2. Sonia followed him
5. Conclusion

Morally ambiguous characters--characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good--are at the heart of many works of literature. Choose a novel or play in which a morally ambiguous character plays a pivotal role. Then write an essay in which you explain how the character can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why his or her moral ambiguity is significant to the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

1. Intro
   1. Focus on character of Raskolnikov and the reader’s constant struggle to determine if he’s good or evil
   2. Thesis
      1. While Raskolnikov may have committed the horrid crime of murder, he also displays constant instances of compassion and love for other characters which advances the novel’s meaning, a young man’s guilt may arise from both a moral dilemma and an internal struggle for superiority over others.
2. Body Paragraph #1
   1. Is he purely evil?
      1. Textual References
         1. Murder of Lizaveta and Alyona
         2. Superiority complex (thinks he is above it)
         3. Lies to family and friends about committing murder
         4. Believes Dounia is marrying Luzhin just to help him, won’t accept that she could be doing it for herself.
         5. Does not show remorse for the killings, but feels guilt and worries he might get caught and not actually be above the murders.
         6. Ordinary vs Extraordinary shows that he characterizes and groups people
      2. Characters to Use:
         1. Raskolnikov
         2. Dounia
         3. Luzhin
         4. Alyona
         5. Lizaveta
3. Body Paragraph #2
   1. Is he purely good?
      1. Textual References
         1. Donates money to Marmeladov’s family not once but twice
         2. Attends Marmeladov’s funeral out of both respect and to help the family grieve especially Sonia
         3. Does not want Dounia to marry for him or for money. He wants her to marry out of love. Somewhat protects her from Svidrigailov when he returns to ask for Dounia’s hand in marriage
         4. Becomes extremely stressed and anxious to the point of sickness after he has committed the crime
         5. Confesses and shows remorse in the end once he has been sent to Siberia
      2. Characters to use:
         1. Raskolnikov
         2. Marmeladov
         3. Sonia
         4. Katerina
         5. Razumikhin
         6. Pulcheria Alexandronova
         7. Porfiry
4. Conclusion
   1. How does all this relate to meaning as a whole
      1. Raskolnikov’s moral ambiguity shows the whimsical nature of humans in systems. Even though there are many perspectives on every action and crime in a system, each individual on either side of the spectrum could change the way they see the crime instantaneously.
      2. The ambiguity of the character may symbolize how taking justice into your own hands can be viewed as both evil and good depending on the nature of law. Is Raskolnikov extraordinary or ordinary? Is there a real difference between the two?

Nihilism- the rejection of all religious and moral principles, often in the belief that life is meaningless

-the doctrine of an extreme Russian revolutionary party c. 1900, which found nothing to approve of in the established social order.

Nihilism is a [philosophical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy) [doctrine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doctrine) that suggests the lack of belief in one or more reputedly [meaningful](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meaning_of_life) aspects of life. Most commonly, nihilism is presented in the form of [existential nihilism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Existential_nihilism), which argues that life is without objective meaning, purpose, or [intrinsic value](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intrinsic_value_(ethics)).[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nihilism#cite_note-1) [Moral nihilists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_nihilism) assert that [morality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morality) does not inherently exist, and that any established moral values are abstractly contrived. Nihilism can also take [epistemological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistemology), [ontological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ontology), or [metaphysical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphysics) forms, meaning respectively that, in some aspect, knowledge is not possible, or that reality does not actually exist.

Utilitarianism is an ethical theory that states that the best action is the one that maximizes utility. "Utility" is defined in various ways, usually in terms of the well-being of sentient entities, such as human beings and other animals.

The Russian Nihilist movement was a Russian trend in the 1860s that rejected all authority.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nihilism#cite_note-13) Their name derives from the [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) [nihil](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/nihil), meaning "nothing". After the assassination of Tsar [Alexander II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_II_of_Russia) in 1881, the Nihilists gained a reputation throughout Europe as proponents of the use of violence for political change.[[citation needed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] The Nihilists expressed anger at what they described as the abusive nature of the [Eastern Orthodox Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) and of the tsarist monarchy, and at the domination of the Russian economy by the aristocracy.

Nihilism - Philosophy

* Abandoning values and knowledge
* Ethical nihilism (moral nihilism) rejects the possibility of absolute moral or ethical values. Good and evil are vague, and related values are simply the result of social and emotional pressures.

Raskolnikov - Nihilist

* Rask believes in ethical nihilism
* Believes that criminality (or being extraordinary) is inherent
* Has his own moral code outside of the law
* Utilitarianism and nihilism are his motives for murder
  + Nihilism: rejecting moral principles to murder
  + Utilitarianism: rob her for wealth because he is impoverished
* At the end, when he finds love, he throws away his nihilism
* “Pain and suffering are always inevitable for a large intelligence and a deep heart. The really great men must, I think, have great sadness on earth.”
* “To go wrong in one's own way is better than to go right in someone else's.”
* “Taking a new step, uttering a new word, is what people fear most.”

Porfiry

* Believes that criminality is determined by environment
* If society is organized, there is no crime
* Opposite of Nihilism
* Can rehabilitate criminals into better members of society

Literary Elements

* Imagery
* Symbolism
* Allegory

2009, Form B. Many works of literature deal with political or social issues. Choose a novel or play that focuses on a political or social issue. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the author uses literary elements to explore this issue and explain how the issue contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

1. Introduction
2. Background
   1. Dostoyevsky’s past
   2. Situation in Russia at current time period

B. Thesis: In Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment,* Nihilism is prevalent as the author depicts the protagonist, Raskolnikov’s, inner thoughts through imagery, symbolism, and allusion to show Raskolnikov’s refusal to cooperate with the moral code.

II. Body Paragraph I: Raskolnikov

1. “Pain and suffering are always inevitable for a large intelligence and a deep heart. The really great men must, I think, have great sadness on earth.”
2. “To go wrong in one's own way is better than to go right in someone else's.”
3. “Taking a new step, uttering a new word, is what people fear most.”
4. Imagery for the murders, blood

III. Body Paragraph II: Raskolnikov vs. Porfiry

1. Believes that criminality is determined by environment

- If society is organized, there is no crime

- Opposite of Nihilism

- Can rehabilitate criminals into better members of society

- “Pawnbroker’s death was for the betterment of society”

B. Environment

- St. Petersburg, Russia vs. Siberia

IV. Body Paragraph III: Love

1. Raskolnikov’s love for Sonya stopped his beliefs in Nihilism
2. Porfiry’s belief that incarceration can make criminals better is wrong when it comes to Raskolnikov’s recovery because love is the primary factor.
3. Familial love: Raskolnikov to Dounia
4. Lazarus reference (allusion)

V. Conclusion

1. Restate thesis: In Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment,* Nihilism is prevalent as the author depicts the protagonist, Raskolnikov’s, inner thoughts through imagery, symbolism, and allusion to show Raskolnikov’s refusal to cooperate with the moral code.

One definition of madness is “mental delusion or the eccentric behavior arising from it.” But Emily Dickinson wrote Much madness is divinest Sense--To a discerning Eye--Novelists and playwrights have often seen madness with a “discerning Eye.” Select a novel or play in which a character’s apparent madness or irrational behavior plays an important role. Then **write a well-organized essay in which you explain what this delusion or eccentric behavior consists of and how it might be judged reasonable. Explain the significance of the “madness” to the work as a whole.**

* Intro
  + Thesis: Marmeladov’s constant drinking despite his poverty and inability to pay for his habit and his belief that he is unable to change himself despite the fact that he wants to change is his madness. This can be judged reasonable because of this belief. This madness is significant to the work as a whole because he believes that he should be punished for this behavior, similar to Raskolnikov.
* BP 1: Marmeladov’s beliefs
  + Believes he cannot change, no matter how much he wants to
  + “I am a beast by nature”
  + “Does not my heart ache to think what a useless worm I am”
  + Knows that it is his fault that he lost his job and is ashamed of it
* BP 2: Marmeladov’s desire to change & how it’s affected by his beliefs
  + “I drink so that I can suffer twice as much”
  + Believes he cannot change, so he punishes himself by constantly drinking
  + Knows how hard his family works to get money and still spends it
  + “There’s nothing to pity me for! I ought to be crucified, crucified on a cross, not pitied! Crucify me, oh judge, crucify me but pity me! And then I will go out of myself to be crucified, for it’s not merry-making I seek but tears and tribulation.”
* BP 3: Relation of madness as a whole
  + Believes that he needs to be punished for his “crime,” just as raskolnikov ends up being punished for his
* Conclusion

Thematic statement: Nihilism is an unrealistic and impersonal way to approach life as human nature is oftentimes a more powerful than the greater good.

1976. The conflict created when the will of an individual opposes the will of the majority is the recurring theme of many novels, plays, and essays. Select the work of an essayist who is in opposition to his or her society; or from a work of recognized literary merit, select a fictional character who is in opposition to his or her society. In a critical essay, analyze the conflict and discuss the moral and ethical implications for both the individual and the society. Do not summarize the plot or action of the work you choose.

Raskolnikov separates himself with his

* Textual References:
* Porfiry/Razumihin’s reaction to Raskolnikov’s theory
* Porfiry’s crime based on Environment theory
* Raskolnikov’s theory of crime/extraordinary men compared to ordinary
* Double homicide with axe
* Confession to Ilya Petrovich
* Near suicide near the bridge/The woman that jumps over
* Dream where he watches the horse getting beaten over the head and killed
* Pre-murder and post-murder thoughts/feelings
* Stole money but then can’t convince himself to use it
* Dunia and Luzhin getting married
* Overhearing the men talk about Aloyna in the bar
* Thesis: In Fyodor Dostoyevky’s Crime and Punishment, Raskolnikov separates himself from his society with his nihilistic
* Body I
  + Idea of extraordinary men compared to ordinary
    - Society’s rejection of his idea
      * Porfiry and Razumihin’s reaction
      * Alternate environment idea
  + Gives him right to murder
  + Justifies his actions
    - Validation for himself
    - Would mean Dounia doesn’t have to marry Luzhin
    - He believes society would be better off without Alayna
  + Reaction to the dream he has before he kills
    - Realization that he will commit the crime
* Body II
  + His drive to kill, reaction to Dunia and Luzhin’s marriage
  + Reaction to murder
  + Post murder thoughts
    - He warned himself criminals often act irrational but that doesn’t stop him from going crazy
  + Guilt nearly pushes him to suicide/confession
    - Confession to Ilya
* Conclusion
  + Raskolnikov’s driving force to commit the murders have set him to believe he is superior
* Thematic statement: Nihilism is an unrealistic and impersonal way to approach life as human nature is oftentimes a more powerful than the greater good.

2002 Essay Prompt Outline

Marmeladov as an ambiguous character

1. Marmeladov attempts to save Katerina Ivanova
2. Both parties were lost and alone
3. Use each other for survival needs
4. When Marmeladov becomes a drunk, the curtain drops and the situation can be seen for what it is.

II. Marmaledov attempts to save himself.

1. After many years of unemployment, Marmeladov decides to be responsible and get a job
2. allows his family to dote over him because of it
3. Tries very hard to go to work the first day but fails.
4. When it rains it pours- not only did he not go to work but he took all of Katerina’s things and pawned them for alcohol. His strong addiction prevented him from saving himself

III. Marmaledov doesn’t attempt to save Sonia, his daughter.

1. Sonia becomes a prostitute at a very young age
2. Marmaledov doesn’t ask Sonia to become a prostitute, but doesn’t stop her.
3. Allows her to become the main provider for the family, but it hurts him bc his family means so much to him
4. He loves everyone but can’t overcome the addiction. The one thing he held near and dear to his heart, he couldn’t save so didn’t even bother

Ex. In the tavern Marmeladov tells a stranger (Raskolnikov) about his sad life and when everyone laughs at him he laughs along. He doesn’t bother to fix his situation because he knows it is useless.

IV. Although Marmeladov is the reason for his family’s woes, he could be a character the reader would want to see succeed.

1. His success would mean the small children wouldn’t starve
2. Although only for material things and more pride and prestige, Katerina would show more affection and love for him if he succeeded
3. Sonia’s reputation is already shot but she could stop being a prostitute
4. Marmeladov would get what he wanted the most secretly, to be able to take care of his family. Which was his primary purpose after all.