Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Kafka's *The Trial*

The polar opposition or contrapuntal structuring inherent in *The Brothers Karamazov* may be seen also in Dostoevsky's earlier novel *Crime and Punishment*. Although he does not work out his structures with quite the compunction and care we find in *The Brothers Karamazov*, it is clear that Dostoevsky intended in *Crime and Punishment* to form a counterpoint alternating between two aspects of Raskolnikov's psychological adjustment: his relationship to mother, sister, and mother surrogates and his relationship to the authorities of the state, the police and detectives, and to various father figures. If one can generalize, perhaps dangerously, one sees that parts one, three, and five deal largely with the former relationship; parts two, four, and six with the latter; and the epilogue, consisting of two chapters, hints at solutions and reconciliations within the tortured conscience of the hero, showing him finally perhaps that these two problems are actually one, or at least closely related, and revealing to him the true motivation for his crime (a motivation he has sought vainly to discover throughout all six parts).

Briefly, in summary, the emphasis in part one is on Raskolnikov's thoughts of the old pawnbroker and her sister; the crucial letter from his mother revealing Raskolnikov's painful family ties to her and Dounia; his abandonment of the drunken girl; his dream of the tortured mare; and his murder of Alyona Ivanovna and Lizaveta. In part three, Raskolnikov's mother and sister arrive in Saint Petersburg, and we are able to observe this triadic family relationship at close range. In part five the role of Sonia becomes paramount in Raskolnikov's life in his confession to her, foreshadowing the resolution of his ambivalence.
toward the mother and consequently toward other women.

On the other hand, in part two Raskolnikov makes his first visit to police headquarters and faints in fear of punishment for his crime. Razumihin, a nurturing father-brother, tends him in his illness. We meet here, too, several fathers manqué: Luhzin, who lives only for himself; Zametov, a father confessor, who does not listen to what Raskolnikov is trying to confess; or Marmeladov, who dies having lived and drunk at the expense of his daughter's virtue (much as Raskolnikov feels he may now exploit Dounia's). In part four the relationship with the police is observed at close range and in detail (as in part two his relationship with his mother and sister had been), particularly through the developing game of wits he and Porfiry Petrovich engage in. And in part six the dilemma with the authorities begins to reach a resolution in Raskolnikov's bowing down at the crossroads and subsequent progress to police headquarters to confess his crime. (Svidrigailov's terrible end in this part is, of course, that of another father manqué, the ultimate object lesson for the hero.)

The contrapuntal treatment of these two themes in the six parts of the novel is, of course, not quite so neat and exact as this brief summary may suggest, but in general it applies. Furthermore, within each part we find shorter sections exemplifying the same counterpoint; for example, in part three Raskolnikov's first visit to Porfiry coming on the heels of Sonia's first visit to Raskolnikov's room. However, the approach to structure will be slightly different in this chapter from earlier approaches. Dostoevsky's structures in *Crime and Punishment* will be examined in full detail in the light of a novel that followed his, Kafka's *The Trial*. Whether or not direct influence is involved is not the question. Suffice it to say that curious and intriguing parallels can be shown to exist between the general structuring of the two books, and it is of no little interest to study Dostoevsky's techniques and themes transposed and adapted possibly to a twentieth-century, post-Freudian novel.
Franz Kafka’s admiration for Dostoevsky is a well-documented fact. Dostoevsky is mentioned seven times in *The Diaries*, all seven of the entries coming in the years 1913–14; it was in 1915 that Kafka worked extensively on *The Trial*. In his biography Max Brod mentions that during the period 1912–17 Kafka read in “the Bible, Dostoievski, Pascal, Herzen, and Kropotkin.” Furthermore, Brod, in writing of the genesis of *The Castle*, mentions Dostoevsky. And Mark Spilka in his article on *The Metamorphosis* and in his book on Dickens and Kafka draws important parallels between the two authors. In 1973 Ronald Gray called attention to a similarity between *The Trial* and Dostoevsky’s *The Double* and to the possibility that Kafka’s aphorism, “How oppressive it is to have even the faintest conviction that our life in time will eventually be justified in eternity,” could have been inspired by Ivan Karamazov. And Kafka’s letter of 2 September 1913 to Felice mentions his admiration for Dostoevsky. Finally, there is Gustav Janouch’s report: “When Kafka saw a crime novel among the books in my brief case he said: ‘There is no need to be ashamed of reading such things. Dostoievski’s *Crime and Punishment* is after all only a crime novel. At the heart of action is a mystery, which is gradually brought to light. But is there a greater mystery than truth?’”

The subject of justice and punishment could hardly fail to remind a writer familiar with Dostoevsky of Dostoevsky’s first major novel. *Crime and Punishment* does seem, in fact, to have a direct bearing on *The Trial*, and because we know that Kafka read Dostoevsky, it is fruitful to reread *Crime and Punishment* with *The Trial* in mind.

Doing so makes one aware of new ways of looking at Raskolnikov. It is possible to see in the police of *Crime and Punishment* an embryo of the same force represented by the court and its officials in *The Trial*. It is also possible to see definite parallels between the women figures in the two novels.

Many excellent psychological interpretations exist dealing with *Crime and Punishment* and *The Trial* individually, but there is no detailed study that connects the two books
as examples of the same psychological syndrome. Among the interpretations are Edna C. Florance's "The Neurosis of Raskolnikov," which discusses both the incestuous and homosexual inclinations of Dostoevsky's hero, and A. Bronson Feldman's article dealing with father love and the character of Svidrigailov. On the other hand, Selma Fraiberg's essay "Kafka and the Dream" sees that Kafka in his work is in "hopeless pursuit of the crime and the judgment," and Simon Lesser discusses the source and the sense of guilt in The Trial.

On the psychological level, then, light is thrown by means of the comparison backward on Crime and Punishment. Writing with an awareness of Freudian psychology, Kafka develops the Oedipal situation in which K. is caught and points overtly to K.'s dependency on various women as well as to his fear and anxiety concerning the court (a father surrogate). If K. is indeed a later Raskolnikov, perhaps we can find a clarification through K. of Raskolnikov's long sought after and vexing motive. What follows is an attempt to reassess Raskolnikov in terms of K. and his trial. The nature of the motive also makes clear why both Raskolnikov and Dostoevsky have difficulty in recognizing it themselves.

The Trial may be seen as a retelling of Dostoevsky's plot in terms of the inner world of the dream and of the unconscious. Both books have in common the two central themes mentioned earlier: the confrontation with authority and the relationship of the son to the mother-sister image, ancient subject matters familiar from the time of the mythical world of "Oedipus Rex" to the modern world of "Tonio Kroger," Thomas Mann's story, which Brod tells us that Kafka "loved."

Although Kafka's and Dostoevsky's books open at apparently different points, one with an arrest, the other with the commission of a crime, both acts serve the same function in that through them the heroes experience traumatic blows. The existence of each hero is suddenly and dramatically altered by these acts. K.'s mechanically
ordered day as a bank executive is invaded by the agents of his trial in the same way that Raskolnikov’s reasoned superman theory is disturbed by his murder of the pawnbroker. However, the appearance of the warder in K.’s bedroom suggests that the trial is from the beginning an inward one for K., the warder a projection of K. himself and of K.’s conscience. The novel is to describe, thus, the confrontation of K. with his own identity and his self-condemnation. Likewise Raskolnikov’s central problem is his own guilt, which appears to exist before the commission of the murder, as can be seen from his otherwise inexplicable generosity to the Marmeladovs, from his reaction to his mother’s letter, or in his dream of the mare. It is as if he himself were somehow personally responsible for Sonia’s, Dounia’s, or the mare’s plight. Raskolnikov’s basic problem is his search for a solution to his case. That is, both heroes are seeking a resolution of their own tangled relationships to their societies.

To repeat, this relationship is basically twofold—to the authoritarian world of the father figure and to the protective world of the mother figure. The father figure for both Raskolnikov and K. is threatening, cruel, and austere. For Raskolnikov he is represented by the nameless men who exploit Sonia; by Svidrigailov, who has insulted Dounia; by the man who is following the drunken girl; by Luzhin, whose motives in proposing to Dounia are purely selfish; and later by the police. All these figures are summed up in Raskolnikov’s dream of the man who beats the mare to death. For K. the father figure is the court and its officials. They invade his privacy as well as invading, uninvited, the house of Frau Grubach and the room of Fräulein Bürstner. Again these officials may be seen as projections of K.’s own wishes, for at the end of the first chapter, it is K. himself who “invades” Fräulein Bürstner’s room. Furthermore, this same projection theory may throw light on Raskolnikov’s motive, for the men who exploit the women in the opening section may be seen as projections of Raskolnikov. Both Raskolnikov’s and K.’s anxiety about
the father figure is partially related to anxieties about their own behavior in reference to the mother figure. Killing the pawnbroker and the sister is a kind of token killing and removal of two figures (mother and sister) who threaten Raskolnikov as sexual objects. K. is unnecessarily apologetic to both Frau Grubach and Fräulein Bürstner for the visit of the officials; Frau Grubach seems to take such things for granted, however, and Fräulein Bürstner immediately suspects that it is K. who has mixed up her photographs, further confirmation of the theory already advanced. For both Raskolnikov and K., the father figure is personally threatening as well as threatening to the mother-sister; Raskolnikov and K. both fear and desire authority; they also both fear and desire the sexual relation with the mother-sister. It is these conflicts that lead Raskolnikov up the stairs to accomplish the murder act, and it is these conflicts that lead to K.'s arrest and to his self-accusation.

The protective and advisory role of the mother, which K. seeks in Frau Grubach, Fräulein Bürstner, and in all the other women he meets, is parallel to the role in which Raskolnikov places his mother and sister, who literally "support" him, and later Sonia, who becomes his spiritual support. The Inspector in chapter one advises K. to "think more about yourself," but both Raskolnikov and K. seek answers from others and particularly from women on whom they are dependent. The problems of both persist, for having reached physical manhood, they both still relate, as if they were children, to the mother image; and they are both unable to identify with, or even conceive of, a benevolent authority, but see authority only in terms of brutality and force. Thus the opening sections of the two novels present strikingly similar situations that comment in different ways but with like discernment on the criminal or psychopathic personality, on its motivations and behavior patterns. Crime, it is suggested, is often the result of self-punishment, and trials are the result of deep and unresolved conflicts with a society.
The parallels continue on into part two of *Crime and Punishment* and chapters two and three of *The Trial*, which deal with the immediate effects of the opening actions. Both heroes are called to appear before the officials. Raskolnikov is called to police headquarters, not knowing the reason for his summons and for another reason than the murder. K. goes for his first interrogation by the court, not knowing of what he is accused. K. is asked by the court if he is a house painter; for a while it is the house painter that the police in *Crime and Punishment* suspect. Raskolnikov faints when he overhears his murder discussed; K. later faints in the stuffy atmosphere of the law offices. Raskolnikov is aided in his subsequent illness and delirium by his friend Razumihin, who himself takes a lively interest in the murder story; K. is assisted during his fainting spell by the Clerk of Inquiries. Luzhin’s arrival in town to claim his prize is parallel to the appearance of the law student who carries off the woman of the courtroom to the Examining Magistrate.

All of these parallels further develop the two central themes, the relation to authority and to the mother-sister figure. But Kafka is writing of an inner level of experience, whereas Dostoevsky is depicting the everyday realities of the existence of Raskolnikov. Thus the empty courtroom that K. discovers on his second visit is inwardly the same sort of experience that confronts Raskolnikov when he learns that Nikolay, the house painter, has been accused. Raskolnikov scarcely speaks in part two, chapter four, for his courtroom is also empty, his accusers having turned their attention elsewhere. The frustration Raskolnikov feels at being denied his accusers is vented in the next chapter on Luzhin, toward whom he directs all the fury he could wish directed against himself. He tells Luzhin to “go to hell” while at the same time rejecting Luzhin’s forgiveness, stating that he is not ill. He feels cheated of
Luzhin's retaliation and tries every means to provoke him, for he himself has also exploited Dounia in as selfish a manner as Luzhin's. Unable to bear the empty courtroom, Raskolnikov attempts to confess to Zametov and later to the people outside the pawnbroker's house. In both instances he partially succeeds, awakening a flash of insight that Zametov apparently rejects and convincing one of the onlookers at the murder scene.

In the same way, K. is unable to bear his empty courtroom, as evidenced by his immediate penetration of the Law Court Offices to find his accusers. When even here they do not materialize but he is confronted by others who also await their trials, he succumbs to his fainting fit as his only remaining means of gaining attention. Raskolnikov's fainting fit on his first visit to police headquarters similarly draws attention to him as well as drawing the early suspicions of Ilya Petrovich, to whom Raskolnikov at the end makes full confession of the crime.

Thus the immediate effects of the arrest and of the murder center chiefly on a seeking of punishment from the very authority both heroes fear. Both simultaneously want to remove themselves from the environs of their accusers and to remain in these environs. At the end of his scene with the crowd, Raskolnikov is flung into the street by the porter. K., also unable or unwilling to leave under his own power, is helped to the door by the Clerk of Inquiries. Both heroes are impotent to deal with the ravishers of the women. Raskolnikov shadow-boxes with Luzhin, who treats Raskolnikov as a sick man or an invalid, and K. is able to muster no serious opposition to the student who carries off the woman of the court; yet both Dounia and the woman have themselves offered assistance to the protagonists.

III

Dostoevsky's part three and chapters four and five of The Trial continue to develop on parallel lines. Dounia
gains the protection of Razumihin as Fräulein Bürstner is now protected by a friend who moves in with her. Emotionally and psychologically left to themselves, the two heroes turn to a series of self-lacerations, K.'s on an inner level, Raskolnikov's on an outer level.

Raskolnikov's conversation with his mother and sister in chapter three involves several humiliations starting with his penitence and moving to his irritation and to his recalling of his masochistic love for the hunchback girl, soon to be transferred to the prostitute Sonia. Both women are flawed beings. Immediately thereafter Raskolnikov visits Porfiry and engages in the first round of the cat-and-mouse games that repel as well as attract him. He then dreams of a macabre reenactment of the murder, returning to the scene as K. does to the lumber room. Similarly K. is involved with the whippers in another back room of his consciousness. Franz and Willem, the victims, are obviously projections of K. (One of them is given Kafka's own first name.) K.'s attempts to free them is anything but decisive, and his only solution is finally to slam the door, that is, to shut out the results of the punishment that he feels he deserves, that he both desires and does not desire. The whipping scene may, of course, represent also sexual pleasure, derived from the sadomasochistic and homosexual nature of the proceedings, and subsequent guilt feelings. Sexual overtones are also present in Raskolnikov's dream in which the old woman (a mother figure) is loudly appreciative of the act of murder. On the second evening, K. finds the lumber room exactly the same as it had been on the first evening; Raskolnikov in his dream also returns to a reenactment of the crime (although a distorted one). Again K. slams the door to repress the scene as Raskolnikov in self-protection tries to scream and awakens to find Svidrigailov by his sofa.

The attentions of the authorities (in part two) and of the mother-sister figures (in part three) have been diverted elsewhere, and the heroes are confronted with the necessity for creating their own punishments and their own
protections. K. finds this inner world of self "smothered in dirt" (p. 111), and in Raskolnikov's dream there is "a smell of mortar, dust, and stagnant water" (p. 270). This is an ugly mirror world in which the hero is isolated and where he must face his self-accusations to which society's accusations may have little relationship. However, neither hero succeeds in these passages in discovering what the real self-accusations are. Raskolnikov dreams of murdering an old woman who is thoroughly enjoying every blow of the axe, "simply shaking with mirth" (p. 272), yet Raskolnikov does not grasp the meaning of her behavior in the dream. In the same way, K. slams the door on the scene in the lumber room. Why did he abandon Franz and Willem is a question he might have asked.

IV

Having carried the protagonists into a world where they have no one but themselves to confront, the two authors begin to work toward their dénouements in part four of Crime and Punishment and in chapters six and seven of The Trial. The doubt that exists concerning the order of Kafka's chapters must concern us here for a moment. I have used Brod's order throughout this discussion fully realizing that this order may not have been Kafka's intended order. The similarity of the situations in which the two heroes are placed does not depend on exact order of development, however. Both Brod and Uyttersprot agree that material in chapters six through ten belongs within these chapters. The first five chapters stress the increasing isolation of K., a descent into a lower world, culminating in the lumber room scene, which both Brod and Uyttersprot place as chapter five. Whether or not Fräulein Bürstner's friend moves in with her earlier or later makes little difference to my thesis that K. is step by step estranged from all outer contacts. The actual order in which this is accomplished makes less difference than the fact that Dostoevsky and Kafka both are concerned with this process of estrangement in the opening halves of their novels.
From this point on, both authors establish new connections for their protagonists, the old ones having been severed. Each hero has faced himself in the nightmare world of his personal hell, Raskolnikov in his dream and K. in the lumber room. Each has turned his back on these ugly scenes of self-revelation, and each has failed really to comprehend their import.

New relationships that now arise in the two novels (and here too the exact order is of little importance) bear some striking similarities. First two pseudo-father figures appear almost as if to mock Raskolnikov and K. Raskolnikov awakens from his dream to find Svidrigailov by his sofa, Svidrigailov who at once proclaims his similarity to Raskolnikov, a similarity Raskolnikov is loath to acknowledge. Raskolnikov rejects Svidrigailov and his schemes even though Svidrigailov's intentions are apparently philanthropic and to Dounia's and Raskolnikov's advantage. Likewise K.'s uncle arrives upon the scene to offer help to K. Both father figures are aware of the "cases" and both offer advice. But the lawyer to whom the uncle takes K. turns out to be no more helpful than Svidrigailov's offers of assistance.

Other new relationships are Raskolnikov's growing attachment to Sonia and K.'s to Leni. Sonia in reading the Lazarus story from the Bible points the way to rebirth for Raskolnikov as Leni does with her advice to K.: "'You're too unyielding, that's what I've heard.' 'You must confess to guilt'" (p. 135). Later the whole burden of Sonia's advice to Raskolnikov is that he should confess. Nor can one overlook K.'s kissing of Leni's deformed hand, reminding one of Raskolnikov's love for "deformed" women (for the landlady's daughter, a cripple, and for Sonia, a prostitute).14

In the fairy tale, the kissing and consequent transformation of deformity represent the redemptive power of love, but in these novels the kiss is offered largely narcissistically. However, the new relationships with women that the heroes form are by and large more valid than the earlier
ones. Although Raskolnikov sees Sonia chiefly as a mother figure and K. sees Leni chiefly in terms of her helpfulness to him, both relationships are potentially normal. For once we see K. exhibiting compassion for another person. However, Sonia is far more positive and influential than Leni, and this in turn emphasizes the generally more negative posture of the twentieth-century novel. From now on, whereas Dostoevsky works toward a resolution, Kafka works toward a conclusion.

Nothing illustrates this more clearly than the new relationships to authority that each hero adopts. Raskolnikov's visit to Porfiry immediately after the Lazarus scene with Sonia is less in the nature of a social call than his first one when he had been accompanied by Razumihin. Although he still has the excuse of the pawned watch, it is clear in his begging for certainty from Porfiry that he is about ready to abandon pretense and to come to grips with the real issue—his crime. On the other hand, K. after chapter three never again seeks out the authorities, and his relationship to the lawyer engaged by his uncle is cavalier and indifferent, even though his name, Huld, signifies grace. It is this grace that in chapter eight he dismisses entirely. Furthermore, Raskolnikov's relation to the authorities is partly sustained by him, whereas they assume largely passive roles, waiting for Raskolnikov to come to his own confessional. K.'s relation to authority, on the other hand, becomes more and more passive and fortuitous. He dismisses his lawyer, he meets the priest in the cathedral through no desire on his part, and he is escorted forcefully to his death. Never, like Raskolnikov, does he give himself up.

Not only a mock father figure, Svidrigaïlov may be seen as a double for Raskolnikov, representing the corrupt and evil side of Raskolnikov's nature. Both commit crimes and both are in the process of suffering for these crimes. The painter, Titorelli, may stand in the same relation to K. or as another projection. He possesses the same flaws that we find in K., although in different degree. The girls who flock
about his door are like the girls (the woman of the court or Leni) with whom K. has passing and superficial encounters. Superficial sexual pleasure is suggested by the painter's name. Svidrigailov, it will be remembered, also has a penchant for young girls. Furthermore Titorelli has betrayed his art by painting what he is told to paint, although he has not seen the subject. K. has betrayed life in the same way and goes to the bank merely from habit, not because of the involvement with his work there. Titorelli mentions "postponement" of K.'s case, a solution that has long been K.'s own apparent one in his sidetracking of all the essential questions of his trial. The two stunted trees in the pictures that K. buys are perhaps Titorelli and K. himself seen in the light of the death (sunset) they are courting. If so, they are fitting mementos of K.'s visit. But whereas Raskolnikov transcends his double, Svidrigailov, K. does not manage to move beyond the stage represented by Titorelli with his flock of girls and apparent strong homosexual leanings. These two corrupt figures offer another kind of relationship entered into by the protagonists in these portions of the books leading toward conclusion and redemption.

In summary, this section shows the heroes, after their futile confrontations of self, beset by mocking offers of assistance from basically hostile father figures, turning to Leni and Sonia for strength and advice, still bargaining and temporizing with the authorities, and confronting their own evil natures disguised in the figures of Svidrigailov and Titorelli.

V

Dostoevsky's fifth part and Kafka's chapter eight both serve to slow the action before the two catastrophes. Dostoevsky brings to a conclusion the story of the Marmeladov family. Marmeladov has been another double for Raskolnikov, another figure whose relation to women was entirely a mother-son relationship and whose relation
to authority has always resulted in punishment. Left be­

hind is Marmeladov's daughter, Sonia, who will transcend
the lonely role her stepmother was forced to play with
Marmeladov. It is to Sonia that Raskolnikov confesses his
crime in this section, thus setting in motion the redemptive
pattern.

Likewise in *The Trial* the story of Block, the tradesman,
effectively blocks the action temporarily. Like K., Block is a
client of Lawyer Huld and like all Huld's clients is involved
also with Leni. He is dried up and shriveled, perhaps a
foreboding of K.'s own possible future state. Neither
Marmeladov nor Block has succeeded in a solution of his
case. Marmeladov dies an alcoholic, and we leave Block
trembling in terror before the remarks of Lawyer Huld and
turning to Leni for support.

VI

The cathedral scene in *The Trial,* whether it appears as
chapter nine (as in Brod's order) or earlier (as Uyttersprot
claims), serves the same function as Raskolnikov's three
major encounters with Sonia in *Crime and Punishment*—
first the Lazarus scene, then his confession to her, and last
the scene in which she gives him the wooden cross to
wear. Both heroes are told parables that directly relate to
their own plights and suggest solutions. The parable of the
doorkeeper suggests that K.'s answer is near at hand and
awaits only his own positive action, a sense of personal
responsibility and an abandonment of his casting about for
answers outside himself. He must take the initiative with­
out waiting for permission to enter.

The story of Lazarus provides a similar answer for
Raskolnikov; he need only ask of God to be forgiven and
resurrected, but he must ask. He must take the initiative.
This is clearly brought out in the confession to Sonia in
part five where she urges him to stand at the crossroads
(symbolizing the way of the cross as well as a new life, a
right-angle turn) and say, "'I am a murderer!' Then God
will send you life again" (p. 407). It is only in the final meeting with Sonia in part six that he agrees to wear the cross; still at the crossroads, he is unable to confess, and at his first try at the police station he flees, returning shortly to tell Ilya Petrovich, "It was I killed the old pawnbroker."

Both heroes are told the way their salvation lies, and for both the priest's words to K. are relevant: "It is not necessary to accept everything as true, one must only accept it as necessary" (p. 276). Raskolnikov confesses more because it is necessary than because he feels confession will lead to a solution, and K. accedes to his executioners because he "suddenly realized the futility of resistance" (p. 282). Raskolnikov, even to the end, is never sure of his real motive in committing his crime, nor is K. any surer of what he has done. The full meaning of their trials escapes both heroes. In his meetings with Sonia in part five, Raskolnikov casts about in real torment for his motive and concludes that he murdered himself, not the pawnbroker, that the devil murdered her; and in the final scene in part six, he is no closer to understanding himself. He is merely taking the way prescribed to him by society. Both heroes must bow to necessity, one to imprisonment, the other to execution, but neither receives more than a glimpse of the true reason behind his punishment.

The reader, however, is aware that both suffer from a common sickness. Raskolnikov's real confession comes in his final words to Dounia. They are an admission of his unconscious incestuous drives: "Oh, if only I were alone and no one loved me and I too had never loved any one! Nothing of all this would have happened" (p. 504). And K. is warned by the priest that help from women is not the right kind of help. In the final chapter when Fräulein Bürstner appears in the square, K. at last recognizes the futility of resistance.

For the first time, it does not matter whether it is Fräulein Bürstner or not. In other words, the need for protection from the mother figure is receding, and K. now
recognizes that he must make his own choices—in this instance, the acceptance of an absurd fate. In the same way in *Crime and Punishment* in the final scene in Haymarket, although Sonia is among the crowd, Raskolnikov goes alone into the police office reflecting, "If I must drink the cup what difference does it [motive] make?" (p. 510). Raskolnikov, too, has accepted an absurd fate.

K. dies like a dog, and Raskolnikov languishes in prison with other common criminals. Dostoevsky's epilogue is, of course, intended to convey the possibility of a new life for Raskolnikov. K.'s life, on the other hand, ends with the thrust of the knife, although a window had been opened before he died. Dostoevsky, in other words, offers a solution; Kafka can only describe the plight of man caught in the toils of the law of his conscience and unable to extricate himself. He depicts the absurd acceptance of an absurd punishment, whereas Dostoevsky suggests that in the acceptance of the absurd punishment lies the possibility of a "gradual regeneration, of his passing from one world to another" (p. 532). The real crime in each book is the crime of Oedipus, and the real punishment lies in the trials given Raskolnikov and K. by their own consciences. But since, as was stated earlier, *The Trial* is an inward account of crime and punishment, the thrust of the knife may represent no more than Raskolnikov's exile to Siberia, and the open window may stand for the kind of solution toward which Raskolnikov is moving.

But beyond this and in summary, the books are archetypally akin for we read here of the disturbances caused by an overdependency on the mother and a contest with the father. Moreover, in the modern novel represented by both books, the archetype suggests not a simple representation but a representation that is anti-archetypical. The story is the same but with a difference. The father figure, the Laius, who in Sophocles' play is never seen but is represented as an individual (or Claudius in *Hamlet*), is replaced by bureaucracy in the two modern novels. Big Brother, the state, with whom the individual must con-
tend, is no longer within reach of the hero who struggles with it. This means that the modern hero, caught in Oedipal toils, faces a new collective father figure, one at once more threatening, more vague, and more stifling, and one who can no longer be killed by a stroke at the crossroads. Acceptance for the modern hero means then the acceptance of absurdity, not a father with whom a common identity is possible.

The contrapuntal structuring of *Crime and Punishment* (paternal and maternal relationships, Laius and Jocasta) as well as the whole forward thrust of Raskolnikov as a character may be fully appreciated when evaluated in the light of Kafka’s *The Trial*. It is little wonder that Dostoevsky has been acclaimed as the forerunner of twentieth-century fiction.
15. The importance of these three scenes is indicated by their positions in their respective sections: chapter four in parts four and five and chapter eight in part six. See Louise Dauner's article in *Modern Fiction Studies* for the significance of the number 4 in *Crime and Punishment*.