

AP World Literature Essay Template: Raskolnikov's extraordinary man theory

Various times throughout the novel *Crime and Punishment*, the author Fyodor Dostoevsky, mentions Raskolnikov's theory of the extraordinary man. Raskolnikov basically states that some men are superior to others. He feels that he is superior enough to commit a murder and not receive punishment for it. This ultimately leads to Raskolnikov's demise as he soon realizes that guilt alone is a punishment. The theory of the extraordinary man is preposterous because, all people have equal human worth, society looks down upon crime, and the individuals believe in moral values.

All humans have equal value because of the universal -treat-people-how-you-want-to-be-treated- virtue. Every human wants to be able to live as long as possible. When a murderer takes someone's life, he or she is stealing their right to fulfill their destiny. Destinies should not be tampered with. The theory of the extraordinary man is not factual because all human lives are worth the same amount of value, whether it's a wealthy businessman or a poor farmer. Raskolnikov takes the pawnbrokers right to die of natural causes and therefore he is violating the world-renowned virtue of reciprocity. Another reason why the extraordinary man theory is irrelevant is because society scolds when crimes take place. Even though some crimes do take place, there is slight order to the chaos because of certain regulations and laws. If the extraordinary man theory was a valid point then some public menaces would go around in a purge proving what they have the freedom to do. That's what Raskolnikov thought he could do. He murdered the innocent just to prove that he could do it and get away with it. He ultimately could not.

Individuals believe in moral values such as respecting others, making wise choices, and not taking an innocent life. This is quite the contrary to the idea of the extraordinary man. Just like in the play *No Exit*, people who commit foul deeds while no one's looking become prisoners of the mind. They remember what they have done and feel guilt. Guilt is a main reason why one cannot feel more extraordinary than the other.

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