

Title: Dostoevsky's Heretical Christology  
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**Abstract:**

The orthodoxy of Dostoevsky's religious beliefs was questioned already by the writer's contemporaries. He was criticized for "the rosy Christianity with Western flavor," as well as for too tolerant views on the socialists (Leontiev). During the subsequent one hundred and fifty years the topic of Dostoevsky's theology was supplanted by the analysis of the writer's poetics, and the existentialist readings that tended to relegate his peculiar ideas on Christology to the realm of biographical detail (Mochulsky's biography being a rare exception). Recent work on the nature of the writer's faith (Apollonio, Jones, Kasatkina, Murav, Tikhomirov) tends to interpret his theological views within the bounds of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. This paper interrogates Dostoevsky's conception of Christology as his compelling--and heretical--vision is dramatized in the characters of Raskolnikov, Prince Myshkin, and Alyosha Karamazov. The murderer, the idiot, and the eccentric novice are self-sacrificial, Christ-like beings who, contrary to the Orthodox doctrine of Christ's complete yet sinless humanity (Council of Chalcedon of 451 a.d.), have the knowledge and the experience of sin. Dostoevsky's radical conception of god-like, self-sacrificing figure—yet the one who is fully immersed in the excruciating and sinful reality of human history—may have contributed to the then evolving ideology of the Russian Jacobins (People's Will, SR).