

Crime and Punishment: Unit Packet

Character

Raskolnikov really loves people. Raskolnikov really hates people. Throughout the novel, he vacillates wildly between extremes. This is Dostoevsky's intention. The very root of Raskolnikov's name is "raskol," which means "schism"—this is essentially like calling an English character Mr. Splitsman.

Of Rodya, Razumihin tells Dounia and Pulcheria, "It's as though he were alternating between two characters" (3.2). When readers first meet Raskolnikov, he hasn't eaten in "two days." At the pawnbroker's house, there are "two gates" and "two courtyards." He last wrote his mother "two months" ago. He meets the abused drunk girl in the park at "two" in the afternoon. The pawnbroker is wearing "two crosses" when Raskolnikov kills her, and Sonia later has "two crosses" when Raskolnikov is preparing to turn himself in.

In Mark, 3:25, Jesus says, "If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand."

Anyone or anything—a country, a family, an individual—will fail if it is racked with dissension, differences, and division. Dostoevsky is interested in exploring this idea throughout his text.

➤ Consider the dual nature of each character by jotting down his/her opposing characteristics:

1. Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov ("Rodya,")
SANE V. CRAZY
PRIDE V. HUMILITY
RATIONAL V. EMOTIONAL/FAITH
WILL/POWER V. SUBMISSION
FEAR
+ MEEKNESS
2. Sofya Semyonovna Marmeladov ("Sonya,")
PURE/FAITHFUL V. PROSTITUTE/SINNER
COLD/HARSH VS. CARING
+ CHARITABLE
+ SENSITIVE
3. Avdotya Romanovna Raskolnikov ("Dunya,")
STRONG V. WEAK/MEEK
VICTIM V. SAVIOR
SELFLESS/SELF-SACRIFICING V. PRIDEFUL
GENTLE V. FIERCE
POOR/POWERLESS/LOWLY V. BOLD + EMPOWERED
4. Arkady Ivanovich Svidrigailov
ABUSIVE/SELFISH/CRIMINAL V. GIVING/BENEFactor
BOLD/PRIDEFUL V. GUILT + SELF-LOATHING
WORTHY
5. Dmitri Prokofyich Razumikhin
SMART + WISE V. BULLIBLE + NAIVE
POWERFUL V. WEAK
GOOD HEARTED V. HOT HEAD
+ OBLIVIOUS
6. Katerina Ivanovna Marmeladov
HARSH V. SUPPORTIVE
POOR V. NOBLE/WORTHY
WEAK V. STRONG
7. Porfiry Petrovich
DECEPTIVE, TRICKY, + CONNIVING V. TRUTH LOVER/FAIR
ARROGANT + HARSH + CRUEL V. COMPASSIONATE + LOVING +
8. Semyon Zakharovich Marmeladov
Educated v. bum
SINNER V. FAITHFUL PATIENT
Ruined his family v. Ruined his family
9. Andrey Semyonovitch Lebeziatnikov

Crime

Crime and Punishment includes a number of intellectual discussions relevant to Raskolnikov's crime and its aftermath.

➤ To consider these discussions, we will create 2 teams (one does 1+3 and the other 2+4).

1. Part 1, Chapter 6

- What ideas does the student propose?

Utilitarianism: save 100's of lives w/ this ONE

Great man Theory / Übermensch: He can break God + man's laws to do "great" things

- How does he justify those ideas?

Her death would improve many lives + she's worthless + cruel / harms others! ("a louse")

- Why isn't he going to actually do it?

A) It's NONE of his business

B) He knows it's wrong

2. Part 3, Chapter 5

- What ideas did Raskolnikov convey in his essay, the one in the *Periodical Review*?

"Great men" (Übermensches) have the right to transgress God + man's laws to move society toward the future

- How does Raskolnikov respond to Porfiry's comments about the article?

calmly + rationally, he defends the ideas, believing they will lead to the "New Jerusalem." Society + their consciences

- What does the conversation reveal about the policemen, Raz, & Rodya?

they believe Rodya is the murderer

he's truly moral

he still believes his theories

he DOES believe in God!

will handle anyone who mistakenly thinks himself "extraordinary"

3. Part 5, Chapter 4

- How does Sonia respond to Raskolnikov's confession?

despite being confused + horrified, she pities him + promises to stay by his side. She encourages him to confess + accept suffering as his path to redemption

- What is Raskolnikov trying to convey when he references Napoleon?

his Great man theory + how he was trying to test whether he was a Napoleon too.

- How does Raskolnikov try to justify the murder of the pawnbroker?

1) He + his family were poor + needed to eat

2) The world's better off w/o her

3) his pride + desire to be an ubermensch

- In what sense did he actually murder himself, as he claims?

★ SIN (turning from God) = spiritual death

he must confess + repent to come back to life (through Christ), like Lazarus. He must realize he is not above God to be resurrected (+ he does, in his last dream)

4. Part 6, Chapter 5

- How does Svidrigailov explain the theory behind the murders?

Partly due to overly "logical" philosophizing, partly due to Rodya's poverty + pride

- How does Dounia respond to this?

- Horrified + worried for Rodya

- Disbelieving + wants to speak to Sonia

- What does it show about her?

she is loyal, pure, + faithful. She will not abandon him no matter what he's done. Like Sonia, she truly loves Rodya.

Love, also, resurrects him (in the end, via Sonia).

Punishment

The crime takes place at the end of Part I; **punishment** dominates the rest of the novel.

The questions below should make you think more about how Raskolnikov's experience refutes the Great Man Theory, which states that an "extraordinary man" is exempt from the limits that constrict the behavior of ordinary men.

1. In Part 1, Chapter 5, after his terrible dream about the mare, Raskolnikov concludes that, despite the validity of his theory (logic), he cannot commit the murder he planned (emotion). How does he feel after deciding not to do the murder, and what does this show?

the theory is a deadly virus! (see final dream)

He feels relief; this shows he does know right from wrong. He does have a conscience!

All his fancy "theory" just a attempt to justify what he KNOWS wrong

2. Part 2, Chapter 1 describes Raskolnikov's situation in the hours after the murders. Describe how he is feeling and acting during this time, and explain what this shows.

feels guilt, fear + paranoia. Sin makes one sick + weak b/c you've rejected Christ.

3. Throughout the novel, the rational intellect is concerned with ideas and theories that seem remote from real life as most people experience it. The rational intellect can even trick a person into betraying his own interests. However, emotions are often better guides in the book. How do A) the dream about the peasant and the horse and B) the scene with Rodya at Sonya's feet show that emotions can be more honest, direct, and moral than intellectual reasoning?

A) Logic = "it's not our business"
 ♥ = it's wrong!!

they both show a mind v. heart battle

+ how the path to God is via faith + emotion, NOT logic + rationality

B. He comes to God via LOVE, not logic

4. Emotion (reinforced by Sonya) compels Raskolnikov's confession at the end of Part 6; intellect has nothing to do with it. It appears confession is the only way to peace. It's not over at the point of confession, however, because even in prison in Siberia, at least at first, Raskolnikov still believes in his theory and thinks of the pawnbroker as a parasite, not a human being. At what point in the epilogue does the reader feel that the conflict between intellect/logic and heart/emotion has been resolved or is certain to be resolved?

his PRIDE still says he's right!

when he falls @ her feet, it shows he's willing to humble himself + lose his pride; thus, he can now come back to life

+ he does this out of emotion not logic

5. How does the novel show that punishment for one's sins is A) inevitable and B) necessary in order to achieve redemption and freedom from guilt?

(B) sin → guilt → punishment → love + redemption
(Siberia)

+ sickness
of ♥,
mind,
Soul,
+ body

This pattern is how you reconcile w/ yourself, others, + God.

(A) you're punished no matter what (by your own guilt)

+ reconne w/ Christ + find peace

Big Ideas

We have analyzed psychological divisions within characters, the theoretical split between ordinary and extraordinary people, and the polarization of intellect (or "reason") and emotion (or "instinct") in the novel.

Crime and Punishment is a psychological study, an exploration of an intellectual theory, and a vehicle for Dostoevsky to present how he views **societal divisions**.

Let us examine the novel's societal setting, which is certainly fraught with division. In fact, *Crime and Punishment* is more than just a demonstration of the idea that crime does not pay; it is also a vivid depiction of societal injustice!

Now, we will consider four key schisms ("splits") Dostoevsky points out within his society:

- Men and Women
- Wealth and Poverty
- Religion and Skepticism/Atheism
- Connection and Alienation

1. What do the experiences of Dounia, Sonya, Pulcheria, and Katerina Ivanovna reveal about the roles of men and women in the novel's societal setting?

• women are more vulnerable + rely upon men for \$ and protection; they are less educated than men
• women support + care for men + children; they are more religious/fair than the men

2. Why was Marfa Petrovna's situation so different?

• \$ allowed her to gain some power + control
• still abused (+ probably murdered) by Svidrigailov though

3. How do characters like Nastasya and other minor female characters connect with this topic?

They are often kind, care givers, meek, vulnerable, + powerless. They are often abused, drunk, or even suicidal.

4. Why do so many of the novel's characters live in poverty?

• 1860's Russia = 80% poor
• Serfs were just emancipated in 1861
• very few jobs to be had

5. Is poverty a motivational factor in Raskolnikov's crime?

yes! he was ashamed of it/himself

6. Are poverty and crime often closely linked in the novel?
- Starving + humiliation → loss of rational control + thinking
He feels humiliated b/c he can't take care of + protect his mom + sister

yes: poverty → desperation + alienation → crime

But Not always... some rich men are criminals too, like Svidrigailov

Russia recently legalized prostitution

men must provide + protect

Nastasya
Polenka
Pulcheria
the drunk girl on the bench
the one who jumped in the river

7. What about wealthy criminals?

like Rodya, Svidrigailov^{also} transgress God's laws due to selfishness + pride + alienation

8. Religion comes up a lot in Dostoevsky's works. To what extent is Raskolnikov a religious person?

He tells PORFIRY he believes in God and in Lazarus rising from the dead. However, he @ times mocks Sonya's belief in God + questions God's existence

9. What does this novel seem to say about belief in God?

Svid. + Rodya } faithless people are lost + alienated; they often struggle to cope w/ life + commit evil acts.

Sonya + Lizaveta } Believers are humble, compassionate, + draw others to them.

10. To what extent is belief in God connected with peace and happiness in this novel?

believers are ultimately happy + @ peace in the end, while the atheists are NOT.

11. The epilogue points out that in the community surrounding the labor camp in Siberia, Sonya, unlike Raskolnikov, is highly regarded and loved. Why?

She is attractive to others due to her faith, humility, + love for mankind + all creation.

He is angry, prideful, + hateful, which pushes others away.

12. What is alienation?

being isolated, estranged, + detached from others / from society

13. How are Raskolnikov's problems caused by alienation? Be specific.

He's angry @ God for his low station in life → [his poverty + living conditions make him sick, delirious, + ashamed. He sulks + withdraws then this makes him overthink, but w/o anyone to bounce his ideas off of who might bring him back to sanity he goes down a dark path.

14. How does the SETTING influence issues of gender, class, religion, and alienation?

★ It's 1860s Russia!

- poverty is rampant

- social class matters A LOT

- atheism is starting to grow

- urbanization → alienation + industrialization

- women receive less education than men

PLUS, moving to the city meant losing his supportive family + being pretty much alone, vulnerable to this madness due to his loss of connection

Literary Devices

➤ What might these elements/motifs from the text SYMBOLIZE?

- Blood

Guilt

Violence

- The Flogged Horse

innocent victims

Rodya himself

- Lizavetta
- Sonia - Katerina

- St. Petersburg children

Rodya's own mind

Russian society

(chaos, crowded, poverty, trapped, dirty, stifling)

- Lazarus

redemption
rebirth
resurrection through Christ
hope + belief

God's miracle
↓
belief in God + Hope in Him

Both tied to Sonia

Her icon is in Kazan Cathedral in St. Petersburg!

- The Virgin Mary

innocence/purity

SONIA is like her!

(pure, loving, endless compassion)

called "little mother"

- Mary Magdalene

reformed sinner

Like Sonia (prostitute)

follower of Christ

she fell @ Christ's feet like Rodya falls @ Sonia's feet

- The Cross / Crosses

a burden

suffering

redemption

salvation

HOPE

- Yellow

decay

sin

corruption

sickness

"yellow ticket"

- Raskolnikov's Room

solitude

poverty

isolation

trapped

confined

crowded

- The 30 Rubles (the \$ Sonia earned on her first night as a prostitute)

lots of yellow

- loss of innocence
- sin/betrayal
- like the 30 pieces of silver Judas took to betray Jesus

Symbol*: a person, place, or thing that represents something larger than itself. A symbol may appear once or twice in a literary work, whereas a motif is a recurring element.

*An action, like running or yelling CANNOT be a symbol.