

Psychology behind a criminal mind

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Mind usually, a person has clear motives for committing a crime. In 1866, though, Fyodor Dostoevsky examines a man with no clear motives for murder in his Russian crime novel, *Crime and Punishment*. He writes of a man, Raskolnikov, who overhears some people hypothetically talking of killing an old, misanthropic pawnbroker, and using her money for better uses than she does herself. Raskolnikov actually considers this thought; then he murders the woman but does not care for the money after the murder.

He then escapes the suspicion from the police of being the murderer. However, he does not escape punishment, for his guilt takes over his mind. He confesses later to the crime due to the life his guilt creates for him. The main topic of his novel is to analyze the mind of Raskolnikov. Dostoevsky then illustrates how a person must address his conscience in order to relieve guilt and return to a stable mind. The Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky was born in Moscow in 1821. In his most three popular novels he expresses the theme of crime.

His writings greatly reflect his life as an adult as he incorporates real life experiences into them. When he was on his way to the Military Engineering Academy in his early years, he was deeply disturbed by a scene as he saw a man beat his horse to death. This experience had such an impact on his life that he wrote of the exact scene in his novel "*Fyodor Dostoevsky*". Also, Dostoevsky himself can be seen in the novel in the protagonist, Raskolnikov, as both deal with the consequences of their actions from their own philosophical ideas ("*Fyodor Dostoevsky*").

By portraying himself in his works, he enables his readers to absorb the reading from a real life perspective. He then enhances his writings by incorporating the fascinating topic of psychology. Furthermore, Dostoevsky also enhances his writings by differentiating his novel from the stereotypical crime novel when he makes known the murderer from the beginning instead of keeping it a mystery. He still remains consistent with the genre, though, as most crime novels possess the aspects of guilt and justice. These characteristics are what help Dostoevsky convey his theme of punishment from crime.

However, *Crime and Punishment* not only falls under the genre of crime novels, but also a psychological drama. A characteristic to this genre is the internal conflict of self-vs.. Errors which is seen throughout the entire novel as Raskolnikov constantly has arguments with himself when in dilemmas (Labeled). He reassures himself in these arguments, though, that the pawnbroker is better off dead, and he did not do anything bad. Dostoevsky examines the vague motives behind the crime in the mind of the criminal while still writing of a crime and the subsequent guilt.

Additionally, Dostoevsky conveys a huge message with just the title of the novel, *Crime and Punishment*. In three simple words, he expresses his thoughts, and theme, of the entire novel: punishment will follow if a crime is committed. He then demonstrates how the forms of punishment can vary. Instead of the punishment being imprisonment as expected for such a crime, guilt becomes his castigation for the pointless murder he commits. Dostoevsky displays the Dostoevsky was not the first person to do

so. Psychology has been an interest to people, even dating back to the late BC time period.

According to Richardson, the first people to use psychology were the Greeks, as Aristotle is known as the Greek philosopher and referred to as the "Father of Psychology". He began to wonder how and why people do what they do. Richardson tells that in the eighteenth century, psychological studies were done by philosophers such as Descartes and Locke to show that the mind and body operate separately while influencing each other. This theory did not stop there, though. Moreover, psychologists continued with this theory, and William James wrote the first psychology textbook in 1860.

Before then, no specific writings had been done to analyze the topic of psychology. According to Carney, Dostoevsky's observations expressed in his novels actually helped other psychologists in bringing forth modern psychology. He was able to convey mental disorders, which were refined by DRP. Bubbler and published in a series of writings (Squires 478). By focusing on the psychology of the criminal mind of Restoration, Dostoevsky grasps a concept that draws other psychologists into an area unexplored by previous studies.

In *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoevsky uses the actions and behavior of the protagonist to communicate psychology in his novel. He also voices his thoughts through the characters of Asimov, the doctor, and Priory Petrologic, the policeman, as they observe and give insight into Reservations behavior. An example of how Asimov does so is in analyzing Reservations dreams, as seen multiple times in the evolve. Asimov says that

in a dream, " actions are sometimes performed in a masterly and most cunning way, while the direction of the actions is deranged and dependent on various morbid impressions" (Dostoevsky 216-217).

This explanation enlightens the reader of why Restoration dreams such dreams. Although he does something in his dream as he would in real life, the motive or rationale to why he does it is distorted. The reader is not left hanging with the feeling that he or she is the only one that knows the real murderer, though. Asimov's skills as a doctor enable him to see things in Restoration that others seem to ignore, for he tells so to Reservations friend, Razzmatazz. Razzmatazz then conveys Asimov's thoughts, while drunk, to Restoration. " For he's got a notion in his head that you are... Mad or close on it" (Dostoevsky 182).

The guilt that Restoration is faced to deal with takes over his mind, suggesting madness, as Asimov observes. But Restoration becomes unaware of this mental change occurring, as he thinks he is perfectly fine. The readers see, though, that he actually contradicts himself in an ironic way. The use of literary devices can change a reader's perspective on a book. Dostoevsky specifically utilizes the use of irony in his novel. Before he commits the murder, Restoration addresses the questions of " why almost all crimes are so badly concealed and so easily detected, and why almost all criminals leave such obvious traces? (Dostoevsky 70). The irony of these questions is that Restoration himself did not conceal his crime at all, and merely only by a chain of coincidences is it that he is able to get away. Dostoevsky also illustrates irony as he is such a poor, unkempt man, yet he refuses to take money from anyone, including his own mother. The idea that example. By <https://assignbuster.com/psychology-behind-a-criminal-mind/>

not accepting help, especially in such a desperate position, he displays his thoughts that he is, in fact, too good for help. As Dostoevsky portrays Restoration as a disheveled man with no direction in life before the crime, his appearance somehow seems to demote into an even worse state.

The guilt starts to take over his appearance, as well as his mind. After the crime, people begin to notice the change in his personality. His guilt shows on the outside, too, as he begins to act delusional, causing attention. "The policeman was bewildered, and stared at him open-eyed. Restoration laughed" (Dostoevsky 50). A policeman observes his behavior in public, only to notice he is a crazy man. Asimov also notices that Restoration had "fallen into a frenzy at the slightest word" (Dostoevsky 213). Once again, Restoration's conscience gets the best of him as he becomes tense with any mention of the murder.

He expresses his unstable mind again here in how he cannot think and act properly. His punishment creeps onto him as he is unaware of the affects it has on him. Although in our society today people attempt to view everyone as equal, Restoration contrasts his opinion by distinguishing between his thoughts about two different types of people. Later in the novel, the cause of murder becomes somewhat evident that Restoration wants to prove himself 'extraordinary and not 'ordinary (Dostoevsky 247). He writes of this idea in a research paper that certain people have different limitations. An "extraordinary' man has the right... To decide in his own conscience to overstep... Certain obstacles" (Dostoevsky 247). As Restoration thinks of himself as being part of this 'extraordinary group', he applies the theory to himself. This notion becomes the first problem to his thinking as he

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mindlessly categorizes himself into that group. It is as though they are afraid of me,' Restoration was thinking to himself, looking askance at his mother and sister" (Dostoevsky 216). He believes that he is superior to others, and that others fear him.

Another problem in applying his theory to himself is that he did not decide in his conscience to break the law, but briefly in his mind. Because of his inability to think the thought through, he is forced to deal with the punishment of guilt. However, the guilt that overcomes Restoration has effects of its own. Not only does his mind begin to function strange, but also his body does not take the guilt well. Another topic that Restoration discusses in his research paper is the subsequent illness from crime (Dostoevsky 246).

He then goes on to prove his own theory as sickness grasps his every breath for weeks after the murder. The aspects of guilt all disappear, though, with the confession of the crime. All with one simple confession, he displays a clear conscience as he finally can love, as well as become a different person. By relieving the guilt, his mind also becomes clear without focusing every moment on the crime. The punishment accomplished its goal and forced Restoration to address his omniscience. In spite of Reservations attempts to avoid it, he is forced to confront himself as he cannot take it any longer.

With the forceful help of others, he tackles the bad part of his conscience that tells him he was not wrong in murdering the pawnbroker. Today, many people avoid situations by telling themselves a lie to make themselves feel better. However, they are left grappling with their conscience and return to a

guilt-free life. Such an experience occurred in Crime and Punishment as would occur today. But the easiest way to not have that painful and unwanted infiltration with the conscience is to not even do something guilty in the first place.