CHAPTER 111

Crimes in the fictional world of Dostoevsky

The literary career of Fyodor Mikhailovitch Dostoevsky can be broadly divided into two: Pre-Siberian and Post-Siberia. From the beginning Dostoevsky shows a fugitive interest in the criminal type, and wants to unravel the secrets of life. Consequently, crime constitutes as one of the major themes of his literary works. Crime in Dostoevsky is as diverse as his characters are, and his fictional world is a world of murderers, fallen women, debauchees, felons, cheats, and so on. These crimes and criminal characters of Dostoevsky can be categorized into three groups namely- crime committed for pleasure, moral crime, and ideological crime.

The first group, that is, crime committed for pleasure, consists of those people who commit crime for their personal satisfaction, and is individual in nature. This group consists of characters, whose main intention is to satisfy their personal desire. In other words, these people are not habitual criminals but indulge in criminal activities for material happiness.

The second group, that is, moral crime, consists of people who instigate others to commit crime, and indirectly participate in the act; and thereby take the moral responsibility of such act. This group consists of crime and criminals that is both individual and sometimes against the society.

The third group, that is, crime based on ideas, includes people who commit crime based on certain ideas. Here, we find individuals who indulge in physical crime, as well as in moral crime, and it is against the society. These criminals are
rational thinkers who, in their effort to set right the wrongs of the society, rebel against the existing order of things, and thereby become criminals.

**Crime for pleasure:** Here, we find individuals like Murin of *The Landlady*, Svidrigailoff of *Crime and Punishment*, Rogozhin of *The Idiot*, Stavrogin, Fedka, and Captain Lebyatkin of *The Possessed*, and Dmitri Karamazov, and Fyodor Karamazov of *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Murin is one of the important characters of *The Landlady* (**Pre-Siberian work**) which deals with the murders supposedly committed by him. He is introduced as an old man, who belonged to a rich merchant class. “The old man was tall” Ordynov notices “still upright and hale looking, but thin and of a sickly pallor. From his appearance he might have been taken for a merchant from some distant province.” Later he is presented as a curious well read man who is sensible and speaks smartly. He always read religious books, and had great influence on people who visits him. People call him a wizard, who has studied the book, and knows of all black arts. The Tartar, his porter says, “He is a clever man. He knows everything; he has read many books, many, many; he has read everything, and tells others the truth. Some bring two rubles, three rubles, forty rubles, as much as you please; he looks in a book, sees and tells the whole truth.”

*The Landlady* also depicts the story of Katerina a *wondrously* beautiful young girl of twenty, caught between the old-fashioned, mesmeric powers of Murin, and the **Westernized** Ordynov. Ordynov is a young man of science, sensitive and extremely cultivated. According to Dostoevsky he had a passion for science, and creating a system for himself. He writes, “This passion was science. It was consuming his youth, marring his rest at nights with its slow, intoxicating poison, robbing him wholesome
food and of fresh air which never penetrated to his stifling corner. Yet, intoxicated by
his passion, Ordynov refused to notice it.”

At the beginning of the story Ordynov is seen wandering the streets of St. Petersburg in search of lodging. His need for a new lodging forced him to come out of his seclusion. By evening he came to the other end of the town, and came out of a long side-street into a square where he saw a parish church. He went into it without thinking. It was here, in the church, Ordynov met Katerina and Murin for the first time.

Ordynov notices that Katerina wore a splendid blue, fur-trimmed jacket, and her head was covered with a white satin kerchief tied under her chin. She walked with her eyes cast down, and a sort of melancholy dignity pervaded her whole figure and was vividly and mournfully reflected in the sweet contours of the childishly soft, mild lines of her face. She is presented as a mysterious woman in tears, and there was something strange in that surprising couple. Ordynov notices Katerina, “Walking with her eyes cast down, and a sort of melancholy dignity pervaded her whole figure and was vividly and mournfully reflected in the sweet contours of the childishly soft, mild lines of her face. The woman fell on her face, before the icon. The old man (Murin) took the hem of veil that hung at the pedestal of the icon and covered her head. A muffled sob echoed through the church. Tears were welling up from her dark blue eyes under the long eyelashes that glistened against the milky pallor of her face, and were rolling down her pale cheeks. There was a glimpse of a smile on her lips; but there were traces in her face of some childlike fear and mysterious horror.”

Later that night Ordynov, in his dream sees her, “So glowing, so intense was the impression, so longing did his heart reproduce those mild, gentle features, quivering with mysterious emotion and horror, and bathed in tears of ecstasy or
childish penitence. Her features were quivering with a feeling of boundless devotion, and tears were falling and drying on her burning cheeks, as though washing away some fearful crime.\textsuperscript{75} The next day Ordynov follows them to their lodgings and enquires whether there is a room to be let. Before Murin could react, much against to his will, Katerina replies that they have a room to be let. In this way Ordynov came to live with them.

Soon Ordynov falls ill, and Katerina takes care of him. She falls in love with him and showers \textit{sensual} caresses on him. “It suddenly seemed to him that she was bending over him again, that she was looking into his eyes with her exquisitely clear eyes, wet with sparkling tears of serene, happy joy, soft and bright as the infinite turquoise vault of heaven at hot midday. … She tried to tell him something; caressingly she confined something to him. She was saying something to him, entreating him with half-bare arms, clasping and wringing her hands; he folded her in his arms, she quivered on his bosom. …”\textsuperscript{76} Then she narrates her story, and how she fell into Murin’s hand. She tells Ordynov how she has been loved \textit{incestuously} by Murin, her father. She tells him that she is born into a family of merchants, who lived on the banks of Volga. Her father is a merchant, and mother is a mistress to Murin.

Murin often visited Katerina’s mother, in the absence of her husband. On one such visit he sees Katerina, then a girl of sixteen, and is attracted by her beauty. Before his departure he offers Katerina a pearl neck lace which he has brought for her mother. He says, “I have a beauty in the town. I got it to offer to her, but I did not take it to her; take it, fair maiden, cherish your beauty; take them, though you crush them underfoot.”\textsuperscript{77}
After a few days, on a stormy night Murin knocks at Katerina’s window. Knowing very well it is Murin, Katerina allows him to enter into her room. She helps him to murder her father. Later she describes the scene to Ordynov as, “The factory is on fire. All ran out of the house; I was left with mother; I knew that she was parting from life, that she had been lying for the last three days on her death bed. I knew it, accursed daughter! … All at once, a cry under my room a faint cry like a child when it is frightened in its sleep, and then all was silent. … Suddenly I hear a shout close by, I hear the men running from the factory. I hung out of the window, I see them bearing my dead father, I hear them saying among themselves, ‘He stumbled, and he fell down the stairs into a red – hot cauldron; so the devil must have pushed him down.’”

Soon Murin is back in Katerina’s room and says, “I’ve come for you, fair maid; lead me away from trouble as before you led me into trouble; I have lost my soul for your sake, no prayers of mine can undo this accursed night! May be we will pray together! Show me how to get out without passing people.” Katerina leads Murin out of the house secretly and surrenders herself to him. Later she notices blood on his hand. When she asked him, “Why are your hands covered with blood?” He replies, “My hands covered with blood, my own? I stabbed your dogs; they barked too loud at a late guest.”

Later they settle in a small town on the Volga, and when Murin was away Katerina’s fiancée, Alyosha, with whom she had betrothed as a child meets her. She plans to elope with him, but Murin arrives on time. He cleverly kills the boy by pushing him into the river in Katerina’s presence. Katerina narrates the incident to Ordynov in the following manner. She says, “Behold, my master walks in without
word or warning. ‘Good-day let us go, there will be storm on the river and the time
will not wait.’ I followed him; we came to the river and it was far to reach his mates.
We look: a boat and one we knew rowing in it as though waiting for someone. ‘Good-
day, Alyosha; God be your help. Why, are you belated at the harbor, are you in haste
to meet your vessels? Row me, good man, with the mistress to our mates, to our place.
I have let my boat go and I don’t know how to swim.’ ‘Get in,’ said Alyosha, and my
whole soul swooned when I heard his voice. ‘Get in with the mistress, too, the wind is
for all, and in my bower there will be room for you, too.’ We got in; the wind howled,
and the waves rose high. ‘It’s a storm,’ said my master, ‘and it is a storm that bodes
no good! I have never seen such a storm on the river in my life as is raging now! It is
too much for our boat, it will not bear three! No, it will not, answered Alyosha, and
one of us, it seems, turns out to be too many, he says. … Alyosha, can you reach the
shore without the boat or will you perish for nothing, will you lose your life?’ Further
Murin says to Katerina, ‘Well, now we are in hard case in the boat. Has not his hour
come for one of us? Choose between the two; which is dear or not dear to you, fair
maid!’

Murin also tries to kill Ordynov their lodger, when he came to know that
Katerina is in love with him. When Ordynov entered into his lodger’s room, he saw
the old man’s eyes flash angrily under his lowering brows, and his whole face
contorted with sudden fury. He saw the old man, still keeping close watch upon him;
feel hurriedly with fumbling hand for a gun that hung upon the wall. Then Ordynov
notices the barrel of the gun flash, aimed straight at his breast with an uncertain hand
that trembled with fury. After the shot he heard a wild, almost inhuman, scream, and
when the smoke parted, a terrible sight met Ordynov’s eyes. He saw Murin suddenly falling into an epileptic fit and fails in his attempt to kill him.

Later Ordynov promises Katerina that he will buy her from the merchant and tries to kill Murin in a drinking bout. Hardly conscious of what he is doing, Ordynov, leans against the wall and took from the nail the old man’s expensive old-fashioned knife. He drew out the knife from the nail and glanced at the old man. At that moment he fancied that one of the old man’s eyes open and looked at him, laughing. When Ordynov gazed fixedly at the old man he fancied that a diabolical, soul-freezing chuckle resounding through the room. Before he could realize what was happening the knife dropped from his hand. Murin slowly got up from bed and angrily kicked the knife into the corner of the room.

After this, at the end of the story Ordynov was forcefully removed from his lodgings. Later, after six months, Murin disappears from the town. Thus, Murin is depicted as a murderer for his personal gain.

Later in Crime and Punishment (Post-Siberian work) Svidrigailoff is also presented in a similar manner. Crime and Punishment, like The Landlady, also deals with the murders committed by Rascolnikoff, the protagonist of the story. Dostoevsky introduces Rodian Romanovitch Rascolnikoff as a sick young man in rags, who for some time past had fallen into a state of nervous depression akin to hypochondria. Dostoevsky writes, “He had withdrawn from society and shut himself up, till he was ready to shun, not merely his landlady, but every human face. Poverty had once weighed him down, though, of late, he had lost his sensitiveness on that score. He had given up all his daily occupations.” He is portrayed as a young man of refined features, and is above average height. “Our hero’s” writes Dostoevsky, “Refined
features betrayed, for a moment, an impression of bitter disgust. We observe casually that he was not destitute of personal attractions; he was above middle height, with a slender and well-proportioned figure, and he had dark auburn hair and fine dark eyes."

He walks out of his garret like lodging on a sultry evening, and he is so miserably dressed that anyone else might have scrupled to go out in such rags. When a passerby shouted ‘look at the German hatter’ he feels no shame, but he took his hat and began to examine it. His appearance also reveals the fact that he had not eaten worth mentioning for the last two days, and his ideas are becoming confused. He writes, “The young man, the owner of the hat, was far from feeling his wounded vanity, was suffering rather from anxiety than humiliation. In a little while he sank into a deep reverie, or rather into a sort of mental torpor. He walked on without noticing, or trying to notice his surroundings. Occasionally he muttered a few words to himself; as if, as he himself had just perceived, this had become his habit. At this moment it dawned upon him that his ideas were becoming confused.” As he approached his destination his heart sank, and his limbs trembled nervously. When he rang the bell, the door was opened half, and an old woman, occupant of the room looks at him suspiciously. Then the young man introduces himself saying, that he is, ‘the student Rascolnikoff. I called on you a month ago.’

After his visit to the old woman he feels for a drink and enters into a dram shop. In the dram shop he meets Semyon Marmeladoff, a titular councilor and a drunkard. In his conversation with Rascolnikoff, Marmeladoff says that his daughter, from his first marriage, Sonia has entered into prostitution in order to support the family because he cannot give up drinking. Here, Sophia (Sonia) Semenovna is
introduced as a sixteen year old prostitute, forced to take up the burden of Marmeladoff family, consisting of her step- mother, step-sister, and step-brothers. Later we learn that she is meek and easily embarrassed, but maintains a strong religious faith.

Later we learn that Rascolnikoff murders Alena Ivanovna, the old money lender, and accidentally kills Elizabeth, (Lizevita) the half witted step-sister of Alena. The first part of the story deals with his preparation, rehearsal, and murder of the old women, while remaining part describes his agony and suffering, leading to his surrender and accepting legal punishment. To this story of murder, Dostoevsky brings in the character of Eudoxia (Dounia) Romanovna, Rascolnikoff’s sister, who is seduced by Svidrigailoff.

**Arcadius Ivanovitch Svidrigailoff** is another important character, the former employer of Dounia who wishes to marry her. “Mr. Svidrigailoff” writes Rascolnikoff’s mother, “who had acquired the habit of drinking in the army, was under the influence. Under his apparent rudeness and contempt the wretch concealed a passion for Dounia. At length he threw off the mask by making dishonorable proposals, trying by various promises, to seduce her, and declaring himself prepared to leave his house and family and take her to live in some other village or even country.”

Thus Svidrigailoff is first introduced as lecherous person attempting to seduce Dounia.

Svidrigailoff is also rumored to be responsible for the death of his wife, but he insists that she died of an apoplectic fit brought about by a bath she had taken after a copious meal. However, he confesses that he struck his wife twice with a horsewhip. He says, “Several times, especially when posting towards St. Petersburg, I asked
myself if I had not morally contributed towards this misfortune, either by having
irritated my wife or in some similar manner. … I had only given her two gentle cuts
with my horse whip which has left no marks. During the last seven years of married
life, I have only used the whip twice.”84

There is also the story about his servant Philip who died a victim of his harsh
treatment. Philip was driven to hang himself in consequence of the incessant brutality
and systematic vexation of his master. A young deaf and dumb girl of fourteen, who
committed suicide, was believed to be violated by him. Dostoevsky writes, “He is the
most vicious, the most depraved of men. By the dint of skill and sacrifice, she (his
wife) hushed up a criminal affair which could have sent Mr. Svidrigailoff to Siberia.
An intricate and mysterious connection existed for a long time between this woman
and Mr. Svidrigailoff. She had living with her distant relative, a niece – a girl of
fourteen who was deaf and dumb. One day this unfortunate girl was found hanging in
the garret the customary inquest ended in a verdict of suicide, when the police
received information that the girl has been violated by Mr. Svidrigailoff.”85

When Rascolnikoff confesses his crime to Sonia, Svidrigailoff eavesdrops on
the conversation, and uses that bit of information to blackmail Rascolnikoff with the
intention to get his consent to marry Dounia. He even offers to send Rascolnikoff to
America in order to escape the consequences of his crime. He tells Dounia, that if she
yields to him, he will not reveal the secret to anyone. In her attempt to escape, Dounia
tries to shoot him twice, but fails. Her rejection to marry him comes as a shock to him,
and asks her to leave. It is his meeting with Dounia, in which he reveals
Rascolnikoff’s crime that decides his fate. He says, “And you do not then love me?”
… For a moment a terrible struggle was at work in Svidrigailoff’s mind. His eyes
were fixed on the girl with an unutterable expression. ... At last he slowly turned round, looked about him, and passed his hand across his brows. His features, which a strange smile had distorted, revealed the most heart-rending despair.\textsuperscript{86}

There is also a dream sequence in which Svidrigailoff sees a five year old, innocent child transforming herself into a brazen French harlot. “Suddenly he fancies he sees the long black lashes of the little sleeper gently move; beneath the half closed eyelids there seemed a tendency to some cunning, sly, in no wish childish twinkle. Can the child be awake and only pretend to sleep? Yes, her lips smile- they quiver as with a desire to check a laugh. But now she throws aside constraint – she merrily laughs – there is, in that small face, a bold, brazen, luring look, without one trait of youth, for it is the face of a French harlot. Suddenly she opens both eyes wide – they gaze on Svidrigailoff with a lewd and amorous look – they ask, they smile. Nothing so repugnant as this childish face, whose youthful traits betoken lust. ‘What! at such an age? He cries a prey to horror. ‘Can such things be?’ And now she turns on him her painted face with outstretched arms. ‘Accursed thing!’ exclaims Svidrigailoff with a cry of horror; he raises his hand to strike her, and at the same moment wakes.”\textsuperscript{87}

This dream symbolizes the fact, that even the most innocent and pure seems irresistibly to take on the appearance of corruption and invite him to defile it. By this description we learn that he is a sensuous man and whose main function in life is pleasure. For him gratification of his desire is all that matter and how they are achieved becomes unimportant. Later he admits to Rascolnikoff that Womanizing is his chief vice and he has a ‘natural propensity’ for vulgar.
Later, in *The Idiot* Rogozhin is also depicted in a similar manner. *The Idiot* is the story of Prince Myshkin, a wise man who is supposed to be the embodiment of human perfection. The story begins with the arrival of Prince Myshkin from Switzerland to St. Petersburg. He returns to meet his distant relative Princess Myshkin, now madam Epachin, the general’s wife. In the railway compartment in which he is travelling he meets Parfyon Rogozhin, a rich merchant. He is from a merchant family that belongs to a sect of *Skoptsy* – a Russian sect which practices self mutilation, of St. Petersburg. Myshkin says to Rogozhin, “You would have settled down quietly in this house with an obedient and submissive wife; you would have been stern and sparing of words, trusting no one and feeling no desire to; doing nothing but heap up money in dreary silence. At the most you would sometimes have praised the books and been interested in the Old Believers’ fashion of crossing themselves, and that only in your old age. … You would have soon given up all this silliness, and as you are quite an uneducated man, you would have begun saving money and have settled down like father in this house with your *Skoptsy*.”

At the beginning of the story, we learn that, just like Murin of *The Landlady*, Rogozhin has presented Nastasya with a pearl ear-ring, in his passion to possess her. He says, “My late father gave me two five percent, bonds for five thousand rubles each. I cashed the bonds, took the money, but I didn’t go to Andreyev’s. I went to the English shop, and picked out a pair of ear rings with a diamond nearly as big as a nut in each of them. I gave the whole ten thousand for it and left owing four hundred; I gave them my name and address, and they trusted me. I went with the earrings straight to Nastasya Filippovna.”
Nastasya Filippovna is a woman of rare, remarkable beauty. She is introduced to the readers in the conversation at the railway compartment, in which Myshkin travelled with Rogozhin. Later, Myshkin sees her portrait in the general’s house which produces a deep impression on him. Nastasya, just like Katerina, is a wonderfully beautiful woman. He writes, “The portrait (of Nastasya) was indeed that of a wonderfully beautiful woman. She had been photographed in a black silk dress of an extremely simple and elegant cut; her hair, which looked as though it were dark brown, was arranged in a simple homely style; her eyes were dark and deep, her brow was pensive; her expression was passionate, and, as it were, disdainful. She was rather thin in the face and perhaps pale.”

Nastasya Filippovna was born in a poverty-stricken family of an officer. At the age of seven due to the blows of fate she becomes an orphan. Then she was taken care of and educated by Afanasy Ivanovich Totsky, a rich land owner, director of companies and syndicates. He appointed, “A respectable and cultivated elderly Swiss governess, experienced in the higher education of girls and competent to teach various subjects besides French, was engaged for her. Little Nastasya began to receive an education on the broadest lines.” Later she is presented as a woman who is unable to get rid of her Russianness despite her modern upbringing and too much education. As Ganya says, “She is a very Russian woman.”

In the course of time she grows into a lovely, charming young lady of extraordinary beauty. When she reached the age of sixteen, attracted by her beauty, Totsky installs her in a specially built house and regularly visited the ‘paradise’. Fascinated by her, Totsky, the subtle and elegant connoisseur of beauty in woman, transfers her to his village house. Later Totsky seduces her and keeps her as his
mistress for almost four years. But later Totsky decides to marry a rich heiress of a good family that befits his aristocratic state. The humiliated Nastasya who has a passion for Totsky, was hurt by his decision, and decides to take revenge on him. She is also desired by general Epachin, Ivolgin – general’s secretary, and Rogozhin.

Rogozhin had a passion for Nastasya Filippovna, and dreams of her every night. On her birthday Rogozhin crash enters into her home and offers seventy five thousand rubles as dowry to marry him. But Nastasya had only contempt for him and looks on him as the lowest refuse. She throws the bundle of money into the fire. “He (Rogozhin) prices me at a hundred thousand. … This, friends, is a hundred thousand rubles,” says Nastasya Filippovna, addressing the company with a sort of feverish, impatient defiance, “in this dirty bundle. This afternoon he shouted like a mad man that he would bring me a hundred thousand this evening, and I’ve been expecting him all the time. He was bidding for me: he began at eighteen, then he suddenly passed at one bound to forty, and then this hundred here. He’s kept his word. … He prices me at a hundred thousand. … Then listen, Ganya; I want to see into your soul for the last time. You have been torturing me for three months past, now it’s my turn. You see this roll; there are a hundred thousand rubles in it! I’m just going to throw it into the fire, before everyone, all are witnesses. As soon as the fire has got it alight, put your hands into the fire, only without gloves, with your bare hands and turn back your sleeves, and pull the bundle out of the fire. If you can pull it out, it’s yours, the whole hundred thousand.”93

Rogozhin is also depicted as a man who is too crude to understand the true love of Nastasya as he can understand and communicate only the language of brute force of real Russian moujik. Rogozhin also knows that if at all she marries him it is
out of spite not love. “She would have drowned herself long ago, if she had me; that’s the truth. She doesn’t do that because, perhaps, I am more dreadful than the water. It’s from spite she is marrying me. If she marries me, I tell you for it will be from spite.”

It is also true that Rogozhin as a Russian moujik will never give up his object, if he wants a thing, nothing will shake him. Ippolit warns Myshkin, “To beware of Rogozhin, he is a man who will never give up his object. He’s not like you and me, prince; if he wants a thing, nothing will shake him.”

Myshkin who was present there offers to marry Nastasya. As Ferdyshtchenko says, “The Prince would take you. You sit there and complain, but you should look at the prince.” When Nastasya asked him whether it is true, he replies that it is true. Then Myshkin looked with a stern, mournful and penetrating gaze into the face of Nastasya, she said, “Here’s a find! And simply from goodness of heart. I have found a benefactor! What are you going to live on if you are so in love that you, a prince, are ready to marry Rogozhin’s woman?”

Later the mad jealousy between Myshkin and Rogozhin leads to the murder of Nastasya by the latter. In his mad attempt to possess her Rogozhin kills her with the same knife which he threatens Myshkin with. He says to Prince, “All I can tell you about the knife is this; I took it out of a locked drawer this morning, for it all happened this morning, about four o’clock. It had been lying in a book all the time. … And. … and … another thing seem strange: the knife went in three or four inches … just under the left breast … and there wasn’t more than half a tablespoonful of blood flowed on to her chemise, there was no more.” When Myshkin asked Rogozhin about Nastasya, the latter showed him the dead body of her. “The sleeper was covered over from head to foot with a white sheet and the limbs were vaguely
defined; all that could be seen was that of a human figure lay there, stretched at full length. … It seemed as though it had been carved out of marble it was horridly still. Myshkin asked him ‘was it … you?’ ‘It was I,’ Rogozhin whispered, and he looked down.” Thereby Rogozhin becomes murderer in his passion to possess Nastasya.

Further in *The Possessed*, also known as *The Devils*, Stavrogin is also presented in a similar manner. *The Possessed* is about a political revolution based on a real incident. In 1869 Dostoevsky, in Dresden, came across an interesting piece of information. A student of Moscow University named Nacheav, a revolutionary fanatic began to organize a revolution with the help of his fellow students. The movement was to be carried on by a group of five, each responsible through its chief to a higher group. Nacheav himself pretended to be one of the central committee. There was a comrade named Ivanov who was suspected by Nacheav that his passion for the cause had subsequently cooled. The confederates fearing treachery and denunciation murder Ivanov at the instigation and under the leadership of Nacheav. They threw his body into a pond behind the academy. Nacheav escapes to Switzerland while his three accomplices were arrested and brought to St. Petersburg for trial.

In the fictional adaptation Peter Verkhovensky occupies the place of Nacheav. He came to town with the intention to murder Shatov, a young student, whom he suspects as an informer. Shatov was murdered with the help of five comrades namely, Liputin, Verginsky, Lyamshin and Erkil. Peter, who plots the murder, never comes to the forefront and just like Nacheav, escapes. To execute his plan Peter seeks the help of Nicolai Stavrogin, the *fairy tale prince*, the principal character of the story.
**Stavrogin** is an elegant young man of twenty five, without affection, not too talkative, and bold and self-radiant. He is introduced as a wealthy supercilious aristocrat, known as the prince. He is a *paragon of beauty* with a **criminal zeal** who had apparently been a terrible bully and went around insulting people for the sheer joy of it. The narrator says, “I saw the most elegant gentleman I’d ever met. I was struck by his looks. His handsome head of black hair was somehow a bit too black; his light eyes were perhaps too steady, his complexion too smooth and delicate, and his cheeks too rosy and his lips like coral. This sounds like a strikingly beautiful face, but in reality it was repulsive rather than beautiful. His face reminded some people of a mask. He was dressed in the best of taste and behaved as only those accustomed to the most refined surroundings. The new arrival immediately captured the attention of our local ladies. Some were attracted because they felt there was some mystery about him; others were positively thrilled by the thought that he was a **killer**.”

Mrs. Stavrogin, his mother, appointed Stephan Verkhovensky to educate her son and as well as to build his character. Stephan Verkhovensky is a **liberal idealist**, whose name is mentioned almost in the same breath as those of **Chaadyav**, **Belinsky**, **Granovsky**, and **Herzen**. Stepha Verkvovensky introduces himself as ‘a professor’ and gathered a circle of friends around him who met twice a week in his home. This circle included people like Liputin, Shatov, Virginsky, and later joined by other **liberal idealists**. The narrator writes, “There was a time when it was said that our circle was a hotbed of **freethinking**, vice, and **atheism**, and this notion always lingered about us. But in actual fact we were just enjoying a pleasant, innocent **Russian** pastime – liberal blather. … One of the earliest members of the circle was Liputin, a great liberal with a reputation as an **atheist**. … There was another young
man who came to our gatherings. He was a young official called Virginsky. ... There was a time when it was said that our circle was a hotbed of free thinking, vice, and atheism, and this notion always lingered about us.”

Later, a year or so before, Shatov also joined the group. “He was a former university student who had been expelled from the university after some scandal. As a boy, he had been one of Mr. Verkhovensky’s pupils. When abroad, Shatov radically altered his former socialist convictions and jumped to the other extreme. He was one of those Russian idealists who, once struck by some overwhelming idea, become obsessed by it, sometimes for the rest of his life. He cannot ever really grasp it, but he believes in it passionately, and his life becomes an uninterrupted series of agonizing pangs.”

Mr. Verkhovensky influences Nicolai Stavrogin, so much that the narrator writes, “In fairness to Mr. Verkhovensky, it must be said that he knew how to gain affection of his pupil. He didn’t hesitate to make a friend out of even such a small child, and as the boy grew, any gap that may have existed between them seemed to disappear. He reportedly woke his ten- or eleven-year old friend in the middle of the night and tearfully poured out his wounded sensibilities or even shared some family secrets with him, which, of course, was quite unforgivable. Then they would sob in each other’s arms. Thus Mr. Verkhovensky has managed to touch the deepest – seated chords in the boy’s heart, causing the first, still undefined, and sensation of the undying, sacred longing that a superior soul, having once tasted, will never exchange for vulgar satisfaction.”
Later it was rumored that young **Stavrogin** has suddenly plunged into wildest **dissipation**. It was not the usual complaint of drinking and gambling, but the debauchery of a savage reckless youth like ‘people run down by his horse, and his brutal behavior toward a lady’. There was something obviously unnatural about his behavior. He was one of those people who do not know what fear is. He is described as a man who in a duel could remain completely relaxed while his opponent was taking aim at him and then shoot and kill him with the most brutal indifference.

When he was in St. Petersburg he marries Mary Lebyatkin, a lame woman. He gave money to captain Lebyatkin, her brother to keep the marriage a secret. Captain Ignat Lebyatkin is a retired army officer, and a big drunkard. He is a vicious crook and a highly irritable man. He claimed that a woman must be taught respect and beat his sister every day. Liputin says, “The Captain whips that fair, simple-minded sister of his, using a real Cossack whip. He does it every morning and every evening – twice a day.”

When Stavrogin realizes that there is a threat to his secret marriage to the cripple he plans for the murder of both, his legal wife and her brother captain Lebyatkin. He arranges the murder of these two through Fedka, an escaped convict. He says, “Your Honor, will you be kind enough to let me have those three rubles? You’d set my mind at rest, sir, by giving me an answer, sir, because in my position, as I told you, one can’t do without a helping hand.” Later we understand that Fedka kills them by setting fire on their home. “It has been established beyond doubt now that Fedka and two factory hands were involved in starting a fire that broke out three days later in our town. Three other workers were caught in the district three months
afterward and convicted of arson.” Later Fedka was mercilessly murdered by Peter Verkhovensky.

At the end of the story in his confession to the retired bishop Tikhon, **Stavrogin** writes that he is a *womanizer* and wanted to commit another *crime* by *bigamy*. He is a sadist who wanted to take pleasure by arranging a meeting of two women he loves. He writes, “I lived in St. Petersburg wallowing in vice from which I derived no pleasure. For some time I rented three lodgings. The one I actually lived in was a furnished room with service and board. Maria Lebyatkin, who is now my lawful wife, lived in the same house. The other two lodgings were rented by the month, and I used them for my love affairs. In one of them I used to receive a certain lady who happened to be in love with me and, in the other, her maid. For some time, I toyed with the notion of making the two run into each other. I wanted the lady and the girl to meet at my place. Knowing them both, I anticipated deriving great fun from playing such a stupid trick on them.”

Stavrogin with a sadist pleasure also pushes Metryosha, the young girl he had raped to suicide. After the rape, his first intention was to kill her fearing that the girl would report the incident to her mother. He writes in his confession, “That night, sitting in my tenement, I felt great hatred for her and decided to kill her. I was thinking how I’d insult her and then kill her. What made me hate her most was the thought of her smile; it generated scorn combined with a feeling of morbid disgust in me.”

Much later in *The Brothers Karamazov*, **Fyodor** Pavlovich Karamazov is also introduced as a most *abject* and *vicious* man. *The Brothers Karamazov* is the story of a parricide, Fyodor Karamazov, the father of Dmitri, Ivan, Alyosha, and the
illegitimate son Smerdyakov. The three sons of Fyodor represent three aspects of life. The elder Dmitri is a Russian rustic, the second Ivan is a Westernizer, and the third Alyosha is the Russian Orthodox. “Fyodor Pavlovitch” writes Dostoevsky “is presented as one of those senseless persons who are very well capable of looking after only their worldly affairs. Ran to dine at other men’s tables, and fastened on them as a toady, yet at his death it appeared that he had a hundred thousand rubles in hard cash. At the same time, he was all his life one of the most senseless, fanatical fellows in the whole district. I repeat, it was not stupidity – the majority of these fantastical fellows are shrewd and intelligent enough – but just senselessness, and a peculiar national form of it.”

He was one of those senseless persons who are very well capable of looking after only their worldly affairs, and, apparently, after nothing else. At the same time, he was all his life one of the most senseless, fantastical fellows in the whole district.

Fyodor is presented as a sensualist debauchee, who is vicious and an unhappy, unbridled old man. He was born in a quite noble but poor family. Fyodor married Adelaida Ivanovna, a young girl who belonged to a fairly rich and distinguished noble family. Soon after the marriage, the greedy Fyodor got hold of all her money which was up to twenty five thousand rubles. Fortunately Adelaida’s family intervened in the matter and circumvented his greediness. Unfortunately, Adelaida after giving birth to a son (Dmitri), left Fyodor and runs away with a destitute divinity student. When Fyodor received the news of her death in St. Petersburg, he was so happy that, he ran out into the street and began shouting with joy raising his hands to heaven, and says, ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.’ Later he invested that money in his business as a money lender.
Shortly after the death of his first wife, Fyodor was allured by the remarkable beauty of Sofya Ivanovna, the daughter of an obscure deacon and was left from childhood an orphan without relations. As she is poor and Fyodor has not taken any dowry from her, he takes advantage of her phenomenal meekness and submissiveness to trample on the elementary decencies of marriage. He gathered loose women into his house, and carried on orgies of debauchery in his wife’s presence. Soon, Sofya Ivanovna, the unhappy young woman who has been kept in terror from her childhood, falls into some kind of nervous disease. She too dies, after giving birth to two children – Ivan and Alyosha. As a father Fyodor forgot his responsibility, and indulges in nothing but sensual pleasure. The children were looked after by servants and distant relatives. It affects his children, especially Dmitri.

Later Fyodor seduces Lizevita, a dwarfish, deaf and dumb idiot. She is a destitute who wandered around the place, wearing nothing but a hempen smock, and slept wherever she wanted on the dirty ground. Once on a clear, warm, moonlight night, five or six drunken revelers were returning from the club at a very late hour saw Lizevita asleep. They stopped to look at her, laughing, and began to jesting with unbridled licentiousness. A young gentle man asked whether it is possible to look upon such an animal as a woman. Fyodor Pavlovich, who was among them, sprang forward and declared that it was by no means impossible, and that, indeed, there was certain piquancy about it. “But five or six months later, all the town was talking about, with indignation, of Lizevita’s condition. They tried to find out who was the miscreant who had wronged her. Then suddenly there was a terrible rumor all over the town that the miscreant was no other than Fyodor Pavlovich. On the day of delivery she made her way into Fyodor Pavlovich’s garden, and died giving birth to
Smerdyakov.” At his birth Grigory the valet says, “A child of God – an orphan is akin to all and to us above others. Our little lost one has sent us this, which has come from the devil’s son and a holy innocent.”

Dmitri, is introduced as a young man of twenty seven, is frivolous, unruly, of vicious passions; impatient, and dissipated and inherits his father’s sensuality. He spent an irregular boyhood and youth. He left his studies at the gymnasium, and then got into a military school. He led a wild life, and spent a good deal of money. He did not like his father, and made haste to get away from him. He argues that the money belongs to him as it was it mother’s money. But Fyodor swindles his money and tries to cheat him. Dmitri is betrothed to Katerina Ivanovna, daughter of a colonel, but wants to marry Grushenka, a fallen woman. Fyodor says, “Dmitri Fyodorovitch, have you abandoned your betrothed for that ‘creature’, so you must yourself have thought that your betrothed couldn’t hold a candle to her. That’s the woman called a creature.”

Ivan is a young man of twenty four who came to town on the invitation of his elder brother Dmitri. From his early childhood he showed a brilliant and unusual aptitude for learning. When he was thirteen, he left the family of Yefim Petrovitch with whom he was living. Later he said that he left Moscow gymnasium because he had an ‘ardor for good works.’ Later at the university he published brilliant reviews of books upon various special subjects, so that he became well known in literary circles. Alyosha was extremely interested in Ivan for he noticed in him a sort of indifference towards him. He says, “Ivan was absorbed in something – something inward and important – that he was striving towards some goal, perhaps very hard to attain.” He wonders, “Whether there was not some contempt on the part of the
learned atheist for him – a foolish novice. He knew for certain that his brother was an atheist.”

Ivan represents modern educated youth. He is a vigorous intellect who has lost faith in everything. He has horrified everyone by his spiritual audacity.

Alyosha is only twenty and was simply an early lover of humanity. He adopted the monastic life because it struck to him that, only that life is an ideal escape for his soul struggling from the darkness of worldly wickedness to the light of love. There is much similarity between prince Myshkin and Alyosha in their spiritual serenity. Like Myshkin, Alyosha too remains undisturbed by the eccentric behavior of all those around him. His silent forgiving attitude wins everyone. His serenity stems from his genuine religious feelings. Dostoevsky writes, “There is something about him which made one feel at once (and it was so all his life afterwards) that he did not care to be a judge of others – which would never take it upon himself to criticize and would never condemn anyone for anything. He seemed, indeed, to accept everything without the least condemnation though often grieving bitterly: and this was so much that no one could surprise or frighten him even in his earliest youth. … Everyone, indeed, loved this young man wherever he went, and it was so from his earliest childhood. And to shelter him would be no burden, but, on the contrary, would probably be looked on as a pleasure.”

Smerdyakov, the illegitimate is the most intelligent crook among of all the Karamazov. Fyodor calls him a soup maker, and wants to send him to Moscow to be trained as a cook. He is a remarkably unsocial and taciturn young man of twenty four, brought up by servant Gregory and his wife Marfa. Not that he is shy and bashful; on the contrary he is conceited and seemed to despise everybody. Even as a young boy he was fond of hanging cats, and burying them with great ceremony. He grew up with
no sense of gratitude; he perfectly plans everything, for years and was fortunate as he
is epileptic. He waits for an opportunity, and it was his patient waiting that bears him
the fruits of his revenge. As Gregory says, “You’re not a human being. You grew
from the mildew in the bathhouse.” Gregory taught him to read and write, and
when he was twelve years old, he taught him scriptures, but this teaching came to
nothing. At the second or third lesson he asked Gregory if God created light on the
first day, and the sun, moon, and starts on the fourth day where the light did come
from on the first day, and that was the end of his lessons. Later he successfully takes
revenge on the man who is responsible for his birth and social degradation.

Dmitri, who represents Russian folk – a Russian moujik, hates his father for
ill treating his mother. He is torn between the inherited evils and the innate good in
him as he possesses his father’s lust. Fyodor is jealous of Dmitri, as Miusov says, “A
father is jealous of his son’s relations with a woman of loose behavior and intrigues
with the creature to get his son into prison!” So he tries to kill his father but fails.
“At that moment a fearful noise and clamor was heard in the hall, there were violent
shouts, the door was flung open, and Dmitri burst into the room. The old man rushed
to Ivan in terror. Ivan rushed at Dmitri. But Dmitri threw up both hands and suddenly
clutched the old man by the two tufts of hair that remained on his temples, tugged at
them, and flung him with a crash on the floor. He kicked him two or three times with
his heel in the face. The old man moaned shrilly. Ivan, though not so strong as Dmitri,
threw his arms around him, and with all his might pulled him away. Alyosha helped
him with his slender strength, holding Dmitri in front. ‘Mad man! You’ve killed him!’
cried Ivan. ‘Serve him right! Shouted Dmitri breathlessly, if I haven’t killed him, I’ll
come again and kill him’. You can’t protect him!”

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Later at the end of the story as the prosecutor says the children had nothing but resentment against Fyodor Pavlovich in their heart. He says, “He had no feelings for his duties as a father. He ridiculed those duties. He left his children to the servants, and was glad to be rid of them, forgot about them completely. He was an example of everything that is opposed civic duty, of the most complete and malignant individualism. … I can well understand what resentment he had heaped up in his son’s heart against him.” Finally Fyodor became a victim to his licentious life and was murdered by his illegitimate son Smerdyakov

All these characters Murin, Svidrigailoff, Rogozhin, Stavrogin, Captain Lebyatkin, Fedka, Dmitri Karamazov, and Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov are murderers in one way or the other, and can be presented as criminals at the peripheral level.

Moral Crime: A different analysis or another perspective of the above said stories reveals the fact that Dostoevsky’s interest lies not in these men of pleasure; rather he tries to bring out the real reason and the person responsible for the crimes committed at the peripheral level. This consists of individuals who indulge in certain criminal acts and take the moral responsibility of such act. This group consists of crimes and criminals that is both individual and against the society. This group includes people like Katerina of The Landlady, the nameless underground man of Notes From Underground, the nameless pawn broker of The Meek One, Nastasya Fillipovna of The Idiot, and Katerina Ivanovna of The brothers Karamazov.

Katerina of The Landlady, who is presented as a simple girl, is in fact not so simple, because she informs Ordynov that she is a murderess. She calls herself an accursed daughter, and thereby repents the most hideous deed – the parricide. She
saying, “I am under a curse, I’m a murderess; my mother cursed me! I was the ruin of my own mother!”

When Murin visited her mother, in the beginning, she tries to protest him by tearing away the ‘evil knife’ from him, but fails as Murin hits her in the breast. She says, “I saw him clutch at the knife and more than once of late I had seen him clutch at the knife when he was talking with mother. I jumped up and caught at his belt, tried to tear the evil knife away from him. He clenched his teeth, cried out and tried to beat me back; he struck me in the breast but did not shake me off. I thought I should die on the spot there was a mist before my eyes. I fell on the floor, but did not cry out. Though I could hardly see, I saw him. He took off his belt, tucked up his sleeve, with the hand with which he had struck me took out the knife and gave it to me. ‘Here, cut it away, amuse yourself over it, even as I insulted you, while I, proud girl, will bow down to the earth to you for it.’ I laid aside the knife; the blood began to stifle me, I did not look at him. I remember I laughed without opening my lips and looked threateningly straight into mother’s mournful eyes, and the shameless laugh never left my lips.” Later we notice, when she helps Murin to murder her parents and escape, she has the same laugh on her lips.

The words of Murin, “I want my enemy to be gone, to take leave for good and all of the old love, and to lay my heart at the feet of a new one, a fair maid like you…,” hurts her feelings and she develops a love-hate relationship with him. She accepts the pearl necklace presented by him so as to use it as a snare against him. “I took them” she says “like a viper, not saying a word. I came in and set them on the table before mother – it was for that I took them.” Later, on the day of the murder, she says, “I opened the door to him, I let him into the house, only on the threshold with an
effort I brought out, ‘Here, take your pearls and never give me a gift again,’ and I threw the box after him.’”

Katerina confesses to Ordynov that she is a murderess, and not Murin. She says, “I am corrupted, they have corrupted me, they have ruined me. I have sold my soul for a mortal sin. I am under a curse, I’m a murderess; my mother cursed me! I was the ruin of my own mother. I hid her in the damp earth.” In this sense Katerina emerges as the real murderess, who commits a moral crime by helping Murin to murder her parents. She feels that she is a senseless, shameless girl who sold her soul for mortal sin. She is conscious of the fact that she sold her soul to a wicked man, a cut throat robber.

After the murder, Katerina elopes with Murin, her father-cum-husband remains subjugated to him. When Murin falls unconscious in the drinking bout she provokes Ordynov to murder him. “A look of pain passed over her face; she raised her head again, and looked at him with such mockery, with such contemptuous haughtiness, that he could scarcely stand upon his feet. Then she pointed to the sleeping old man and – as though all his enemy’s mockery had passed into her eyes, she bent again a taunting, glance at Ordynov that sent an icy shiver to his heart. A fixed laugh that froze Odynov’s whole being, remained upon Katerina’s face. Its boundless irony rent his heart. Not knowing what he was doing, hardly conscious, he leaned against the wall and took from a nail the old man’s expensive old-fashioned knife. A look of amazement seemed to come into Katerina’s face, but at the same time anger and contempt were reflected with the same force in her eyes. Ordynov turned sick, looking at her … he felt as though someone were thrusting, urging his frenzied
hand to madness. He drew out the knife … Katerina watched him, motionless, holding her breath.”

Here, Dostoevsky presents Katerina as a traditional Russian woman born and brought up in the environment of Domstroi tradition. Murin says, “She is a simple woman, an unwashed peasant woman, a foolish rustic maid, a match for a peasant like me. It is not for a gentleman like you, to be friends with peasants.” According to this a woman is expected to be always obedient to her father or husband. But Katerina moves away from this tradition in her rebel against her father-cum-husband. Katerina’s support to Murin’s crime speaks of her social irresponsibility. On both the occasions, when Murin kills her parents and her fiancée was drowned to death in her very presence, Katerina remains cool and indifferent. Here, Dostoevsky highlights the responsibility of the individual for shaping his/her own destiny and the moral responsibility of individual for his/her plight.

In this sense The Landlady occupies an important place in his early works. It presents the ideological stand of Dostoevsky in its rudimentary form. A sense of shame for transgressing the moral convictions is dealt with in its all diversities in his later works.

Later in Crime and Punishment Marmeladoff, Sonia’s father shows the same indifferent attitude towards his daughter. Marmeladoff, who looks like a retired government official, is a drunkard. “This man” writes Dostoevsky “who was over fifty, was of medium height and had a hale complexion. His head was very bald, displaying only a few grey hairs. His swollen cheeks, of a yellow or rather a greenish hue, betrayed his intemperate habits, and under the drooping eyelids sparkled a pair of small eyes, somewhat red, but full of animation. The most striking thing about his
face was its expression of intelligence and enthusiasm, which alternated with a look of insanity.” He enjoys his poverty, and says that poverty is no vice. He proudly announces that he married Catherine Ivanovna, a widow with three children as she has nowhere to go to. Then he speaks about Sonia, his daughter from his first wife, who is a yellow card holder.

Marmeladoff justifies himself that Sonia was not forced take up yellow card. He says that Catherine Ivanovna, his wife said so only to vex her than to drive her to evil ways. He says, “The children were starving, and Catherine Ivanovna walked up and down the room wringing her hands. ‘You idle thing! She exclaimed, are you not ashamed to live here and do nothing. I was lying down – I may as well say- drunk. … I must tell you that Daria Frantzovna, a bad woman, had already made overtures to her thrice. Catherine Ivanovna ironically says you must have a fine treasure indeed to preserve it so jealously! Do not accuse her, Sir, do not; she did not know what she was saying; she is ill and harassed, and her words meant rather to vex Sonia than to drive to evil things.” This shows that as a father he fails to perform his duty and his indifferent attitude towards her.

This quality of social irresponsibility and Moral crime based on ideas can later be traced in Notes From Underground, a Post-Siberian work. It consists of two parts – the first deals with the monologue of the nameless underground man, who unfolds his revenge against the society. The second part shows how continuous humiliation provoked the nameless man to take revenge on Liza, a young prostitute.

The nameless underground man is introduced as a collegiate assessor, who is a well educated spiteful egoist. He says, “I am a sick man … I am a spiteful man. I am an unattractive man. Besides, I am extremely superstitious, sufficiently so to respect
medicine, anyway, I am well-educated enough not to be superstitious.” He is rude and took pleasure in being so, and felt intense enjoyment when he succeeds in making anybody unhappy. Whenever he insults his fellow men he feels happy, and says, “All my life I had this fact about myself as a secret. I got to the point of feeling a sort of secret abnormal, despicable enjoyment in returning home to my secret corner acutely conscious that day I had committed a loathsome action again, and secretly, inwardly gnawing and gnawing at myself for it, tearing and consuming myself till at last the bitterness turned into a sort of shameful accursed sweetness, and at last- into positive real enjoyment! Yes, into enjoyment, into enjoyment! I insist upon that the enjoyment was just from the too intense consciousness of one’s own degradation; it was from feeling oneself that one had reached the last barrier, that it was horrible.”

We can also notice that this nameless underground man is a profound analyst of his own feelings and those of others. He is thoroughly aware of his distorted personality. He says, “I hated my face, for instance: I thought it disgusting, and even suspected that there was something base in my expression, and so every day when I turned to the office I tried to behave as independently as possible, and to assume a lofty expression, so that I might not be suspected of being abject. ‘My face is may be ugly’ I thought, ‘but let it be lofty, expressive, and above all extremely intelligent…. Perhaps I was the only one in the office who fancied that I was a coward and a slave, and I fancied it just because I was more highly developed.” He knows that the fundamental opposition of his nature is one between will and nature. But he cannot resolve the contradiction so he retreats to himself and stores up venom and spite for all which is because of his gloomy and neglected childhood.
From his childhood he was a lonely boy, a dependent on his relations. As a child he grew up as a forlorn, silent boy, crushed by reproaches. His school fellows met him with spiteful and merciless jibes, because he was not like them an ordinary boy. They laughed cynically at his clumsy figure and their coarseness revolted him. He hated them from the very beginning and could not endure their taunts. The humiliations he faced at school by his schoolmates made him to withdraw from human society. He kept to himself away from everyone in timid, wounded and disproportionate pride. Consequently he made friends with no one and hid in his hole and spent most of his time at home, reading. He writes, “I tried to stifle all that was continually seething with in me by means of external impressions. I was overwhelmed with depression. I had a hysterical craving for incongruity and for contrast, and so I took to vice.”

He felt that those boys understood nothing, took no interest in such striking impressive subjects and essential things of life that made him to consider them as inferior to him. “At sixteen” he says, “I wondered at them morosely; the stupidity of their pursuits. They had no understanding of such essentials things, they took no interest in such striking, impressive subjects, that I could not help considering them inferior to myself. They understood nothing, they had no idea of real life, and I swear that that was what made most indignant with them. On the contrary, the most obvious, striking reality they accepted with fantastic stupidity and even at that time were accustomed to respect success. They were monstrously depraved.”

He hated them horribly, though he was worse than any of them. He confesses that he did not desire their affection, on the contrary he continually longed for their humiliation. To escape from their derision, he purposefully began to make all the
progress in his studies. They realized that he had already read books that none of them
could read, and understand things not forming part of school curriculum, of which
they had not even heard. He writes, “They took a savage and sarcastic view of it, but
were morally impressed. The mockery ceased, but the hostility remained, and cold
and strained relations became permanent between us. In the end I could not put up
with it; with years a craving for society, for friends, developed in me. I attempted to
get on friendly terms with some of my school fellows; but somehow or other my
intimacy with them was always strained and soon ended of itself.” ^129 Later as a
collegiate officer once he re-met his old school fellow Simonov. Then he learns that
that evening they were gathering at hotel de Paris to bid good bye to one of their old
comrades. The underground man also expresses his wish to join them.

Next morning he was so happy at the very thought that he jumps out of bed in
excitement. He thinks that a radical change is taking place in his life. He was so
excited that he left office early to be there in time. He dreams of getting the upper
hand, of dominating them. When he arrives at the hotel to his disappointment he
learns that the dinner was postponed by an hour and he feels ashamed. Even after their
arrival no sufficient attention was given to him and he sits crushed and humiliated.
Unable to bear the humiliation he starts walking up and down the other side of the
room for three hours.

It was just after this humiliating incident that the underground man followed
them to the brothel and met **Liza, the young prostitute.** The incident instigates him to
show his wrath on the poor girl. As he is humiliated he wants to take revenge by
humiliating Liza. He says, “During those three hours I was three times soaked with
sweat and dry again. At times, with an intense, acute pang I was stabbed to the heart
by the thought that ten years, twenty years, and forty years would pass, and that even in forty years I would remember with loathing and humiliation those filthiest, most ludicrous, and most awful moments of my life. No one could have gone out of his way to degrade himself more shamelessly, and I fully realized it, fully. "

He arouses great hope in Liza with his delicate speech. When he asked Liza why she left home she hints at some mysterious infamy saying that what if it was even worse there. He proudly announces that if he had a daughter he would love her better than any sons. At the same time he frightens her with the information that after a year she will be worthless, she will go a step lower to some other house. And in another year to a third house, always lower and lower, and in seven years’ time she will die at the hands of customers, who do not even know how to caress a woman without first giving her a cuff or two.

He invites Liza to his home promising that he will relieve her from her miseries. At home he weaves sweet dreams about her coming to his flat. When Liza visits him he was in a rugged dress and loses all control. He humiliates her in the most inhuman way. He shouts at her, "Why have you come to me? You’ve come because I talked sentimental stuff to you then. So now you are soft as butter and longing for fine sentiments again. So you may well know that I was laughing at you then. And I am laughing at you now. Why are you shuddering? Yes I was laughing at you! I had been insulted just before, at dinner, by the fellows who came that evening before me. I came to you, meaning to thrash one of them, an officer, but I didn’t succeed, I didn’t find him; I had to avenge the insult on someone to get back my own again; you turned up, I vented my spleen on you and laughed at you. I had been humiliated, so I wanted to humiliate; I had been treated like a rag, so I wanted to show my power. That’s what
it was, and you imagined I had come there on purpose to save you. Yes? You imagined that? ... Power, power was what I wanted then, sport was what I wanted, and I wanted to wring out your tears, your humiliation, and your hysteria- that was what I wanted then! I am a wretched creature, I was frightened, and, the devil knows why I gave you my address in my folly. Afterwards before I got home, I was cursing and swearing at you because of that address, I hated you already because of the lies I had told you.”

The words of the nameless underground man, “Because I only like playing with words, only dreaming, but, do you know, what I really want is that you should all go to hell. That is what I want. I want peace; yes, I’d sell the whole world for a farthing, straight off, so long as I was left in peace. Is the world to go to pot, or am I to go without tea? I say that the world may go to pot for me so long as I always get my tea” just like Katerina of The Landlady shows his indifference and social irresponsibility. The underground man brings out the hidden rivalry behind romantic sentiments and ideals, the exchanges of pride and humiliation that govern the relation between people.

Later in The Meek one, Dostoevsky presents a similar stream of consciousness. He writes in The Diary of A Writer that The Meek One is neither a story nor a note. He calls it “fantastic” and writes, “Please Imagine a husband whose wife, a suicide, is lying on the table, a suicide; several hours earlier she threw herself out the window. He is in a state of consternation and, as yet, he has been unable to compose his thoughts. He keeps walking around in his rooms and is endeavoring to rationalize the event, ‘to collect his thoughts into a one focus.’” Further he writes that his protagonist is “an inveterate hypochondriac, - one of those who talk to themselves.
And thus he talks to himself; he relates the event, and **rationalizes** it to himself. Despite the seeming consecutiveness of the speech, several times he **contradicts** himself – both in the logic and in his sentiments. He at once justifies himself and accuses her, and embarks upon other.”

He introduces the protagonist, again a nameless pawn broker as a man who is not especially talented, but rather a cheap egoist. If the nameless underground man is not exactly a man of flesh and blood, and the conscience of every human being talking to oneself; the pawn broker of is presented as a desperate speaking voice. Just like the underground man the pawn broker despises the world around him and is despised by them. He hates the society around him, and wishes to avenge against it. He says, “I was in fact ‘taking revenge on society’, really, really, really! So, that her morning witticism about my ‘taking revenge’ was unjust. That is, you see, if I had told her directly in so many words: ‘Yes, I’m taking revenge on society’, and she had burst out laughing, as she did that morning, it would in fact have come out ridiculous… I standing there at the gate was a deliverer.”

Like the underground man the pawn broker first rescues the meek girl, a girl of sixteen, from her miseries by marrying her, and later rejects her.

The young girl visited the pawn broker often to pledge petty articles, and used the money to place advertisement in the news papers to get a job, thereby to lead a decent life. He noticed her because, “She was so slender, fair-haired, medium tall; with me she was always awkward, as if abashed (I think she was the same with all strangers, and, naturally, I was the same for her as any other, that is, taken as a pawn broker but as a human being).” He also notices that she is proud and rebellious. Later he learns from Lukerya, the maid, that she is an orphan living with her aunts.
They were planning to marry her off to an old shop keeper of fifty. Then the pawnbroker decides to marry her and save her from miseries.

After the marriage he tortures her with his silence. When the poor girl showed enthusiasm to talk about her early life he immediately douses it with cold response. He says, “It was in this my ‘idea’ lay to her raptures. I respond with silence. I set about creating a whole system. I had been discarded by everyone, discarded and forgotten, and no one, no one knows it! And suddenly this sixteen year old girl snatched all sorts of details from mean people afterward and thought she knew everything, but the secret meanwhile remained only in this man’s breast! I kept silent, especially kept silent with her. I wanted her to stand before me entreatingly for the sake of my suffering – and I was worth it.”

Later he recalls us that he took revenge on his young wife for an earlier humiliation. He says, “You see: in my life there was one terrible external circumstance, which until then, that is, until that very catastrophe with my wife, had weighed on me every day and every hour-namely, the loss of my reputation and this retirement from the regiment. In two words: there had been a tyrannical injustice against me. True, my comrades disliked me for my difficult character-my ridiculous character, perhaps-though it often happens that what is most sublime to you, what is cherished and revered by you, at the same time for some reason makes the crowd of your comrades’ laugh. Oh, I was never liked, even at school. Never and now here was I not liked. Lukerya is also unable to like me. The incident with the regiment, though a consequence of the dislike for me, was undoubtedly of an accidental character. I say that because there is nothing more offensive and insufferable than to perish from an accident that might or might not have happened, from an unfortunate conglomeration
of circumstances that might have passed over like a cloud. For an intellectual being it is humiliating. … That was their personal affair, and why should I get involved in it? Meanwhile the officers began to say that the affair was not personal, but also concerned the regiment, and since of the officers of our regiment I was the only one there, I had thus proved to all the other officers and the public in the buffet that there could be officers of our regiment who were not so ticklish about honor. Nevertheless the dark past and the forever ruined reputation of my honor oppressed me every hour, every minute. I got married to prove that I was not a coward, and that I had been unjustly accused of cowardice. Having withstood the revolver, I had revenged myself on my whole gloomy past.”

The girl unable to bear the suffering rebels against him. She befriends his enemy from the regiment and learns about the past humiliating incident he faced in the army. The tortured girl decides to kill him when he was asleep. He recalls, “She was standing by the table holding the revolver in her hand. She came to the bed and stood over me. I heard everything; and though a dead silence fell, I heard that silence. She was looking at me, right into my eyes, and the revolver was already at my temple.”

When she held the revolver at his temple he did not try to stop as he had no intention to save her from evil doing. He pretends to be fast asleep by closing his eyes. He acted so because he wants to prove that he is not a coward. He says, “Yes, they judged me a coward. But I refused the duel not because I was a coward, but because I did not wish to submit to their tyrannical decision and challenge a man when I myself did not feel any offence. You know, I couldn’t help myself here, that to rise up actively against such tyranny and accept all the consequences was to show
much greater courage than in any duel you like."\textsuperscript{139} After this incident the girl feels guilty and falls ill.

In spite of the murder attempt he looks after her, which makes her to be ashamed of herself. He says, “I was still her husband, looking after her, still as if I were a real husband.”\textsuperscript{140} These words of the pawn broker arouse in her the feeling that he is her liberator, and has forgiven her. Unable to bear the guilt conscience the girl confesses her moral crime. He recalls, “But suddenly she comes up to me, stands in front of me, and, clasping her hands, began saying to me that she was a criminal, that she knew it, that her crime has tormented her all winter, torments her still … that she values my magnanimity only too highly.”\textsuperscript{141}

This willingness to go against the established order of things can be traced in Liza of \textit{Notes from Underground}. Dostoevsky presents Liza as a young girl, who came from Riga- a small town, to St. Petersburg aspiring a new life, but falls into the mire of prostitution. When the underground man asked Liza why she left home she hints at some mysterious infamy saying that what if it was even worse there. The underground man frightens her with the information that after a year she will be worthless, she will go a step lower to some other house. And in another year to a third house, always lower and lower, and in seven years’ time she will die at the hands of customers, who do not even know how to caress a woman without first giving her a cuff or two. Underground man’s chance encounter with Liza, the young twenty year old prostitute reveals another important aspect of modern free life.

For Liza, as the underground man says, brothel-life is a sort of free-life leading to a progressive future, and he seems to be so bookish, one who speaks like out of a book. Through Liza Dostoevsky unfolds the plight of young girls carried
away by liberal ideas and free thinking, and condemns such free living. He draws our attention to such young ladies who leave their parents and join Communes. He also brings out the attitude of the individualistic man towards such unfortunate ones.

Dostoevsky hints at that family discords need not be always due to external factors such as poverty, but human factors. Often they are due to lack of faith in God and love, and inherent psychological factors of man. According to him young girls cannot solve their problems by leaving their parents and taking refuge in communes or elsewhere outside their family. He considers life in communes is similar to that of a brothel, where young girls like Liza enslave their soul, over which they are powerless, together with their body. This quality of Liza is later traced in the character of Sonia, of Crime and Punishment.

Sonia is introduced for the first time at the death of her father. He writes, “A girl made her way quietly and timidly through the centre of the crowd, and strange indeed it was her unexpected appearance in the room, in the midst of poverty, rags, distress, and death itself. She, too, was in rags and her clothes worthless, although decked out for the street with all the glaring prominence of her kind. Sonia remained at the threshold of the inner door, and stood there looking as one in a strange place, who knew nobody. Her gaudy attire, her colored silk dress with its absurd train, the light boots, the parasol (quite unnecessary at night), her little round hat trimmed with flaming scarlet feathers, all made a striking figure in such a scene. From under her hat appeared a poor little wan and frightened countenance, with open mouth and eyes immovable from terror. Sonia was small and slightly built, with fair hair and complexion, and possessed very attractive blue eyes.” 142
Though Sonia is presented as a meek young girl in reality she is not so innocent. As Marmeladoff, her father says, she used to borrow books from Lebeziatnikoff, and she has already read Ludwig’s physiology. Lebeziatnikoff, whom Dostoevsky portrays as a Liberal Enlightener, is a clerk in a government office. Although a decent man at bottom, he showed in his language a presumption which frequently savored of over-whelming conceit. He had an inconsiderate fascination that induced him to side with the party of progress. Later we realize that George Henry Lewes was a famous popularizer of science and physiology. He was a positivist, and a champion of woman’s questions. The book was popular among the nihilist of 1860s obsessed with materialistic outlook. Dostoevsky ironically hints at the role of positivism as a factor leading Sonia to take yellow card.

Lebeziatnikoff is one of those innumerable simpletons who became infatuated with new fleeting ideas. His special craze was the propaganda, that is, the establishment of a new species of commune of peculiar nature. He believes that, “A woman to be in every respect man’s equal, even in the matter of bodily strength (and people are beginning to hold this theory), then equality must exist here also.” It is his progressive ideas that made him to refuse to attend the funeral feast hosted by Catherine Ivanovna in memory of her husband Marmeladoff. He says, “If I don’t go the dinner there, it is simply on principle, in order to discourage by my absence the idiotic custom of funeral feats! That’s why I might go, to be sure, to make fun of them; but unfortunately there will be no clergy, otherwise I would go without a moment’s hesitation.” He says that he will attend the feast as a sign of protest which can indirectly aid the civilizing propaganda which is, according to him,
everyman’s duty. Thus he wants to sow the seeds of protest with his ideas. Hence he encourages Sonia to sell her body.

According to him Sonia’s condition is woman’s normal state. He argues that in society as it is such kind of life is not quite a normal one because it is unnatural. But in future society it will be normal, because it will be free. He says that even now she has a perfect right to give way to it. She is wretched and why not dispose of her own free will of what is after all her capital. He supports Sonia’s action saying, “Under present circumstances, his doings are an energetic protest in the society. In future society, I may as well tell you, capital will be of no earthly kind of use, but the position of the gay woman will be of a different character, and will be rationally regulated.”

Such a person, one of the most advanced young Liberals of the metropolis and a pupil of Looshin, lent books to Sonia. When Mr. Lebeziatnikoff, was accused of spoiling the young mind he escapes saying that “I have never run after Sophia Semenovna’s favors. All I did was to try and develop without any other kind of intention, whilst striving to awaken in her a spirit of protest. I wanted nothing else; she herself felt that she could no longer remain here!”

Later Prince Myshkin of The Idiot can also be seen as a follower of Lebeziatnikoff. As explained earlier Prince Myshkin absolves Nastassya Flippovna of her moral responsibility, and elevates her to the level of princess in a moment by his proposal to marry her. Nastasya Filippovna who is engulfed by evil smelling money grubbing people like Totsky, her seducer, General Yepachin, Ganya Ivolgin – Yepachin’s private secretary and Rogozhin rebels against them. When Totsky plans to marry another woman, she feels humiliated, and decides to take revenge on him.
She laughs at him and stings him with venomous sarcasms, and declares to his face that she had never harbored any feeling for him. She says that she has only contempt, nauseating contempt for him. She declares, “It was a matter of absolute indifference to her if he married at once any one he chose, but she had come to prevent his making that marriage, and would not allow it from spite, simply because she chose not to, and that therefore so it must be – ‘if only that I may have a good laugh at you, for I too want to laugh now.’”

At her birthday party she declares her intention to marry Rogozhin, by accepting seventy thousand rubles offered by him. She says, “Come along, Rogozhin! Get your money ready! Never mind about wanting to marry me, let me have the money all the same. Perhaps I shan’t marry you after all.” Then she flings the money into the fire as her protest against the aristocrats, stating, “You thought if you married me, you’d keep your money? A likely idea! I am a shameless hussy! I’ve been Totsky’s concubine.” By this act she challenges the false, hypocritical, vile society, and humiliates the bourgeois mentality. When Myshkin offers to marry her, she accepts his offer saying that he is her benefactor. But later she runs away with Rogozhin, and decides to remain his mistress, for she cannot tear herself away from him as she has a sense of guilt within her. For her Rogozhin becomes a source of suffering, giving a sort of pleasure.

Myshkin recognizes such a free will of such a free living by accepting Rogozins mistress as his fiancée. Prince, in fact, translates the ideas of Feuerbachian philanstry and utopian socialist into real life. The Prince simultaneously loves both Natassya Filippovna, and Aglaya. Interestingly he loves Aglaya as a sister as well as fiancée! Such a casual attitude of prince brings him close to those advocating
philanthropy lives. But the laws of living-life do not accept the logic, reason and love of prince. By this act Myshkin, who is portrayed as an idiot, not because he is not intelligent but because of his deeds, does not preach Christian love and compassion as we often find it in soviet criticism. Like socialists, he vulgarizes Christian love and compassion in the name of extreme love in weak ones.

Later at the end of the story speaking about prince’s action Yevgeny Pavlovich rightly says to prince during his last meeting that, “From the very first” he declared, “it begins with falsity. What begins with lie must end with lie; that’s a law of nature I don’t agree, and, in fact, I’m indignant when somebody calls you-well-an idiot. You’re too clever to be called that. But you are so strange that you are not like other people- you must admit that yourself. I’ve made up my mind that what’s at the bottom of all that’s happened in your innate inexperience (mark that word ‘innate’ prince), and your extraordinary simple-heartedness, and then the phenomenal lack of all feeling for proportion in you (which you have recognized yourself), and finally the huge mass of intellectual convictions, which you, with your extraordinary honesty, hitherto taken for real, innate, intuitive convictions! You must admit yourself, prince, that from the beginning, in your relations with Nastasya Filippovna, of conventional democratic feeling (I use the expression for brevity), the fascination, so to say, of the ‘woman question’ (to express it still more briefly). I know all the details of the stranger, scandalous scene that took place at Nastasya Fillippovna’s, when Rogozhin brought his money. If you like, I will analyze you to yourself on my fingers; I will show you to yourself as in a looking-glass. I know so exactly how it all was, and why it all turned out as it did. As a youth in Switzerland you yearned for your native country, and longed for Russia as for an unknown land of promise. You had read a
great many books about Russia, excellent books perhaps, but pernicious for you. You arrived in the first glow of eagerness to be of service, so to say; you rushed, you flew headlong to be of service. And on the very day of your arrival, a sad and heartrending story of an injured woman is told you, you a virginal knight-and about a woman! The very same day you saw that woman, you were bewitched by her beauty, her fantastic, demoniacal beauty (I admit she is a beauty of course)... The fact's clear that you, intoxicated with enthusiasm, so to speak, clutched at the opportunity of publicly proclaiming the generous idea, that you, a prince by birth and a man of pure life, did not regard a woman as dishonored who had been put to shame, not through her own fault, but through the fault of a disgusting aristocratic profligate... But, even granting that she's innocent now-I won't insist on that for I don't want to-but could all her adventures justify such intolerable, diabolical pride, such insolent, such rapacious egoism. 

From these words it is evident that, prince is a symbolic representative of the radicals of the time advocating environmental doctrine.

This act of Nastasya can be later noticed in Katerina Ivanovna of The Brothers Karamazov. Katerina Ivanovna, daughter of a lieutenant colonel, is a modern educated intelligent woman, representing Westernism. Dostoevsky presents her not just as some simpering boarding school miss but as a person of character. She is a proud and genuinely high principled woman. Once, when Dmitri Karamazov, tried to speak to her, she scarcely looked at him, and compressed her lips scornfully. As Dmitri says, "Katerina was not an innocent boarding-school miss, but a person of character, proud and really high-principled; above all, she had education and intellect, and I had neither. You think I meant to make her an offer? No, I simply wanted to revenge myself, because I was such a hero and she did not seem to feel it."
Later we learn that Dmitri Karamazov is serving in her father’s battalion, and did not show any respect to him. Consequently Dmitri was not liked by him. Once, the colonel even placed Dmitri under arrest. Unfortunately, after sometimes, the colonel was accused of misappropriating battalion’s money to the tune of four thousand rubles. When it was discovered by the authorities he was asked to repay the money immediately. Dmitri, who was waiting for an opportunity to take revenge on Katerina learns about this, and tries to take advantage of the situation. He sent words with her sister that he is ready lend the money provided proud Katerina calls on him alone in his apartment. Katerina who wants to save her father from disgrace and humiliation visits Dmitri in his apartment. After receiving the money Katerina gently bows low and goes down at his feet her brow touching the floor. Later Dmitri says to Alyosha, “Then I showed it to (money) her in silence, folded it, handed it to her, opened the door into the passage, and, stepping back, made her a deep bow, a most respectful, a most impressive bow, believe me! She shuddered all over, gazed at me for a second, turned horribly pale – white as sheet, in fact – and all at once, not impetuously but softly, gently, bowed down to my feet – not a boarding-school curtsey, but a Russian bow, with her forehead to the floor.”150

Then there was a dramatic change in her life, she inherits an unexpected wealth. Though she repays the amount, she could not get rid of her feminine shame, of her lost honor. With a view of regaining her lost honor she tries to buy Dmitri as her husband through a huge dowry. Dmitri says, “She offers to be my wife, offers herself to me. ‘I love you madly’ she says, ‘even if you don’t love me, never mind. Be my husband. Don’t be afraid. I won’t hamper you in any way. I will be your chattel. I will the carpet under your feet. I want to love you forever. I want to save you from
myself.” Here, Dostoevsky says that her love towards Dmitri springs not from heart but from her mind as a result of her rational thinking.

Later when Katerina learns Dmitri’s affair with Grushenka, she reacts rationally rather than emotionally. When she learns that Dmitri is in need of money, she puts him to test by giving him three thousand rubles under the pretext to send it to her sister according to his convenience within a month or so. Dmitri says, “Katerina Ivanovna sent for me, and in strict secrecy (why I don’t know I suppose she had some reason) asked me to go to the chief town of the province and to post three thousand rubles to Agafya Ivanovna in Moscow, so that nothing should be known of it in the town here. So I had that money in my pocket when I went to see Grushenka, and it was that money we spent at Mokroye.” Dmitri being a man having no control over him falls into her trap and takes Grushenka to Mokroye and spends half of the money on revelries. This shows Katerina Ivanovna’s desire for dominating Dmitri. Here what she is looking for is a means for finding fault with Dmitri in order to accuse him later.

**Crime based on Ideology:** This includes those people who commit crime based on certain ideas. Here, we find both individuals who indulge in physical crime, and people who indulge in moral crime, and it is against the society. These criminals are rational thinkers who, in their effort to set right the wrongs of the society, rebel against the existing order of things, and thereby become criminals. It includes most of the Western educated youth like Ordynov, Rascolnikoff, Ippolit, Stephan Verkhovensky, Stavrogin, Peter Verkhovensky, Kirilov, Ivan Karamazov and Smerdyakov.

Dostoevsky introduces Ordynov as a man of science, in the Russian context a philosopher of progressive thoughts. He was devoured by the deepest and most
insatiable passion for science, which absorbs a man’s whole life, and provides any
niche in the domain of practical daily activity. In fact he was creating a system for
himself. He was prompted rather by an instinctive impulse than by a logical, clearly
defined motive for studying and knowing. His odd and unsociable disposition made
him to grow little by little, more and more secluded in his habits.

When he saw her for the first time in the church, he noticed, “She walked with
her eyes cast down, and a sort of melancholy dignity pervaded her whole figure and
was vividly and mournfully reflected in the sweet contours of the childishly soft, mild
lines of her face. Tears were welling up from her dark blue eyes under the long
eyelashes that glistened against the milky pallor of her face, and were rolling down
her pale cheeks. There was a glimpse of a smile on her lips; but there were traces in
her face of some childlike fear and mysterious horror. She pressed timidly to the old
man and it could be seen that she was trembling from emotion.”\textsuperscript{153} She kneels before
the icon of \textbf{Virgin Mary} and fervently prays to \textbf{god}.

Moved by her past history, Ordynov tries to save her from the clutches of
Murin, absolving her of personal and moral responsibility. He tries to murder Murin
after a drinking bout. He says, “I will buy you, my beauty, from your merchant. Not
knowing what he was doing, hardly conscious, he leaned against the wall and took
from the nail the old man’s expensive old-fashioned knife. He drew out the knife; he
glanced at the old man. At that moment he fancied that one of the old man’s eyes
opened and looked at him, laughing. Their eyes met. For some minutes Ordynov
gazed at him fixedly. Suddenly he fancied that the old man’s whole face began
laughing and that a diabolical, soul-freezing chuckle resounded at last through the
room. A hideous, dark thought crawled like a snake into his head. He shuddered; the
knife fell from his hands and dropped upon the floor. The old man, very pale, slowly got up from the bed and angrily kicked the knife into the corner of the room.”

But Murin warns Ordynov, the man of science, representing Westerners, that science and reasoning are not in incongruity with human nature. He says, “You’re a young man, your Excellency, proud and hasty, and she, you know yourself, sir, is a little child with no sense- it’s easy for her to fall into sin. She’s a buxom lass, rosy and sweet, while I am an old man always ailing. Well, the devil, it seems, has tempted, your honor.” Further he says that, “A woman’s heart is not as deep as the sea; you can get to know it, but it is cunning, persistent, and full of life! What she wants she must have at once!” Thus, in the character of Ordynov, Dostoevsky establishes the connection between egoism and the intellectual dreamer that appears in his later works. His failure to free Katerina from Murin’s spell marks the defeat of the dreamer by the malignant power that holds the beautiful landlady in a thrall.

Katerina hopes that Ordynov is her deliverer as Mary Lybyadkin in The Possessed who thinks that Stavrogin is her savior. But neither of them is relieved from her false promise of the intelligentsia. Thus, Ordynov, the early Westernizer of Dostoevsky, who believes in the environmental doctrine, can be considered as the early dreamer of Dostoevsky, who later evolves into the nameless underground man of Notes From Underground.

Through his underground man Dostoevsky brings out the predicament of the nineteenth century man influenced by Western ideas. He believes that it is the most civilized gentlemen who have been the subtlest slaughters. He writes, “Only look about you: blood is being split in streams, and in the merriest way, as though it were champagne. Take the whole of the nineteenth century in which Buckle lived. Take
Napoleon – the great and also the present one. Take the farce of Schleswig-Holstein. … And what is it that civilization softens in us? The only gain of civilization for mankind is the greater capacity for variety of sensations – and absolutely nothing more. And through the development of this many-sidedness man may come to finding enjoyment in bloodshed. In fact, this has already happened to him. Have you noticed that it is the most civilized gentlemen who have been the subllest slaughters … In any case civilization has made mankind if not more blood thirsty, at least more vilely, more loathsomely blood-thirsty. In old days he saw justice in bloodshed and with his conscience at peace exterminated those he thought proper. Now we do think bloodshed abominable and yet we engage in this abomination, and with more energy than ever.”156 These words of the underground man present the prophetic views of Dostoevsky. It refutes the theory that man grows softer from civilization and becomes less blood thirsty.

The underground man shatters the idea of renovating the whole human race by means of that system which facilitates benefits in the society. He says that man has such a predilection for systems and abstract deductions that he is ready to distort the truth intentionally. He is ready to deny the evidences of his senses only to justify his logic. He writes, “Man everywhere and at all times, whoever he may be, has preferred to act as he chose and not in the least as his reason and advantage dictated. And one may choose what is contrary to one’s own interests, and sometimes one positively ought (that is my idea). One’s own free unfettered choice, one’s own caprice – however wild it may be, one’s own fancy worked up at times to frenzy – is that very ‘most advantageous advantage’ which we have over-looked, which comes under no classification and against which all systems and theories are continually being
shattered to atoms. And how do these wiseacres know that man wants a normal, a virtuous choice? What has made them to conceive that man must want a rationally advantageous choice? What man wants is simply independent choice, whatever that independence may cost and wherever it may lead.”157 Here Dostoevsky examines the effects of modern life on man’s personality. It leads to the fact that the underground man is a fine example of the problems of a modern man.

Through his underground man Dostoevsky effectively brings out the predicament of each and every man, who says that man’s defect is his perpetual moral obliquity. He says, “We don’t even know what living means now, what it is, and, what it is called! Leave us alone without books and we shall be lost and in confusion at once. We shall not know what to join on to, what to cling to, what to love to and what to hate to, what to respect and what to despise. We are oppressed at being men – men with a real individual body and blood, we are ashamed of it, and we think it a disgrace and try to contrive to be some sort of impossible generalized man. We are still born, and for generations past have been begotten, not by living fathers, and that suits us better and better. We are developing a taste for it. Soon we shall contrive to be born somehow from idea.”158

This leads to the birth of Rascolnikoff, in Crime and Punishment. He is presented as a young university drop-out, planning the murder of Alena Ivanovna, an old pawn broker. “Rascolnikoff” Dostoevsky writes in The Diary of a Writer, “was contaminated with the ideas of the prevailing, theoretical socialism. He wanted to kill the lady with the misconception of the idea that he can set right the society. The brotherly merger with them in a common misfortune, they, that one has been made equal to them, and even to the lowest stratum.”159 His mother also writes in her letter,
“You are studying for the law. … Do you pray to God, Rodia, as you used to do, and believe in the mercy of the Creator and our Redeemer? I almost fear in my heart that the new epidemic of unbelief has attacked you; if so, I pray for you, Rodia.” Much later, after Rascolnikoff’s departure to Siberia she once again says, “Do you know, Rodia, I am positively reading for the third time the article you contributed to a review and which Dmitri Prokovitch has lent me. It has been quite a revelation for me and I have ever since been able to account for everything, and to see what a silly creature I have been. ‘that is the sort of thing which takes up all his time, I have said to myself he keeps turning over in his head new ideas, and does not like being taken out of them, savants are all like that.”

He systematically arranges everything including the rehearsal. He calculates the exact distance between his lodging and the destination. He had counted them when ‘his plan only floated through his brain like a vague dream’. As he rang the bell of the old woman he carefully listens that it gave a faint sound and when the door opens he observes everything. Dostoevsky writes, “The young man entered a gloomy ante-room, divided by a partition, behind which was a small kitchen. … The small room into which the young man was ushered was papered with yellow; there were geraniums and muslin curtains in the windows, and the setting sun shed a flood of light on the interior. ‘The sun will shine on it just the same then!’ said Rascolnikoff all at once to himself, as he glanced rapidly round to take in the various objects and engrave them in his memory.”

Just before his planned murder two incidents from his past life becomes important. The first is the dream from his childhood in which he sees a horse battered to death. “He was passing the caback (hotel) a particular circumstance attracted his
attention. The boy looked on and saw how they struck the animal seizing a crowbar he hit the mare a heavy blow with it…. The mare reeled and sank to the ground. Some drunken fellows seized what they could lay their hands upon, sticks, boards, or anything and began belaboring the expiring mare. … then somebody shouted get a hatchet and finish her off’ The boy pleaded with the father to do something to save the horse. The father replies, “Never mind, let us goes, they are drunk, it is only their mad pranks, it is not our affair and he was led away.”

Incidentally, the second incident happens just six weeks before the plan hatched in his mind. He was sitting in a restaurant and accidentally over hears a conversation between a young student and a young officer. They were discussing about Alena Ivanovna, the old pawn broker. The student says, “I will kill that damnable old hag, and take all she is possessed of, without any qualm of conscience. On the one side here is a silly, flint-hearted, evil-minded sulky old woman, necessary to no one, and on the contrary, pernicious to all- and who does not know herself why she lives. Fresh young strength droops and is lost for want of substance; this is the case with thousands everywhere! A hundred, a thousand deeds and enterprises could be carried out and upheld with the money this old woman has bequeathed to a monastery. A dozen families might be saved from hunger, want, ruin, crime, and misery, and all with her money! Kill her, I say, take it from her, and dedicate it to the service of humanity and the general good! What is your opinion? Shall not one little crime be effaced and atoned for by a thousand good deeds? For one useless life a thousand lives saved from decay and death. One death, and a hundred beings restored to existence! There’s a calculation for you. What in proportion is the life of this miserable old woman?”
These two incidents have a fearful influence on Rascolnikoff. If the first incident expresses his father’s social irresponsibility, the second almost echoes Rascolnikoff’s idea. These two incidents caused in him to feel sure that he was the instrument of a fixed purpose.

Later just before his intended murder, he goes to the old woman with a false pledge so as to get access into her lodging. He writes, “Having finished his task, Rascolnikoff inserted his finger in a small crevice in the floor under his couch, and brought out the pledge with which he had been careful to provide himself. This pledge was, however, only a sham – a thin smooth piece of wood about the size and thickness of a silver cigarette – case, which he had found in a yard adjoining a carpenter’s shop, and a thin piece of iron of about the same size, which he had picked up in the street. He fastened the two together firmly with thread, then proceeded to wrap them up neatly in a piece of clean white paper, and tie the parcel in such a manner that it would be difficult to undo it again. This was all done in order to occupy the attention of the old woman and to seize a favorable opportunity when she would be with the knot. The piece of iron was simply added for weight, in order that she might not immediately detect the fraud.”

Later in Rascolnikoff’s action Dostoevsky brings in a similarity between the killing of the mare by the peasants and the murder of the old woman. He writes, “He opened his coat, freed the hatchet from the loop, he held it with his right hand beneath the garment. There was not a moment to lose now. He pulled out the hatchet, raised it with both hands, and let it descend without force, almost mechanically, on the woman’s head. The hatchet struck her just on the sinciput, … Then Rascolnikoff, whose arm had regained all its vigor, struck two fresh blows with the hatchet on the
This description of the murder shows that poverty-stricken, sensitive and intelligent Rascolnikoff is forced to make a choice between inhumanity of the peasants and social irresponsibility of the father and the young officer.

The idea of murder takes root and grows in his mind because he was persuaded with the idea that the removal of an old woman will change the world. He has evolved a theory of his own, and has written an article on crime, when he was a student. In that article he has divided mankind into two categories: ordinary and extraordinary. The first group comprises of ordinary inferior people, the kind of people whose function in life is to reproduce specimens like themselves. It includes conservatives, men of order, who live in a state of obedience and love. They help obeying, because it is their destiny, and such an act has nothing humiliating for them. The second group, the superior ones consist exclusively those people who break the law, or strive, according to their capacity or power to do so. They are the people who have the gift or power to make a word, thought or deed.

He writes, “An extraordinary man has a right - not officially, but from and by his individuality - to permit his conscience to overstep certain bounds, only so far as the realization of one of his ideas may require it. ... All legislators and rules of men, commencing with the earliest down to Lycurgus, Solon, Mahomet, Napoleon, etc. etc., have one and all been criminals, for, whilst giving new laws, they have naturally broken through older ones which had been faithfully observed by society and transmitted by its progenitors. These men most certainly never hesitated to shed blood, as soon as they saw the advantage of doing so. It may even be remarked that nearly all these benefactors and teachers of humanity have been terribly bloodthirsty.
Consequently, not only all great men, but all those who, by hook or crook, have raised themselves above the common herd, men who are capable of evolving something new, must, in virtue of their innate power, be undoubtedly criminals. … It is in so far that my article gives them a right to commit crime.”

This theory of Rascolnikoff speaks of Napoleonic motif of everything is permitted for an extraordinary man. He murders two defenseless women as his first step of anticipated Napoleonic journey to the glorious future, and thereby becomes a victim of Western ideas of nineteenth century. He is greatly influenced by various Western theories advocating materialism, utilitarianism, and individualism. He makes use of these theories to solve his immediate personal problems and problems of humanity in general.

The rational Rascolnikoff asserts that man has a right to commit crime and desecration of everything that is sacred. His intelligence and ambition lead him beyond the bounds of accepted morality in search of power, which he believes will give him happiness. He believes in violating the existing order of the day. Guided by his rational ideals, he tries to replace the old values with a new one. Like Napoleon, who ‘forgets an army in Egypt and waste an army in the Russian winter.’ Rascolnikoff had a desire to leave a stamp on History, and wanted to raise himself to the level of superman. His ideology to prove himself as the shadow of Napoleon leads him to murder. He followed the Napoleonic tradition of super human existence. In his effort to translate his theory into practice he sheds human blood and becomes a murderer. Thus, for Dostoevsky, Rascolnikoff, who killed two defenseless old women, is in fact a victim of the Western ideas of the nineteenth century, which is further developed in The Possessed.
Stephan Verkhovensky, one of the leading characters of *The Possessed* is a **liberal idealist**, a highly sensitive man and a fighter for social justice. He is introduced as a man who since his childhood had a praiseworthy tendency, to slip into a pleasant day dream about his taking a gallant civic stand. He greatly relished his idea of himself as a persecuted man – in fact – an exile. As the years passed, he placed himself, by exalting this glamour, in his own estimation, on a pedestal that greatly gratified his vanity. After his return from abroad, losing his position as a lecturer in the university, he succeeded in publishing, in some **progressive** monthly.

His name is mentioned almost in the same breath as those of **Chaadyav**, **Belinsky**, **Granovsky**, and **Herzen**. “He had from his earliest years, a constant and genius desire of indulging in the agreeable fancy of being a famous public figure. Throughout his life, he himself sincerely believed that in certain government quarters they were very apprehensive of him, that his every step was watched, and that each of the three successive governors we had during twenty years had been warned about him by very highly placed, powerful people and consequently was full of misgivings on taking over the province. … He was such an intelligent, gifted man, and his learning … well, it’s true that there were no special academic achievements to his credit. … This is so often the case with our learned men in Russia.”

Mr. Verkhovensky is fond of translating all sorts of **Russian** sayings into **French** in the most idiotic way without doubt he could have translated them much better if he had wanted to. But he thought it witty to distort them like that. He gathered a circle of friends around him who met twice a week in his home. “There was a time when it was said that our circle was a hotbed of freethinking, vice, and atheism, and this notion always lingered about us. But in actual fact we were just
enjoying a pleasant, innocent Russian pass time- liberal blather. Liberal Idealism and liberal idealists are possible only in Russia.”

He fulfilled a supreme duty by spreading ideas through words, exchanging certain brand of Russian ideas about Russia, God in general, and the Russian God in particular repeating for the hundredth time scandalous little jibes against the Russian authorities. He says, “I don’t know why everyone around here insists I’m an atheist. I believe in God – but let’s make a distinction: I believe in God as a being that is conscious of Himself only through me. As to Christianity, well, despite all my respect for it, I’m not a Christian.” Later this argument of Stephan Verchovensky can be traced to Ivan Karamazov. Stavrogin who has been tutored by Verkhovensky preached all those teachings to Shatov and Kirilov.

Shatov is a twenty-seven year old serf by birth and had been for sometime Mr. Verkhovensky’s pupil. He was expelled from the university after some scandal. He recognizes, Socialism healthier than Roman Catholicism, sees it as a form of atheism because it dreams of a society based on science and reason and this is opposed to the Russian spirit which is linked to Orthodox Christianity. For him the problem of revolution is essentially a question of God and Religion, and man’s place in the universe. He says, “In its very essence, socialism is godless – it proclaimed in its very first statement that it aims at an organization that does not presuppose God; that is, an organization based on the principles of reason and science exclusively. But reason and science have always performed, and still perform, only an auxiliary function in the life of the people, and it will be like that till the end of time. … The objective of any national movement in any people at any time is actually a search for God. … There have never existed a people without God and religion, that is, without
a concept of good and evil. … Reason has never yet managed to define good and evil or even distinguish between them, and half knowledge is a tyrant without precedent. France, during all her long history, has been nothing but the incarnation and elaboration of the concept of the Romish god and if she has now gone over to atheism – which they call socialism over there – it is only because even atheism is healthier that Roman Catholicism.”¹⁷⁰ Hence, Shatov, the young Russian Idealist, who changed his former socialist convictions, was murdered by the nihilist revolutionaries. His religious ideas later evolve in the character of Ivan Karamazov.

Alexie Kirilov is a young man of twenty-seven, is a brilliant construction engineer, who seemed dreamy and absent-minded. Liputin says, "Kirilov is right now doing some interesting research on the causes of the increasing incidence of suicides in Russia, and in society. … He denies there is any such thing as morality and he advocates the latest principle- total destruction in the name of the ultimate good. He has already demanded that more than one hundred million heads roll that reason may be introduced in Europe, and that considerably exceeds the figure proposed at the last peace congress. In that sense, Alexie Kirilov is ahead of everyone."¹⁷¹

Kirilov also has his own philosophical grounds to kill himself. He believed that for a Christian the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Whereas for a superman the last enemy is to overthrow is the fear of death, which is, according to him possible by killing himself. He says that through death alone he can achieve godhead; and suicide is therefore the crowning sacrament of the religion of the superman. In fact he was researching about suicides in Russia. “Kirilov is right now doing some incidence of suicide in Russia in general, on the causes of an increase or
decrease of suicides in a society. He denies there is any such thing as morality and he advocates the latest principle – total destruction in the name of the ultimate good.”

Later he says that, “I have an obligation to shoot myself because the supreme gesture of free will is to kill oneself.” He leaves a death note, “Alexei Kirilov, declare that on this-----day of October, between seven and eight P.M., I killed Ivan Shatov in the park for his betrayal and informing the police about the leaflets and about Fedka, who hid in Filipov’s house, in which we both lived, for ten days and nights. And if I am shooting myself now with my own gun, it is not because I regret what I’ve done or am afraid, but because I decided to take my life long ago, when I was living abroad.” Being a sympathizer with the revolutionaries, he promises to make his suicide coincide with the political crime committed by the false Werternisers.

Later we learn that they got their ideas of atheism, nationalism, or socialism from Stavrogin who is not committed to none of these. In fact Shatov says to Stavrogin, “You weren’t fooling! In America I lay on straw for three months next to that wretched Kirilov and then I found out that, at the same time – perhaps on the very same day that you were sowing those ideas about God and Russia in me, you were poisoning Kirilov’s mind, the wretched maniac. You implanted all sorts of lies and other drivel in his mind and brought him to the edge of insanity. Go and have a look at him now; go and admire your creation.”

Stavrogin does not obey any moral order and becomes a demonic criminal for whom everything is permissible. He becomes a man who is dominated by the life denying forces of nihilism. Earlier, in Svidrigailoff, a wealthy immoralist, of Crime and Punishment, Dostoevsky exemplified a distinct character in the type of nihilist in realm of sensuality. “Nihilists” says Lebedyev of The Idiot “Are sometimes well-
informed people, anyway, even learned, but these have gone further because they are first of all men of business. This is a sort of sequel to nihilism, not in a direct line, but obliquely, by hearsay, and they don’t express themselves in newspaper articles, but directly in action.”

Ippolit, the most significant character of The Idiot, is a typical example of absurd young people as nihilists. He is a young man of sixteen, whose soul is divided between bitter revolt against his motiveless and meaningless sentence of pain and death. He is a man of normal youthful desire for bombastic self-assertion. He attempts to commit suicide as he is slowly dying of consumption.

His confession to Prince Myshkin before his death reveals the greatest truth of life. He says, “Whose business is it to judge? What is it to anyone that I should not only be condemned, but should conscientiously endure my sentence to the end? Can it really matter to anyone-from the ethical point of view? I quite understand that if, in the bloom of health and strength, I were to take my life, which might be ‘of use to my neighbor’ and all the rest of it, morality might reproach me on the traditional lines for disposing of my life without asking leave, or for some other reason of its own. But now, now that the term of my sentence has been pronounced? What normal obligation demands, not only your life, but the last gasp with which you give up your last atom of life, listening to words of comfort from the prince, whose Christian arguments are bound to bring him to the happy thought that it is really for the best that you should die. Christians like him always do come to that idea. It’s their favorite tack.”

Similarly, in Stavrogin Dostoevsky establishes a relation between nihilism and crime.
Peter Verkhovensky, the son of Stephan Verkhovensky, seeks the help of Stavrogin because he was thoroughly contemptuous of the world around him. Peter Verkhovensky’s ruthless, monstrous cunning behavior is the result of Mr. Verkhovensky’s negligence of his son. Stavrogin says, “His brain is a real filing cabinet, and when he tells something I always have the feeling that he is reading it off from his records. Note that, being a realist, he cannot lie since truth is more important to him than success – except for some rare instances when success is more important than truth.”

He is distorted by his unloved childhood and detested his father for the indifference showed when he was a motherless child. We are told earlier that soon after his birth, Peter was packed off to Russia and his education was entrusted to some distant relative residing in a remote place. Stephan Verkhovensky says, “Peter, a kind, well-meaning boy, and awfully sensitive. I was so pleased when I met him in Petersburg because he was so different from the other young men of today. And let me tell you, the whole trouble stems from immaturity and sentimentality! It’s not the practical aspects of socialism that fascinate them but it’s emotional appeal – its idealism – what we call its mystical, religious aspect – its romanticism … and, on top of that, they just parrot others. … A boy like Peter among the revolutionary leaders! …”

As there was an inherent quality of leadership in Stavrogin, Peter reveals his plan to him. Peter wants Stavrogin to act as his ‘fairy tale prince’ and to join Shigalov’s system to help him. Shigalov, who offers a final social solution, divides mankind into two uneven categories. He says, “One-tenth will be granted individual freedom and full rights over the remaining nine-tenths, who will lose their
individuality and become something like a herd of cattle…. The procedure Mr. Shigalov suggests which would deprive nine-tenths of their free will and transform them into a herd through re-education of entire generations, is very interesting; it is based on data gathered from the natural sciences and is very logical. … Mr. Shigalov is a genius! Do you know, he’s a genius in the same sense that Fourier is, only bolder and stronger than Fourier. I’ll take him in hand. He’s the man who invented equality. … He has a great spy system. In his system, each member of the movement watches all the others and has to report to them. Each belongs to all and all belong to each. All are slaves and equal in their slavery. The highest level of science and art is accessible only to those with greatest abilities. The most gifted men cannot help being tyrants and have always perverted others more than they have been useful to them; so they are ostracized or put to death. They cut out Cicero’s tongue, gouge out Copernicus’ eyes; they throw stones at Shakespeare – that’s Shigalov’s system.”

After his graduation, Peter left the country and has spent four years abroad. He wants to be the Columbus and discover a new America- the dream land contradicts Shigalov’s theory and philanthropists. He confesses that he is a crook and not a socialist. He says, “May be maybe I’m raving, but it was I who devised the first step. There are many Shigalovs, but who knows how to make it. And that man is me. Why do you look at me like that? I need you. Without you, I’m a zero, a fly in a glass jar, a bottled thought, a Columbus without America. … I’m a crook and not a socialist, ha, ha, ha! We have the lawyer defending the well-educated murderer. … When I was leaving for abroad, the rage of the day was Litter’s theory that crime is insanity; today it is no longer insanity but the soundest common sense- indeed almost a sacred
duty or at least a noble gesture of protest. I’m not contradicting myself – I’m only contradicting Shigalov and the philanthropists.”

Peter came to town with the intention to create unrest in the society with the help of a group, whom he calls as the fives. He says, “We must have one or two generations of debauchery, of unheard of, degrading vice that turns a man into a repulsive, abject, cruel, selfish bug! Yes, that’s what we need now! And we must have nice, fresh blood handy, to get them accustomed to it. … We shall proclaim destruction because – because, once again, the idea is too attractive for some reason! And, anyway, we need some exercise. We shall set towns on fire, we shall create myths, and for that, any lousy cell will be useful to us. In these Fives I’ll find you volunteers who’ll be prepared to assassinate anyone and will thank you for sending them to do it. So we’ll start unrest, and there’ll be havoc everywhere – havoc such as the world has never before witnessed.”

With the help of group of Fives, that included Liputin, Verginsky, Lyamshin, Tolkachenko and Erkil, Peter murders Shatov.

Liputin is a middle-aged official in the provincial administration, who has little respect in the town and not even received in top society. He is introduced as a great liberal with a reputation as an atheist. He kept his family terrorized and shut them up at home. He is a notoriously malicious gossip, and at least twice had been chastised for his slanders. Among his group he is liked for his keen wit, his inquiring mind, and his talent foe vicious jibes.

Verginsky is a well educated, almost self taught local official who attended the gatherings. He is a poor, married man who is known as a ‘family man’. His wife
and other family members held the most progressive political views, who took everything they read literally. Virginsky is also a man of exceptional purity of heart and always spoke of ‘bright hopes’ quietly. Erkel was a sort of ‘little fool’ who lacked the real sense that should rule a man’s head, but who had plenty of minor, subordinate sense, even to the point of cunning. He was fanatically and childishly devoted to the movement and was capable of participating in murder without any personal hatred, without batting an eye.

Of these Virginsky was a bit like Shatov. He was young, well educated, poor and sad who worked in a department of the local administration. He was a man of exceptional purity of heart. He always spoke of ‘bright-hopes’ and had a passionate conviction in it. Liputin was a middle aged official, a great liberal, with a reputation as an atheist. He was a follower of Fourier. He was well known for his notorious malicious gossips. He hoped that one day Utopia might be established in their province.

The group met with the intention that, “The public must realize that the achievements of an objective, that is of universal human concern is of an infinitely higher order of interest than the transient gratification of bodily aspects, that, in the final analysis, the purpose of our gathering is the proclamation of a great idea and, that, therefore, we must be content with a frugal.”¹¹⁸² These false Westernisers murder Shatov because they think that he is a threat to their conspiracy- not materially but ideologically.

Shatov who argues that the problem of revolution is essentially god and religion, and man’s place in the universe, eventually becomes a victim of the crime.
“He (Peter) stamped his foot on a spot ten paces in the direction of the forest from the back corner of the grotto. At the second, Tolkachenko, who had been hiding behind a nearby tree, leaped at him, while Erkel caught him by the elbows from behind. Liputin rushed at him from the front, and the thereof them knocked him (Shatov) off his feet and pinned him down to the ground. It was then Peter came up with his gun. I’ve been told that Shatov managed to turn his head toward Verkhovensky and that he recognized him. Peter Verkhovensky neatly and carefully placed the muzzle of his revolver against Shatov’s forehead and pulled the trigger hard. … Since they planned to dump the body into the nearest pond, they started tying one stone to the neck and other to the feet. Peter did the actual tying of the stones to the body. When the two rocks were finally tied to the body, Peter stood up.”¹⁸³ This description of Shatov’s murder has close resembles with that of Rascolnikhov’s murder of the old woman. All these learned people pre-plan everything, and systematically murder, and thereby become criminals.

The fanatic logic of Kirilov leads to the raise of Ivan Karamazov in The Brothers Karamazov. Of the three Karamazov brothers – Dmitri, Ivan and Alyosha, Ivan is introduced as an academician, who has shown, as a boy a purely supercilious brilliant aptitude for learning, almost from his infancy. The narrator says, “Ivan, I will say that he grew into a somewhat morose and reserved, though far from timid boy. At ten years old he had realized that they were living not in their own home but on other people’s charity, and that their father was a man of whom it was disgraceful to speak. This boy began very early, almost in his infancy (so they say at least), to show a brilliant and unusual aptitude for learning. But he left the family of Yefim Petrovitch when he was hardly thirteen, entering a Moscow gymnasium and boarding with an
experienced and celebrated teacher. Ivan used to declare afterwards that this was all due to the ‘ardor for good works’ of Yefim Petrovitch, who was captivated by the idea that the boy’s genius should be trained by a teacher of genius.”

Ivan is presented as a curious mysterious creature, who says that all he cares about is his intelligence, which by itself is the source of all evil and ultimately leads to despair. As a student he has written an article on the question of the ecclesiastical court, and the scope of its jurisdiction. He writes, “The essential principles of church – state will go on forever, in spite of the fact that it is impossible for them to mingle. The confusion of these elements cannot lead to any consistent or even normal results, for there is falsity at the very foundation of it. Compromise according to him between church and state in such questions as jurisdiction in any real sense is not possible. … If everything became church, the church would exclude all the criminal and disobedient, and would not cut off their heads.”

Ivan solemnly declares that “There is nothing in the whole world to make men love their neighbors. That there was no law of nature that man should love mankind, and that, if there had been any love on earth hitherto, it was now owing to a natural law, but simply because men have believed in immorality.” He added in parenthesis, “That the whole natural law lies in that faith and that if you were to destroy in mankind the belief in immortality, not only love but every living force maintaining the life of the world would at once be dried up. Moreover, nothing then would be immoral, everything would be lawful, even cannibalism. That’s not all. He ended by asserting that every individual, like ourselves, who does not believe in God or immortality, the moral law of nature must immediately be changed into the exact contrary of the former religious law, and that egoism, even to crime, must become not
only **lawful** but even recognized as the inevitable, the most rational, even honorable outcome of this position.”

To understand **Ivan** it becomes necessary to know the characters of **Muisov**, **Smerdyakov** and **Rakitin**. The **socialistic liberal** ideas of Ivan could only be understood by another liberal Muisov. Pyotr Alexandrovitch Muisov is a **liberal**, a **free thinker** and an **atheist** who has probably not even been to church for thirty years. He is a man of enlightened ideas and of European culture who lived many years in Paris. He had known **Proudhon** and **Bekumin** and followed the **Liberal** of the type common in 1840s and 50s. He regarded it as his duty as a citizen and as a man of culture to open an attack upon the ‘clericals’. In a religious discourse at the monastery he quotes a **French Idealist** who says that, “We are not particularly afraid of all those socialists, anarchists, infidel, and revolutionists; we keep watch on them and know their entire goings on. But there are a few peculiar men among them who believe in **God** and are **Christians**, but at the same time are **socialists**. Those are the people we are most afraid of. They are dreadful people! The socialist who is a **Christian** is more to be dreaded than a **socialist** who is an **atheist**.”

He made acquaintance of young Ivan who interested him extremely, and argued with him with an inner pang.

**Rakitin** is a **theological student**, trying to conceal his lowly origin. He is a cousin to Grushenka, the fallen woman, who pays him money for his luxuries. In the very beginning he proves himself to be an egotistical **unscrupulous evil**. He ridicules Zossima’s bowing to Dmitri, and says to Alyosha, “The holy man foresaw it, prophesized it! Though it’s poor sort of prophecy, flopping like that. He predicted the **crime** and marked the **criminal**. That’s always the way these crazy fanatics; they cross themselves at the tavern and throw stones at the temple. Like your elder, he
takes a stick to a just man and falls at the feet of a murderer.” He is a dishonorable scoundrel interested in no one but himself who had a footing everywhere and got information about everything. He was an uneasy and envious temper who is well aware of his own considerable abilities. As Father Paissy says that felt seemingly uneasy at the very sight of him. He says, “Nevertheless, it was particularly unpleasant to him to meet certain persons, whose presence aroused in him great misgivings. In the crowd in the dead man’s cell he noticed with inward aversion (for which he immediately reproached himself) the presence of Rakitin and for some reason felt suddenly suspicious.”

His vileness could be seen in the scene where he takes Alyosha to Grushenka without his knowledge and accepts money. His object in taking Alyosha to Grushenka is twofold; first he wants to take revenge on him as Ivan calls him a liberal booby with no talents whatsoever. He also has a desire to see, the downfall of the righteous Alyosha’s from the saints to the sinners. Rakitin says that he is a liberal and looks toward Europe for salvation of Russia. Dmitri says, “Rakitin knows a lot, damn him! He’s not going to be a monk. He means to go to Petersburg. There he’ll go in for criticism of an elevating tendency. Who knows, he may be of use and make his own career, too. They are first-rate, these people, at making a career! Damn ethics.”

He was a practical person and never undertook anything without a profit of gain for himself. He went to meet Dmitri in prison with the intention to write an article on him and thereby begin his literary career.

Dmitri who fears him instinctively calls him ‘Bernard’ intuitively grasping the evil inherent in his trust in science. Later in the trial scene when the prosecutor considers him as a significant witness Dmitri says that Rakitin is such a man who
loves humanity without God. He is a contemptible Bernard and an opportunist who
doesn’t believe in God. He says that in the United States of America Rakitin would
have proclaimed himself a scientific humanist. Later we learn that Claude Bernard (1813-1878) is a well known French physiologist who aimed to establish
scientific method in medicine. According to Dostoevsky Rakitin may not be a
physical murderer but he is much more dangerous than Ivan. If Ivan murders a
deprieved buffoon, Rakitin murders innocent and naïve souls with his poisonous ideas.
As Dmitri says, “He (Rakitin) can’t bear Ivan, he hates him. Ivan is not Rakitin, there
is an idea in him.”

Ivan contributed articles on real incidents under the signature Eye witness. In
the university he published brilliant reviews of books upon various special subjects.
Among them one article was written on the position of the ecclesiastical courts
attracted the attention of a large number of readers. He horrifies everyone by his
spiritual audacity. Dostoevsky tells us what was interesting about this article was its
tone and unexpected conclusions. Not only secularists but even the atheists
appreciated the article. “The article dealt with a subject which was being debated
everywhere at the time- the position of the ecclesiastical courts. After discussing
several opinions on the subject he went to explain his view. What was most striking
about the article was its tone, and its unexpected conclusion.”

Later in his story entitled The Rebellion, Ivan brings out his concentrated
protest and indignation against the falseness of religion. He tells Alyosha, that once
there was a retired general of aristocratic connections. He settled down in his estate
after his retirement ruling over his subjects. He had kennels of hundreds of hounds.
Hundred uniformed dog boys looked after them. One day a serf boy, a child of eight,
threw a stone in play and hurt the paw of the generals favorite hound. The general noticed the hound limping around and enquired why his favorite dog is lame. The dog boys informed him that the boy threw a stone that hurt the dog’s paw. Immediately the boy was summoned and the serf owner looked him up and down. He ordered the boy to be taken from his mother and kept shut up all night.

Early the next morning the general came on horseback with his hounds, dependents, and dog boys and hunts men in full hunting parade. All the servants were summoned to witness the scene. The boy’s mother stood in front of them. The boy was brought out from the lock up. The general ordered the child to be undressed. The boy was shivering, numb with fear and dare not cry. Then the general ordered the boy to run and set the whole pack of hounds on the boy. The hounds caught him and tore him to pieces before his mother.

After narrating this story Ivan asked Alyosha what the general deserved. Alyosha, another version of prince Myshkin, spontaneously reacted that the serf owner should be shot dead. Ivan asked Alyosha, “Well – what did he deserve? To be shot? To be shot for the satisfaction of moral feelings?” Alyosha murmered, “To be shot” lifting his eyes to Ivan with a, twisted smile. “Bravo!” Cries Ivan delighted. “If even you say so … you’re a pretty monk! So there is a little devil sitting in your heart, Alyosha Karamazov.”

This story brings out the fact that man is basically made up of virtues and vices; and no man is perfect. Consequently, Dostoevsky who firmly believed that adherence to moral values enables an individual to remain virtuous in a wicked environment, advocated Christian teaching of salvation through suffering as means
for those weak sinners who failed to withstand the environment. Hence, the reaction of Alyosha Karamazov to the cruelty of the estate owner shows that even the most saintly character like Alyosha has his weakness too. It clearly indicates that even a man like Alyosha sometimes wants to take revenge, and it is not possible to be a perfect virtuous man. Here, Dostoevsky expresses his belief in the Kantian philosophy, who described man as a complex phenomenon bearing within him both good and evil.

Thus, Ivan, in The Rebellion condemns the deception not only of Christianity but of all and any religious morality which calls upon man to bow down to the suffering and the crimes committed against mankind in the name of future celestial harmony. He says, “I simply wanted to show you my point of view. I meant to speak of the suffering of mankind generally, but we had better confine ourselves to the sufferings of the children. … If they, too, suffer horribly on earth, they must suffer for their father’s sins, they must be punished for their fathers, who have eaten the apple; but reasoning is of the other world and is incomprehensible for the heart of man here on earth. The innocent must not suffer for another’s sin, and especially such innocents. … People talk sometimes of bestial cruelty, but that’s a great injustice and insult to the beasts; a beast can never be so cruel as man, so artistically cruel. … I think the devil doesn’t exist, but man created him, he has created him in his own image and likeness. … Surely I haven’t suffered simply that I, my crimes and my sufferings may manure the soil of the future harmony. … I want to forgive. I want to embrace. I don’t want more suffering. And if the sufferings of children go to swell the sum of sufferings which was necessary to pay for truth, then I protest that the truth is
not worth such a price. … And that I am doing. It’s not God that I don’t accept, Alyosha, only I most respectfully return the ticket.” ¹⁹⁴

This story exemplifies that the reason of man, his conscience cannot bow to insult, humiliation or the torment that little children undergo. Here the question is not whether the general to be shot or not; but that of moral and of humanity. According to Ivan, it is this and only this human morality that is sacred. “For the hundredth time I repeat, there are numbers of questions, but I have only taken the children, because in their case what I mean is also unanswerably clear. Listen! If all must suffer to pay for the eternal harmony, what have children to do with it, tell me, please? It’s beyond all comprehension why they should suffer, and why should they, too, furnish material to enrich the soil for the harmony of the future? I understand solidarity in sin among men. I understand solidarity in retribution, too; but there can be no such solidarity with children. And if it is really true that they must share responsibility for their father’s crimes, such a truth is not of this world and is beyond my comprehension.” ¹⁹⁵

The central idea of Ivan’s rebellion is the idea of the inhumanity of the forgiveness of torment caused to the children. Dostoevsky’s mind was hemmed by two kinds of idealistic philosophy and two kinds of amorality and cruelty. There is the amorality and cruelty of bourgeois individualism, the idea of Superman, which he anticipates. On the other hand there is the cruelty and amorality of religion with its justification of all the evil in life. The writer realized the cynicism in both the kinds of amorality. It is this sin of amorality that is laid at the door of religion.

It becomes important to understand whether humanity has the right to forget such crimes. Whether the conscience of mankind can allow even the thought that a
‘harmony’ is possible under which such crimes can be forgiven. Can the conscience of mankind forget or condone the tear of a single tormented child? Can mankind’s conscience attempt to justify the drench of the whole earth in a new ocean of children’s tears? Has mankind that moral right? This is the essence of moral problem raised by Dostoevsky. This story of Ivan bears irrefutable testimony to the fact that nothing can still the conscience of humanity. Thus in Ivan’s revolt, Dostoevsky highlights not materialism or atheism, but that of idealism. Ivan’s theory highlights realism and his protest against human suffering and deafness to it, which leads to his philosophy of ‘everything is permitted’.

Later in the Legend of Grand Inquisitor, Ivan highlights the social disparities as depicted in the articles of Rascolnikhov and Shigalov. It speaks of the unlimited power of select over the mass of depersonalized slaves. The difference between Shigalov’s Utopia and that of Ivan is that here Dostoevsky adds along with nihilism, his polemic directed against Catholicism, confusing and fusing the two with a fantastic obsession that borders on the maniacal.

In his argument with Alyosha, Ivan expresses his views on God. He says, “Man has actually invented God. Man created God or God man. And I won’t go through all the axioms. I tell you that I accept God simply. But you must note this. If God exists and if he really did create the world, then, as we all know, he created it according to geometry of Euclid and the human mind with the conception of only three dimensions in space. Yet there have been and still are geometricians and philosophers and even some of the most distinguished, who doubt whether the whole Universe, or so to speak more widely the whole of being, was only created in Euclid’s geometry; they even dare to dream that the two parallel lines, which according to
Euclid can never meet on earth, may meet somewhere in infinity. I have come to the conclusion since I can’t understand even that, I can’t expect to understand about God. … I accept God and am glad to, and what’s more, I accept His wisdom, His purpose—which is utterly beyond our ken; I believe in the underlying order and the meaning of life; I believe in the eternal harmony in which they say we shall one day be blended. I believe in the Word to which the universe is striving, and which itself was ‘with God’. Yet in the final result I don’t accept this world of God’s; although I know it exists, I don’t accept it at all. It’s not that I don’t accept God, you must understand, it’s the world created by Him I don’t and cannot accept.”

Ivan who is ruled by reason loses faith in everything and becomes a demon.

Ivan, who believed that all things are lawful, believed in it intellectually, and instigates Smerdyakov, the illegitimate son, to parricide. “He had taken a marked interest in Smerdyakov, and had even thought him very original. He had encouraged him to talk to him, although he had always wondered at certain incoherence, or rather restlessness, in his mind, and could not understand what it was that so continually and insistently worked upon the brain of ‘the contemplative’. They discussed philosophical questions and even how there could have been light on the first day when the sun, moon and the stars were created on the fourth day, and how that was to be understood. But Ivan soon saw that, though the sun, moon, and the starts might be an interesting subject, yet that it was quite secondary to Smerdyakov, and that he has looking for something altogether different.”

Smerdyakov is a young man of twenty four, who is conceited and seemed to despise everybody. He is so crooked that even as a young boy he was fond of hanging cats. This remarkably unsocial and taciturn young boy grew up with no sense
of gratitude. The public prosecutor says, “There was no simplicity about him, either. I found in him, on the contrary, an extreme mistrustfulness concealed under a mask of naiveté, and an intelligence of considerable range. He made a very definite impression on me: I left him with the conviction that he was a distinctly spiteful creature, excessively ambitious, vindictive, and intensely envious. He resented his parentage, was shamed of it, and would clench his teeth when he remembered that he was the son of stinking Lizevita.” 198

Smerdyakov ridicules the very faith and concept of God. When Gregory, the valet, read him from the scriptures he reacts how it can be possible that God created light on the first day, and the Sun and the Moon and the Stars on the fourth day. He wanted to know from where did the light came on the first day. He says, “Gregory taught him to read and write, and when he was twelve years old, began teaching him the Scriptures. But this teaching came to nothing. At the second or third lesson the boy suddenly grinned. .. Oh! Nothing, God created light on the first day, and the sun, moon and the stars on the fourth day. Where did the light come from on the first day?” 199

Smerdyakov knows very well that Ivan desires his father’s death. In their last meeting he informs Ivan, it is all nonsense that persuaded him to go to Chermashnya. He says, “After our conversation you would either have gone away or have stayed. If you had stayed nothing would have happened. I should have known that you didn’t want it done, and should have attempted nothing. As you went away, it meant you assured me that you wouldn’t dare to inform against me at the trial, and that you’d overlook my having the three thousand. That’s why I needed your consent. I could have always have cornered you, revealing your eagerness for your father’s death.” 200
He perfectly plans everything and waits for an opportunity. It was his patient waiting that bears him the fruits of his revenge. He successfully takes revenge on the man who is responsible for his birth and social degradation. Later Smerdyakov says to Ivan, “Aren’t you tired of it? Here we are face to face; what’s the use of going on keeping up a farce to each other? Are you still trying to throw it all on me, to my face? You murdered him; you are the real murderer, I was only your instrument, your faithful servant, and it was following your words I did it.”

After the murder he leaves no clue, rather argues for himself. When Ivan asks, “Tell me, why did you open the envelope and leave it there on the floor?” Smerdyakov replies, “I did that for a good reason. For if a man had known all about it, as I did for instance, if he’d seen those notes before, and perhaps had put them in the envelope again himself, and had seen the envelope sealed up and addressed, with his own eyes, if such a man had done the murder, what should have made him tear open the envelope afterwards, especially in such a desperate haste, since he’d know for certain the notes must be in the envelope? No, if the robber had been someone like me, he’d simply have put the envelope straight in his pocket and got away with it as fast as he could. But it’d be quite different with Dmitri Fyodorovitch he was not a habitual thief. I did not say that openly to the prosecutor, on the contrary I brought him to it by hint.”

Thus, in Ivan, Dostoevsky brings out his profound philosophical and religious ideas, and provides answer to all the questions raised in his earlier characters. Ivan is the embodiment of amorality, a man drawn to the slogan later raised by Nietzsche – everything is permitted’. He demonstrates the process of violation of law, trauma, self-knowledge and peace which occur again and again in his characters starting from Devyushkin (Poor People) to Ivan Karamazov.
This analysis of his works establishes the fact that there is a complete transformation in Dostoevsky’s approach to his criminal characters in his post-Siberian works. When he wrote The Landlady he was closely associated with Belinsky circle. Then as a young radical he considered the Russian Orthodoxy as the religion of fear and terror. But his Siberian experiences transformed him into an ardent critic of Radicalism and admirer of Christian Teachings. The reading of Bible in the Siberian prison revised his ideas. The reality he confronted in the prison led him close to the concepts of Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer, on the relationship between reason and evil, and individual and state.

Like Katerina, Ivan also instigates parricide, like Ordynov tries to absolve a criminal. Then like the Underground man who rebels against everything, the crystal palace stood for, and the harmony offered by Utopian Socialism that has been set forth in Cherishevsky’s What is to be done? Ivan also rationalizes everything, and rebels against the false harmony that tried to justify the ills and wrongs of the society. Then like Rascolnikoff of Crime and Punishment, he aspires to be a Napoleon and wishes to set right the inequalities in the society. Like Ippolit, the young nihilist of The Idiot he condemns the motiveless suffering of the innocent, and ultimately like Kirilov of The Possessed rebels against religion.

This leads to the fact that his criminals are not habitual criminals, but people influenced by the Western philosophy. Unlike Katerina’s protest which is individualistic, Rascolnikoff against society, Ivan rebels against religion. Thus, Dostoevsky establishes the fact that a doubter in God cannot but be a criminal, and he condemns the inner criminality of man. Hence, crime in Dostoevsky is not exactly physical; rather it is an ideological intoxication.