

Examining Rogerian empathy in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*

Abhignya Sajja and Vaibhav Shah*

Abstract: The paper examines Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* employing the conceptual framework of empathy as delineated by psychologist Carl Rogers. Murderer-hero Raskolnikov is crafted such that his guilt-ridden angst elicits the empathy and emotional investment of a reader who, in the real world, would likely not interact with someone like Raskolnikov, let alone understand the trajectory of his morally-complex life and fragmented thoughts. Like Humbert Humbert, Emma Bovary, Captain Ahab, or Dorian Gray, Raskolnikov too occupies a liminal space wherein the reader acknowledges the problematic nature of his action(s) but does not withhold readerly empathy; the reader practices Rogerian *unconditional positive regard* in order to participate in the workings of Raskolnikov's psyche by suspending the emotions of disgust or shock. Dostoevsky's narrative, the paper argues, strategically achieves this feat as he allows the reader to enter into the conflicted, schism-mind of his hero (interiority, *indwelling*) by 1) depicting Raskolnikov's pitiful state in defamiliarised detail; his ideology at odds with his (latent) Christian beliefs (*incongruence*), 2) wielding the language of disease and trauma and 3) presenting Raskolnikov as a 'good' person with a distorted *internalised locus of evaluation*. The study is a qualitative examination of the nature of Dostoevsky's writing in the context of Raskolnikov's story.

Keywords: Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, empathy, narrative analysis, Raskolnikov, Carl Rogers

Towards a dialogue on empathy in the context of *Crime and Punishment*

Crime and Punishment is amongst Fyodor Dostoevsky's most celebrated works. Protagonist Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov is an outlaw; he kills two defenceless women in broad daylight. One aged, another docile and pregnant. Dostoevsky describes the murder in a

* Abhignya Sajja; Vaibhav Shah (✉)

School of Liberal Studies, Pandit Deendayal Energy University, Gandhinagar, India
e-mail: abhignya.sajja@yahoo.com (corresponding author)

brutal, attentive fashion. There is blood and repeated, blunt striking; it is not a smooth passage to death for the victims. He describes the murder of the old pawnbroker as such:

The blow landed smack on the crown of her head, something made easy by her smallness, She cried out, but very faintly, and suddenly sank in a heap on the floor, though even she managed to raise both arms to her head...with all his might, he (Raskolnikov) landed her another blow, and another, each time with the butt and each time on the crown of her head. The blood gushed out as from an upturned glass, and her body collapsed backwards. He stepped back, allowed her to fall and at once bent down over her face; she was dead. Her eyes were goggling out of her head as though they might burst from it, while her forehead and all the rest of her features were crumpled and distorted in a convulsive spasm.

(Dostoevsky 2003, 94)

Raskolnikov maims and steals and seemingly remains unrepentant and unremorseful. He often snaps at those who mean well; he is rude and cold. He rarely emotes and often carries around him an air of being better than the other. His conduct is not exemplary; it does in fact cause harm. Raskolnikov still is the ‘hero’ of the novel. The reader, nevertheless, tends to feel bad for him (working against her natural instinct to loathe); when reading Dostoevsky’s tale, one practices the German notion of *Einfühlung*¹, i.e., empathy. The aesthetic idea of *negative empathy* (Bonasera 2024) is often associated with the character. Empathy is defined as “the ego’s capacity to transiently identify with someone else in order to grasp his or her subjective experience. An altruistic elimination of one’s personal agenda-to the extent this is possible-and attunement to the other’s affect and fantasy are hallmarks of empathy (Akhtar 2009, 93). Daniel Stern (1985, 145) describes empathy as “a transient role identification”. The most relevant expert on the notion of empathy, however, appears to be psychologist Carl Rogers, inventor of the person-centric approach to therapy. According to Rogers², the simple act of listening is enough to elicit empathy for the client. He writes of empathy as:

[...] being sensitive, moment to moment, to the changing felt meanings which flow in this other person, to the fear or rage or tenderness or confusion or whatever, that he/she is experiencing. It means temporarily living in his/her

¹ An opposed to *Mitgefühl* (sympathy), *Efühlsansteckung* (emotional mirroring), or *Nachfühlen* (vicarious feeling) as discussed by phenomenologist Max Scheler (2017).

² See Rogers. 1995. *A Way of Being*; Vincent. 1999. *Being Empathetic*; Rogers. 1995. *Becoming a Person*.

life, moving about in it delicately without making judgements, sensing meaning of which he/she is scarcely aware[...].

(Thorne and Sanders 2013, 38)

Drawing from this insight, the simple act of close-reading a text ought to elicit empathy for a character (especially one like Raskolnikov whose interior life is described with minute attention to detail) whilst suspending reactions of shock and judgement. The terms that Rogers uses, *objectivity, empathy, unconditional positive regard, indwelling, presence, and congruence* (Thorne and Sanders 2013, 27), we argue, Dostoevsky employs in his writing as he crafts his characters. Rogers³ discusses the idea of *self-actualising tendencies* wherein an individual, once having been assured of the basic needs of sustenance, can develop to achieve her full potential. This, in Raskolnikov's case does is not possible since he lives in abject poverty (amongst other deficiencies he battles). This will mean that his intellectualisation and hyper-rational bent stems from a distorted (driven by ideology) *internalised locus of evaluation*, i.e., an unwavering trust of one's own vision (without seeking the validation of others) and a disregard for *conditions of worth*, i.e., giving in to expectation or being shaped by someone else's criteria of success/growth/goodness in Rogerian lingo. Raskolnikov only perceives to possess a congruent self whereas he is always already alienated from his inner voice. The reader, unsettled, recognises this and thereby empathises with the hero. The paper, using Roger's lens of empathy, attempts to study as to why this happens and how Dostoevsky facilitates this; how is it that the reader feels sorry for the murderer and invests her emotions in the hefty read that is *Crime and Punishment* (Dostoevsky 2003).

Raskolnikov as a victim to circumstance

Based on the real-life personality of Pierre-François Lacenaire that writer Kevin Birmingham (2000) describes as "an extraordinary and horrifying incarnation of evil", Raskolnikov is a troubled, well-read, and sometimes charming friend, brother, and son. Dostoevsky allows the reader to gauge his state of mind (*indwelling*) and enter into his universe. One has access to the complex workings of Raskolnikov's psyche (his family and friends do not have this privilege). It creates a sense of attachment and helps the reader foster empathy for him. Moreover, Raskolnikov's life is not enviable, it is described as driven

³ Also Marlow-Szent Gyorgyi and Maslow.

from lack. His family's socio-economic state becomes an immediate trigger to commit the crime. At the beginning of the novel, Dostoevsky writes of how Raskolnikov lives. His coffin-like room is suffocating and is described as a desolate living space; the half-peeled, dirty wallpaper does not help with general feelings of dullness. At a certain point in the novel, Dostoevsky writes that "low ceilings and cramped rooms cramp the soul and the mind" (Dostoevsky 2003, 498). He sleeps on a narrow sofa and is often seen stashing a bunch of unwashed and washed clothes under his head, for he cannot afford the simple luxury of a pillow. Raskolnikov is even unable to pay rent or acquire food. He sustains himself on unappetising cabbage soup (*shchi*) and watered-down tea that his landlady grudging sends his way. His wardrobe consists of tattered clothes that barely protect against the harsh Russian cold. His friend Razhumikhin buys him clothes with the money his (Raskolnikov's) poor mother has sent him from her meagre 125 roubles a year pension (and has probably gone without food herself). Dunya, his sister, is forced to drain herself at work and eventually, agrees to marry the old and cunning Luzhin to support the family. Raskolnikov is an ex-student and is now no longer able to study despite possessing great academic vigour. He was to be a lawyer; it is to be noted that his choice to study law and justice reflects his introspective nature and a fiery zeal for the philosophical ideas of equality and retribution. He has had a fiancé, depressed and sickly, who has passed away recently. In matters of love, the handsome Raskolnikov remains defeated. Dostoevsky defamiliarises Raskolnikov's life - like Tolstoy's depiction of *Kholstomer* (Tolstoy 2010) and paints him in a visceral spirit of pathos. No happy event is described to have occurred in Raskolnikov's life (except perhaps the article he wrote which later anyway becomes a threat to his peace). The reader is presented with an almost naturalistic picture of Raskolnikov's impoverished, lonely, and troubled existence. This causes her to learn of his past and begin to understand his motivations which stem from the frustration of being unable to sustain his loved ones and himself. This establishes that Raskolnikov is (at the moment) unable to reach Maslow's/Roger's stage of self-actualisation; he barely makes it alive to the end of the day.

Moreover, Raskolnikov is also carried away by the influence of the West. Dostoevsky presents him as a fallen creature in awe of 'floating ideas' coming from the beyond (as he is known to have described to editor of *The Russian Messenger* Mikhail Katkov in a letter, 2013). He

thinks of himself as Nietzsche's superman/*Übermensch* (Nietzsche 1883) - although, of course, Nietzsche's philosophy is post-Dostoevsky. One-half of the populace, he believes, is more intelligent than the rest. These individuals are above the law and may commit acts of violence to change the course of history. Napoleon was one such figure and Raskolnikov had the potential to be one. His theory pertaining to the Newtons of the world - one amongst ten thousand, "fearsome blood-letters" (Dostoevsky 2003, 309) is a disruptive prospect. He refuses to believe in the existence of a conscience. When Razhumikhin says that "the living soul's reactionary" (Dostoevsky 2003, 305), it is as if he were referring to Raskolnikov. Dostoevsky himself was a member of the infamous Petrashevsky circle and was involved in "a misconceived and self-destructive flirtation with radical politics" (Dostoevsky 1985, 9). Thinkers in the likes of Fourier, Darwin, Chernyshevsky, and Wagner were looked up to for the radical nature of their ideas; dissent and rebellion had become central to leading life in Tsarist Russia. In the mock-execution and Siberian hard labour that followed, Dostoevsky understood that life cannot be articulated and shaped by the lofty idea of the enlightenment. In his magnum opus, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), Dostoevsky etches the character of the rationalist Ivan Karamazov who is burdened by his "European cultural heritage" (Namli 2022, 22); Raskolnikov too finds himself in "a state of depersonalisation" (Picca, Schnyder and Romele 2024). In a paper on the Christian tenet of suffering, the following lines appear: "The shadow of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* lies heavily on the figure of Ivan, confirming the impossibility of following the precept that egoism is the only rational principle" (Namli 2022, 23). The paper argues that both Ivan and Raskolnikov need to learn to cope with the meaninglessness of life, like Alyosha and Father Zosima from *TBK* who practice 'active love'. There exists a reality that transcends the logic of utility. Many truths exist; God and Godlessness can exist at once. Ivan refuses to act on his utilitarian/rational egoist ideas whereas Raskolnikov does. The former, an atheist descends into madness. The latter acts; and in acting, loses composure. He is nevertheless able to recover through rediscovering his faith. For the most part of the novel he experiences *inauthentic* *sorge* (Heidegger 2010), commits *philosophical suicide*⁴ (Camus

⁴ Sonya, in fact, accuses him of having committed "moral suicide" (Dostoevsky 2003, 474).

1942), and lives in *bad faith* (Sartre 2007). The reader, familiar with Dostoevsky's own difficult past, believes in the troubles of his hero as Raskolnikov finds himself to be an honest Russian tainted by the gaze of the West. There exists a tussle between Western nihilism/hyper-rationality and Raskolnikov's Russian Orthodox Christian upbringing (characterised by kenotic love, and the Russian notion of sobornost). It is not his *authentic* self that is involved in deceitful crime, it is the (invisible) Western cord that drives him forward, that contributes to his "spiritual lethargy" (Matual 1992, 30) and decay. He of course does not realise this but the reader does and feels cathartic pity (and fear) via the act of *listening*; Rogerians would say he operates from a distorted *internalised locus* of evaluation. As the Russian word *Raskol* means schism or split, the protagonist is caught between the unstoppable force of his "false outer self" and the immovable object of his authentic real/inner self; this leads to disintegration and psychosis (Lowenstein 1993) (*incongruence*). Like Dostoevsky, Raskolnikov too, the reader expects, is soon to be disillusioned with his way of life. Thus these lines appear in the novel⁵: "...am I a monster or am I myself a victim?" (Dostoevsky 2003, 410)

The persistence of disease and trauma in the text

Crime and Punishment, "the chronicle of a sick-bed" (O'Leary 2009, 142) is Raskolnikov's story of ill-health. His illness is caused by guilt which in turn stands for inauthenticity. Thus the reader understands that the murder is not an act that aligns with the core of the novel's hero and his personality (Rogerian *organismic integrity*). The text is ridden with episodes of sickness, both metaphorical and literal. Raskolnikov's state inspires or spreads (like an infection) ill-health to other characters. Katerina Ivanovna perishes of consumption, Marmeladov struggles with self-control and is a drunkard, Raskolnikov's mother is delirious, Svidrigailov, Luzhin, and Lebezyatnikov deal with complex metaphorical illnesses of character. These serve to remind the reader of Raskolnikov's position and how:

1. He suffers from a physical ailment that stems, of course, from guilt and spiritual alienation. The antidote that can appease his guilty conscience guilt is "will to suffering" (Beebe 1955).
2. He is on the verge of disintegration like Katerina Ivanovna (physically broken) or Svidrigailov (whose spiritual death leads to

⁵ In a different context.

suicide). He occupies a liminal position and can either be redeemed or damned. The other characters coloured by sin and death represent the alternate track Raskolnikov's life could take (he, however, redeems himself through suffering, faith, and love, facilitated by Sonya).

3. He exercises freewill but is ultimately governed by his conscience and the will of God in a deterministic setting.

Dostoevsky writes of disease but the language he wields is also one ridden with the metaphors of sickness. Of course, there is literal ill-health (but is only a manifestation of a sinful, metaphorical illness that first exhibits itself as he conceives the plot of the murder and then goes on to get worse). The reader is subjected to repeated descriptions of it. Raskolnikov is susceptible to psychosomatic fainting sprees, is declared to suffer from monomania, frenzy, and an "idee fix"; he is gripped by hallucinations, dissociation, paranoia, and episodes of conversion. As he speaks to Luzhin, Razhumikhin, Zosimov, and Nastasya post-murder, Dostoevsky (2003, 183) describes him such: "Raskolnikov lay pale, his upper lip quivering and his breath coming with difficulty". This state of poor health stems from a conflict and it is visible. Razumikhin declares once: "for we must make a proper human being out of you" (Ibid, 156). Raskolnikov is viewed as not completely human, then. At another point in the novel (Ibid. 201) as he begins to berate Razumikhin, he comes across as sinister. Yet, Dostoevsky quickly writes of how it is not Raskolnikov's authentic state. Acting out in anger only makes him more pitifully sick. Words of anger are immediately followed by a description of illness: "He had begun calmly, savouring the mass of venom he was about to unleash, but ended in a state of frenzy, gasping for breath..." (Ibid. 262). Dostoevsky writes: "the enactment of a crime is invariably accompanied by illness" (Ibid. 381). He draws from personal experience⁶ in the writing of the novel. One knows of his battle with epilepsy⁷ and the morose spells of depression and anger he battled. When Raskolnikov is unmindful of the route he takes in order to reach different locales in the city, he alludes to his state of mind as being completely blank. It is as if he has had an epileptic fit (Ibid. 200).

⁶ For the biographical details mentioned through the course of the paper, see Joseph Frank, Alex Christofi, Kevin Birmingham, Anna Grigorevyna Dostoevskaya and other authors from the bibliography.

⁷ Freud (1945) calls it "hystero-epilepsy" that stems from latent homosexuality and an unresolved Oedipal complex.

The language of trauma and illness is overarchingly used for all of Dostoevsky's characters (Lambert 2018). Raskolnikov suffers the most, but the rest are not immune from feelings of guilt and discomfort. Employing the metaphors and colourations of being unwell for Svidrigalov, Sonya, Dunya, Razhumikin and the rest imply that they are not innocent as goes the adage: "The minds of men are mirrors to one another" (Hume 1739, 365). When Raskolnikov is unable to commit suicide and chooses *Vladimirka*⁸ and "*the seventh verst*" (Dostoevsky 2003, 387) instead, it is the collective instinct of self-preservation that takes charge. Dostoevsky believes in the idea that one is responsible for all, there happens to be a Jungian collective conscience that governs the populace of the world⁹. This idea, of one for all¹⁰, helps the reader understand that the figure of the criminal is not that of an outcast. The reader, in fact, is Raskolnikov (across time and space, in a different form). Sonya, post confession falls ill and spends the night troubled with fevered dreams. She too, partakes in Raskolnikov's illness; his state is characterised by the contagion of discomfort. She is horrified when she first knows of what has occurred. She asks Raskolnikov as to how he committed the act of murder; she views it as a strong instinct for self-destruction: "...what have you got and done to *yourself*?" (Dostoevsky 2003, 491) she asks him. Raskolnikov might have killed and might be a difficult person but he is a part of the whole. And thus, Raskolnikov, ridden with "black ecstasy" (Ibid. 2003, 498) becomes the figure of the reader herself. Raskolnikov's state where he wields no control, constantly ill and passing on the illness to the world at large, is pathetic and makes of him a figure enveloped in shame that deserves mercy and correction.

Vulnerability and lapses: Is Raskolnikov a good person?

Dostoevsky is often accorded the title of a psychologist (like Tolstoy is considered a sociologist); his works examine the nuances of human nature. His characters are often grey, neither villains nor Gods. In Raskolnikov's case it is important to focus upon the details that make up his life and how these aspects throw light upon the greater truths of

⁸ The region surrounding the town of Vladimir, through which the gangs of convicts bound for Siberia were dispatched.

⁹ Gibran (1923) states - "the murdered is not unaccountable for his own murder" - "the blood that's on everyone's hands" (Dostoevsky 2003, 618).

¹⁰ Also expounded upon in *The Brothers Karamazov* (Dostoevsky 1880).

the human condition. In a paper that re-reads Dostoevsky's fiction to understand society and its functions, the following lines appear:

[...] our sociality, which every human being shares, consists of both the capacity for sympathy or self-sacrifice and the instinctive, irresistible feeling of satisfaction of viewing the suffering of others.

(Chudo 2013, 136)

Further:

An optimist might be inclined to see our evil social impulses as a perverted, eradicable form of the good ones, whereas a Freudian might be inclined to make the opposite reduction. Dostoevsky considered both reductions as naïve, one a case of sentimentality and the other of reverse sentimentality. The human soul is ever entertaining what Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot* calls double thoughts.

(Ibid, 137)

Thus, Dostoevsky, like Carl Rogers believes in a (so to say) postmodern complexity of the self. Raskolnikov cannot simply be a villain. In depicting the various 'positive' ends to his life, Dostoevsky lends his persona a quality of compassion (exercising *self-actualising tendencies* despite constraints) and ambiguity. He is no longer a criminal or outcast, solely. Morality, as exhibited through Raskolnikov's example, is not constituted of absolutes. He is always already crafted as an empath himself:

His sense of compassion, which has been an integral part of his personality since childhood and which is manifested from time to time throughout the novel, is undeniable. It endows his actions with a magnanimity that runs counter to the malevolence of his scheme and the cruelty of his crime. Before he commits the murder, Raskolnikov's thoughts reflect a curious ambivalence that suggests a certain disenchantment with his plan and even a desire to be delivered from it.

(Matual 1992, 28)

Raskolnikov visits the old pawnbroker, feels disgusted when he ruminates over his plan and in a moment of authentic return (to his Christian past), beseeches God for help. Nevertheless, he commits the murder. He is often depicted as being the agent commissioning remarkable deeds of charity and courage. Despite his brash behaviour, his friends and relatives continue to gravitate towards him. He helps Marmeladov with money and most importantly, establishes himself as a dependable force of goodness at the time of his death. It so happens that within the course of a week Raskolnikov finds himself covered

again in blood. First, it is the pawnbroker and Lizaveta's. It symbolises shame, guilt, and dishonesty; it is the nihilist West's contamination of Russian spirituality. He tries very hard to hide it and even in his sleep mutters of the bloodstains. Like Lady Macbeth, he is overwhelmed. The second time he finds himself stained by blood is at the event of Marmeladov's death. He has been of great help to Katerina Ivanova and her family. He not only brings Marmeladov home to die and facilitates his seeking forgiveness from Sonya, he also pays for his funeral. Nikodim Fomich who runs into him at the tenement of the dead man remarks of the blood. It is not hidden now (from the other characters), it becomes a metaphor of redemption. Or perhaps the beginning of redemption through faith and suffering. Raskolnikov is unashamed of the blood and does not try to get rid of it. He is enveloped by a "new and boundless sensation of full and powerful life" (Dostoevsky 2003, 288). This blood is life-affirming. Its presence upon Raskolnikov's body symbolises the return to his old self, Christian and unpolluted. It is hoped that he is capable of refurbishing his *internalised locus of evaluation*. Drawing from his own experience of the mock execution, Dostoevsky describes Raskolnikov's state of mind "This sensation might be compared to that experience by a man who has been sentenced to death and is suddenly and unexpectedly told he has been retrieved." (*Ibidem*). Raskolnikov is at times the pure and meek Prince Myshkin (Dostoevsky 1869).

He comforts Poly, Marmeladov's stepdaughter, after his death. She embraces him and talks to him of God. He then requests her to pray for him too (the reader is to remember that Raskolnikov is an avowed nihilist and has rejected religion). Child characters like Poly become a tool with which to elicit empathy for Raskolnikov as they find comfort in his presence and mould the perception of the adult reader via Shklovsky's literary technique of *defamiliarisation* (Sajja 2022). Raskolnikov, when Poly weeps and embraces him, is covered in blood and is sickly pale, feverish, etc. This does not deter the child from seeking warmth from his presence. Poly assures him she'll pray for him the rest of her life. It creates a sense of regard, in the reader's subconscious, for Raskolnikov who is loved by an innocent orphan child. The character of Goryanchikov in *The House of Dead* (Dostoevsky 1985) is an ex-criminal who remains aloof post his return to civilised society. His young student, Katya, is a child who feels for him deeply. Through their case, Dostoevsky presents a moving

moment: “So even this man had been able to make someone love him” (Ibid. 25). Raskolnikov finds his Katya in Sonya and the reader.

Later in his trial, of course, the reader hears of him having saved children from a burning building. He had once helped a consumptive student and his impoverished father sustain themselves, testifies Razhumikhin. Raskolnikov stands up for Sonya when Luzhin accuses her of stealing a hundred rouble note. He uncovers the rouse and saves Sonya and her stepmother from a bitter episode of humiliation. He is protective of his sister and chases down Svidrigailov to look out for her. Raskolnikov had been ready to safeguard her by hook or crook. He knows Razhumikhin is a person of honest values and makes a case for him to his sister (she’d be happier marrying him than compromising to stay with Luzhinto help her family). Through the entire narrative of the text, Raskolnikov defends his beliefs and fiercely stands by those he thinks need him (Sonya and Dunya, primarily). He comes across as a man of values and the murder becomes the one act that is to be condemned in his otherwise glowingly philanthropic trajectory of youth. The reader listens and thus emotes.

Conclusion

One might be compelled to claim that they feel no empathy for Raskolnikov, the epilogue seems forced (Curtler 2004); critics in the likes of Gary Saul Morson (1992), Rowan Williams (2009) and Victor Terras (1998) claim so. It is an amusing story and that is all; more spiritual than psychological like the paper makes it to be. Raskolnikov’s very own case might be considered too sensational to be true, he remains irredeemable. Anna Akhmatova is known to have commented upon this idea. “But we know now that one can kill five - ten, one hundred people - and go to the theatre in the evening”, she says (Akhmatova n.d.). Is guilt sure to come? Is suffering an antidote to crime? It is important to note that in the context of Carl Roger’s work empathy broadly means engagement and *considering* the empathetic approach. Therefore, a reader’s close engagement and identification with the text is enough to hold on to the practice of empathising. Dostoevsky, at least, gently goads the reader to empathise. Raskolnikov’s is not a particular, unique narrative, it is universal and has become an archetype. The paper argues that Dostoevsky employs a few writerly strategies in order to elicit readerly empathy for his murderer-protagonist Raskolnikov; Carl Roger’s

construct of empathy is at play in the novel. The reader empathises with Raskolnikov as Nabokov's readers did with poet, paedophile, and murderer Humbert Humbert (Nabokov 2011); his experience and subjectivity slyly drifts over and settles onto that of the unassuming reader's. This happens through establishing a defamiliarised account of:

1. Raskolnikov as a proletariat Russian youth who works hard to make ends meet but finds himself defeated by the hardships of circumstance and influence.
2. Disease (literal and metaphorical) and trauma in the lives of all the characters of the novel.
3. Raskolnikov as a practitioner of the Christian ideas of grace and charity. He is essentially a well-meaning citizen who seeks the cleansing state of suffering; murder is the only dark aspect of his life.

The reader (akin to a Rogerian therapist) tends to associate herself with Raskolnikov because at instances more often than not, she too has been a victim of circumstance and violent influence. Dostoevsky facilitates an entry into the complex psyche of his hero and one is invariably drawn in; numerous monologues and interiority in the text further present an opportunity to understand Raskolnikov's *indwelling* and character better. He becomes a prototype for all men; universal emotions please and enervate him. Thus, the reader, in empathising with Rodya, i.e., Raskolnikov, only empathises with herself. Dostoevsky, through his writing, teaches one to practice empathy for individuals different, 'odd', and perhaps morally ambivalent; he fashions the reader into a Rogerian therapist.

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