



Rebirth and Renewal of Heroes in *Crime and Punishment* and *Siddhartha*

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Abstract

Literature is perhaps the best medium to vent out. The masterpieces under discussion have been juxtaposed to find out similarities and differences within. Astonishingly, both are quests aimed at the larger question in life, meaning of existence. However, they both approach this question differently. The study at hand tries to find out some of the similarities in the differences making it very viable for further investigation. Siddhartha, on one hand, is weary of the traditional belief system he has inherited and endeavors to unearth something more holistic. While Raskolnikov is bent on rebellion to the existing set of rules and laws. He tries to surpass them to justify his struggle. Fortunately, both men do experience what they set out for. However, the existential burden they carry is far too heavy. An implied connection to existentialism whether philosophical or Christian has been attempted – in the case of Siddhartha a primitive incompleteness and a modern disenchantment with over-completeness with respect to Raskolnikov. Thus, the representation of both the protagonists results in non-conformity. The study explores how both men overthrow what exists and consequently grapple with their own existence.

Keywords: Existence, Non-conformity, Disenchantment, Rebellion, Incompleteness, Rebirth, *Siddhartha*, *Crime and Punishment*.

Introduction

This study compares two literary masterpieces *Siddhartha: An Indian Novel* (Hermann Hesse, 1922¹) and *Crime and Punishment* (Fyodor Dostoevsky,

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¹ Hesse H. *Siddhartha: Eine Indische Dichtung*. 1922, [German]. *Siddhartha: An Indian Novel* (trans.), (United States: New Directions Publishing, 1951).

1866²) where quests of leading masculine characters in these pieces discover themselves and unveil. The two heroes are in search of the 'reality of existence' that perplexes humanity despite many meanings and their comprehensions exist to date. The analysis traces how these characters' approach life, deal with their dilemmas and make them meaningful. At times the meanings are lost, and they encounter in struggle to unfold what makes complete sense to them.

Background

Crime and Punishment and *Siddhartha* were written more than half a century apart. *Crime and Punishment*, written in the mid-nineteenth century portrays an extremely convoluted hero, Rodion Raskolnikov, riddled with moral crisis, guilt, and redemption. His idea of situating Napoleon in his place romanticized his act of murder. Apparently, he thought about this crime as something heroic that spared a lot of people who were indebted to the moneylender. This very image of a Robinhood is nonetheless evidence of how views were changing as to guilt. Dostoevsky also suffered similar crises including poverty and political dissent for which he was incarcerated in Siberian prison. In a time when the serfs were freed in Russia and educated people started questioning traditional ideas and morality, venturing in shaping their society in new ways. *Siddhartha* was penned in an ever changing world. World War I had just been over and no one could predict what indelible marks would be etched on mankind for the next twenty years. Germany was destroyed and so was the world, and the edifice that upheld humanity collapsed from the lust for power and control over other fellow beings. The war disillusioned humanity so much that rebuilding seemed nothing else, but whimsical. Interest in the East for Hesse began to develop at this point when the West was largely wiped out. His solace in the story of *Siddhartha* provided a roadmap for meaning in life. Theoretically, his ancient story reflected the dilemma of modern man, a perennial quest to find the real meaning of life in good or in bad times. Hesse's interest for Indian Spirituality coupled with German Romanticism led to an awe-inspiring story of a prince looking for *bliss*. His quest for Nirvana³ is a long and tiring journey that he willingly undertakes. In doing so, he shuns all the material pleasures, perhaps the way the modern world would provide with its technological advancements oblivious to real happiness.

² F. Dostoevsky. Преступление и наказание. 1866, [Russian]. Frederick Whishaw. *Crime and Punishment* (trans.), (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1911).

³ Donald S. Lopez. "Nirvana: Religion," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, (March 31, 2014).

Methodology

The study employs a comparative literary analysis approach, examining the thematic and philosophical underpinnings of the two works. Comparative literary analysis is a thoughtful approach used in literature studies to explore and understand the similarities and differences between various literary works, characters, themes, and other elements.

This methodology involves several steps that focus on close reading, contextual analysis, and interpretation, all framed within a chosen theoretical perspective. The contextual background of each novel is mainly considered, situating them within the historical and cultural milieu in which they were written. This provides a deeper understanding of the societal and intellectual influences that shaped the authors' perspectives.⁴

The analysis delves into the spiritual and existential quests of the protagonists, highlighting the divergent approaches they take in their search for meaning and enlightenment. Siddhartha's journey is aligned with Eastern philosophies, particularly Buddhism and Hinduism, while Raskolnikov's quest is rooted in the Christian existentialist tradition, which divert researchers' interest to explore relations between the authors, society and its depiction in write ups.⁵

Character Analysis

Quite interestingly, Siddhartha wants to undergo various life experiences to be able to find Nirvana anywhere. It sounds like a pretty taxing way of life. This journey takes him to Samanas. Here, he practices extreme control over his *self* by shunning even human instincts; hunger and sleep. He stands out among this group yet he moves forward to find something else which is more satisfying.

Another encounter is when he meets Kamala. A prostitute by profession who teaches Siddhartha the art of love. His remarkable acceptance of the fact that he can do three things only namely, think, wait, and fast convinces Kamala that he is an odd-one-out. So, here starts a cruise of worldly pleasures that he indulges in to forget what he always craved for – truth.

⁴ D. Moran. "Contextualizing Literary Works: The Importance of Historical and Cultural Influences" *International Journal of Comparative Literature* 12, No. 1 (2017): 23-41.

⁵ V. Prabhu. "Philosophical and Literary Influences in Siddhartha and Crime and Punishment," *Comparative Literature Studies* 25, No. 1 (2020): 89-113.

Finally, the encounter with Vasudeva transforms his life altogether. Vasudeva symbolizes life as a whole. The unbreakable connection with the river is too attractive for Siddhartha to ignore. Here is the time that he always yearns for. Listening to the river becomes his most enjoyable activity to try to understand life in totality.

On the other hand, Raskolnikov's intellectual arrogance leads to his moral downfall. His haughtiness is all the more fatal for him to realize that he lives among people who disdain his sense of morality. Although he is intellectually more mature, he does not understand the shallowness of the masses. His constant denial of the crime he committed costs him dearly. He thinks he is doomed forever.

Furthermore, his journey involves confronting the consequences of his actions and seeking redemption through suffering. His time in the prison in Siberia serves as a purgatory. He is cleansed of his crime but perhaps not of his sins. This is an allusion to the Biblical figure of Lazarus who was brought back to life when Jesus came to see him.⁶ It is a kind of juxtaposition between Raskolnikov and Lazarus. How having spent time in the prison reincarnates him.

Existential Journeys

Raskolnikov is a complex character, a man with a disturbed and a brooding nature. He is a non-conformist, a former law student living in a tiny rented apartment who gives up the idea to support himself and schemes to murder the old woman's pawnbroker, and rob her of her sister with a hatchet. The murder of the pawnbroker becomes a turning point in his life resulting in a deep psychological conflict that haunts him endlessly. He extolled the murders as noble, thinking his actions brought joy to many people who suffered at the hands of the pawnbroker, but this consolation remains transient, and the feeling of guilt overrides any mental contrivances. He is torn between guilt, horror and redemption.

However, he does it so smartly that his crime is exposed towards the end of the novel and that too not very explicitly. Since his crime was not easily discoverable, he was psychologically enchanted by the police officer to agree

⁶ Joel C. Elowsky. *John 11-21*. Vol.4B (Intervarsity Press, 2007).

to the fact that there were murders and his involvement in the same may not be ruled out.

There comes a time in the novel when Rodion asks for help. He is enfeebled when he is with the girl he admires, and it is this moment when he becomes weak to ask for redemption. The same girl – Sonya – is the daughter of his late acquaintance.

Therefore, an existential crisis pervades the personality of the hero. To exonerate himself of the murder, he bears the expense of an acquaintance's funeral and helping his orphans. He is seen to be playacting all the time when he is surrounded by either his acquaintances or family members. In other words, he is practicing bad faith in terms of Sartre.⁷ He knows he is a murderer but neither surrenders to law nor accepts it conscientiously. His many attempts to accept the charge fail due to his intense deliberation over what is right or wrong.

Here a great tension is seen in terms of morality. Is it the society that should tell you what is right/wrong or good/bad or an individual may also decide the same for themselves? This moral ambiguity raises many questions which are so complex to solve. Raskolnikov's procrastination in accepting the responsibility is delayed due to a heightened sense of his own morality which he supposes superior to any in his days.

Finally, when he encounters Sonya carrying a Bible and, subsequently, asks her to read the section on Lazarus. He breaks down after listening to Lazarus's story. He confesses to his crime and spends a good amount of time in prison.

In the novel *Siddhartha*, Siddhartha the young man is shown to be a religiously good practitioner. He lives with his father and obeys him well. Materially, he is wealthy enough but he always has a yearning to go beyond what he practices. His self is not contended. The ultimate desire to attain Nirvana leads him to ask his father to let him go to Samanas (ascetics) to become an ascetic.⁸ His father after much consideration allows him. He

⁷ David Detmer. *Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity* (Chicago: Open Court, 2008).

⁸ The word "samana" means *novice*. Buddhist samanas, which the ones in the novel are, were seemingly in search of pureness and a cleansed soul and were highly respected by

leaves his parents, his house, and everything behind except a friend of his, Govinda. Govinda is very much like Siddhartha himself. He too is inquisitive enough to attain Nirvana. So, they forsake and join Samanas. Siddhartha performs stunningly with them, however, finds these practices insufficient to seek any substantial way forward. He leaves them too to find truth elsewhere.

When Siddhartha is with Samanas, he is told about the illustrious one-Buddha. He thinks he can experience Nirvana through him. He finds him but does not adhere to his beliefs. He argues with Buddha, "To nobody, O Illustrious One, can you communicate in words and teachings what happened to you in the hour of your enlightenment."⁹ So he leaves him too but feels himself robbed of his friend Govinda yet finds his *Self* all alone like never before. As he goes on his way, he keeps "thinking about his lost *Self*" that he had been running away from. This was entirely contrary to why he abandoned his house, left Samanas, and, finally, not conforming to the wisest one, Buddha.

Siddhartha having left everything considers his *Self*-free. He thinks of giving it newer meanings. He meets Kamala- the beautiful prostitute- who teaches him love. His *Self* turns hedonist. He is by pleasure, for pleasure and of pleasure. He manages to get every pleasure but somewhere fails to give meaning to his *Self*. Siddhartha finds that worldly pleasures cannot provide the ultimate "bliss" to his *Self* which is the ultimate thirst of his quest. Therefore, he is disenchanted and forsakes Kamala.

Now, he meets Vasudeva, the ferryman. He, with him, gets close to the river. This opens the natural facticity of the existing world to Siddhartha.¹⁰ He then learns that human condition plays an important role in giving meaning to *Self*. Thus, he relates his *Self* to those particular entities which mitigate the anguish of his *Self*.

the kings and nobility and also commoners. All of whom gave them food, lodging, and other necessities of life. In return, the samanas gave these people lessons from the dharma. The samanas practiced meditation and "unpitying self-denial."

⁹ Herman Hesse and Hilda Rosner. *Siddhartha; Translated by Hilda Rosner* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1971).

¹⁰ V S Bhaskar. *Faith & Philosophy of Buddhism* (Gyan Publishing House, 2009).

In the end, when Siddhartha meets his beloved friend Govinda, he reveals the mystery of human life. The facticity and the givenness should not be transcended if one is to get an authentic mode of human existence. World is intrinsically good therefore “that exists is good- death as well as life, sin as well as holiness, wisdom as well as folly”. It gives rise to a humanistic perspective towards the world, that is to say the meaning of things and the Self depend upon the individual’s free-will. “Everything is necessary, everything needs only my agreement, my assent, my loving understanding; then all is well with me and nothing can harm me”.¹¹

Finally, Siddhartha comes to know that transcendence from worldliness does not give meaning to *Self* rather it gives rise to the complexity between the *Self* and the world.

Comparison

While both Raskolnikov and Siddhartha embark on journeys that lead to profound personal transformation, the nature of their quests and the conclusions they reach are fundamentally different. Raskolnikov’s journey is deeply rooted in the Christian existentialist tradition, where guilt, sin, and redemption are central themes.¹² His story is one of moral failure and subsequent redemption through suffering, reflecting Dostoevsky’s belief in the necessity of spiritual rebirth through acknowledgment of one’s sins.

In contrast, Siddhartha’s journey is more aligned with Eastern philosophies, particularly Buddhism and Hinduism, where the focus is on self-realization, the dissolution of the ego, and the attainment of spiritual enlightenment. Siddhartha’s path is not about overcoming guilt or seeking forgiveness but about understanding the true nature of existence and achieving a state of inner peace and harmony.

Ultimately, both novels explore the universal human quest for meaning and the different paths one can take towards self-discovery and redemption. Raskolnikov’s and Siddhartha’s journeys, though divergent in their approaches, offer insights into the complexities of the human condition and the enduring search for truth and spiritual fulfillment.

¹¹ Herman Hesse and Hilda Rosner. *Siddhartha*; Translated by Hilda Rosner (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1971).

¹² Jonathan Judaken and Robert Bernasconi. *Situating Existentialism: Key Texts in Context* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

Individual vs. Society

Siddhartha is undoubtedly considered heir to his father's rule and legacy. He grows up to be a magnificent man whose thirst for knowledge is not quenched amongst the learned around him. He craves for the ultimate truth that is devoid of any human adulteration. It is exactly this time that he starts to rebel against the edifice of traditions and customs. An incessant fire that could only be put out had he found out the truth but for that he had to toil in the harshest of conditions.

He defies his family and society to overthrow the illusion of contentment. He is so disenchanted with the beliefs and rituals that everything appears meaningless to him. Therefore, along with his friend Govinda, they pursue a journey that ultimately lands them in different directions.

Since Siddhartha is not easily satiable, his quest takes a lot longer than his friend's. Interestingly, he explores different ways of spending his life to be able to appreciate and resort to anyone. Unfortunately, none of the worldly pleasures bring him what he always wishes for – Nirvana.¹³ He looks down upon the ways of ordinary men who subscribe to a particular set of beliefs and never question the authenticity of truthfulness. However, Siddhartha is a nonconformist. He questions untiringly to reach that state of bliss that common individuals never even try.

Finally, when he does find Nirvana after a relentless whirlpool of events in his life that he chooses for himself, it is at the expense of family and society.

A hero is meant to be rebellious. If he is not one, he is not the hero. Raskolnikov right from the onset is an erratic individual who behaves unconventionally. His subscription to the society he belongs to is nominal. Such individuals only try to grapple with the reality around them. More often than not, they become extremely lonely and cavillous. What is around them is not what they want. Rather they create a world of their own to happily enjoy there. This is only too miserable for such people and the hero is one of them.

Repetitive attempts to connect with the society and suddenly break away from it is rather very frequent. Raskolnikov tries many times to behave like

¹³ Louis de La Vallée Poussin. *The Way to Nirvana; Six Lectures on Ancient Buddhism as a Discipline of Salvation* (Legare Street Press, 2021).

everybody does, but, one way or the other, he is perennially dissatisfied. One of the reasons why he is so out rightly critical of the society is that the moral edifice it has built is too congesting for every individual to bow down to. Nevertheless, he formulates his own morality to justify the crime that he commits. His outlandish theory to murder the pawnbroker somewhat puzzles the readers. The loathsome act is too audacious for a person like him to perform. However, he justifies it like most utilitarians would do – maximum pleasure for maximum number of people.¹⁴

Paths to Enlightenment and Redemption

Important to discuss here is the extraordinary capacity of Siddhartha to experience enlightenment or in the other words – Nirvana. He believes that no one can transfer wisdom to anyone else. It is only knowledge that is communicable. In order to understand reality, one must experience that phenomenon.

Therefore, the authenticity of the experience lies inherently in the fact that it should not be *given* rather it is to be experienced. Siddhartha does experience different modes of life to consequently reach one that makes him feel the truth. To say it otherwise, the meaning of life is to be understood in totality. It is not about shunning one's mode to accept another. Instead, it is about incorporating all experience to form a whole.

The last part of the novel is a manifestation of the same idea. Siddhartha is alone with a friend and lives by a river. The symbolic value of the river represents life in totality which may not be broken down into pieces. Here, he connects the dots to make a picture of his struggle for *truth*. The ephemerality of one lived experience is connected to the other to form a complete picture.

Raskolnikov, on the other hand, passes through a very gradual psychological awakening. He has a fight with himself as to the realization whether he is actually a murderer or what he did was a heroic act. This convulsion is so powerfully delineated in the novel that it carries the reader away from the criminality of the protagonist.

¹⁴ Tim Mulgan. *Understanding Utilitarianism* (2007; repr., Routledge, 2014).

Linking crime to guilt is a major dilemma in the novel. Coming to terms with social reality is a great burden on Raskolnikov. He has denied himself any counselling by any friend or family member. This worsens the case because he is too engrossed in his own turbulence to absorb the commotion in the society. However, he is sometimes conscientious of the consequences of his actions.

Raskolnikov does want to vent out his guilt that he for so long encapsulated within but his introversion is an impediment to his confession. Nonetheless, he is so enfeebled that he accepts to cleanse himself of the sins. His punishment is an atonement not for the murders but for the concealment on his end.

Pertinent to note here is the spiritual cleansing that the hero undergoes. His physiological and psychological demeanor changed for the better in Siberia. Also, his affiliation with the religion improves which overshadows his relationship with Sonya.

Philosophical Influences

Influences are very easy to be undermined. Same is the case with the texts at hand. *Siddhartha* is an Indian tale that aptly glorifies themes such as individual enlightenment, detachment, and the cyclical nature of life. Although, *Siddhartha* is shown to belong to a Brahman family, he still looks for something better for his own awakening to be able to understand the complexities of existence.

Worthwhile is his obsession with newer things to experiment in life. Life unfolds at its own pace for better or worse. He is altogether calm for nature to bring him the best of choices that he either chooses or declines. However, he does try to explore new avenues where his path for enlightenment takes him.

Siddhartha is already influenced by his Hindu background that helps him unearth what he intends to find – ultimate happiness. The cyclical nature of life is about what goes around, comes around.¹⁵ The latter part of his life sees the cutting off of relationships he once enjoyed; parents, Govinda, Kamala etc. His only consolation is his impudent son who craves for worldly

¹⁵ John Stratton Hawley and Vasudha Narayanan. *The Life of Hinduism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

desires, and one day he too leaves him. So, here it is both a tragedy and relief. The idea of detachment is extremely important to find one's true self. There are chains one is bound by and the only way for realization to hit is to forsake everything and everyone behind.

If Siddhartha is compared to any philosophical thought of today, it is quintessentially Existentialism.¹⁶ The story of modern man is akin to his story; anguish, burden, anxiety, authenticity etc. are also all found in modern times.¹⁷ And they have become so manifest that man is unable to find a way out.

Crime and Punishment is pervaded with Christian Existentialism. Kierkegaard theorized on this idea.¹⁸ The fundamental question that arises here is why one must approach God objectively and it is hard to grapple with reality subjectively. Each person must make independent choices to constitute their existence. Raskolnikov is all psychologically torn between what is moral and immoral.¹⁹ The paradoxical question of morality is too demanding for him. His repeated attempts to come to terms with reality is a manifestation of his failure to comprehend perhaps what is expected of him and what he expects of himself. A precarious situation that he cannot avoid and is bound to undergo turmoil.

Pertinent to note here is the objectivity of faith that worsens the situation. A man is burdened to believe in the objectivity of faith which fundamentally contradicts human nature. What Raskolnikov wills to believe is not what he is willing to believe. Therefore, he is in a constant state of anxiety which paralyses him to act normatively.

Being authentic is another facet of Christian Existentialism. *Crime and Punishment* is neither a story about crime because the hero thinks he has acted nobly nor about punishment. When there has not been a crime, a question of punishment does not arise. An emulation of Napoleon

¹⁶ Charles Glicksberg. "Sartre: Existentialism in Fiction," *Source: Prairie Schooner* 23, No. 1 (Spring 1949): 12-18.

¹⁷ Luna Dolezal. "Reconsidering the Look in Sartre's: Being and Nothingness," *Sartre Studies International* 18, No. 1 (January 1, 2012).

¹⁸ Ihab Hassan. "Quest for the Subject: The Self in Literature," *Contemporary Literature* 29, No. 3 (1988): 420.

¹⁹ R. M. Davison. "Moral Ambiguity in Dostoevski," *Slavic Review* 27, No. 2 (June 1968): 313-316.

Buonaparte is what Raskolnikov idealizes. That is not at all an authentic existence.²⁰ Furthermore, it is the illusion of freewill that enchants everybody to do what they wish. However, doing what one wishes is not exactly as what one does not wish. In other words, freewill is only too real to be exercised. It is the destiny that is responsible for all the actions whether good or bad.

Influences of the Literature

Siddhartha is a tale that has been told in an allegorical style to convey his spiritual journey. The first example in the story is when the Illustrious – Great Buddha - is mentioned. His personality is delineated so romantically that the reader is full of curiosity to find more about the same.

Secondly, different parts of the novel are phased into very exemplary stories to allure readers to keep reading. The characters around *Siddhartha* such as Govinda, Kamala, and Vasudeva are all allegorical. They represent different things in life. Govinda is an embodiment of spiritual journey and companionship whereas Kamala pictures a world of desires where *Siddhartha* learns about love, attachment, and material world. Vasudeva, on the other hand, exemplifies the unity in life.

Moreover, the lyrical style of *Siddhartha* is so important because it adds an inseparable tone to the novel. His attachment to the river is a sign of flow, continuity, and interconnectedness. Similarly, the extensive use of repetition, metaphors, and vivid imagery heightens the overall mood.

Dostoevsky's employment of psychological realism in the novel is a technique that defines much of what he wants to convey through Raskolnikov. The protagonist's inner conflict and moral dilemma which arise due to his act of murder keep him entangled throughout more so because he takes pride in the fact that he is intellectually better than others. Therefore, he has a right to take measures. In doing so, he commits the crime. His character is then marked by intense internal conflict of guilt and justification.

In addition, Dostoevsky's masterful use of stream of consciousness is yet another technique to keep the reader captivated. Raskolnikov's mental

²⁰ Gary Rosenshield. "Crime and Punishment, Napoleon, and the Great Man Theory," *Dostoevsky Studies* 23 (December 30, 2020).

happenings are so vividly captured that they seem real. His mental distress and paranoia reflect his utter inability to handle the situation. This also includes monologues that he often has as to his justification of the crime and sometimes doubt and regret.

Symbolism is yet another tool that Dostoevsky uses to enhance psychological realism. For example, his dream about the horse beaten to death is a powerful symbol for his own state of guilt and helplessness. This dream foreshadows his crime and represents violence and moral deterioration. Also, the recurring image of the pawnbroker is his inescapable guilt and the psychological burden that he cannot shrug off.

Conclusion

Both *Crime and Punishment* and *Siddhartha* are novels that one way or other explore human condition. Ostensibly, they approach what lies here in this world differently but somehow there are similarities in the fundamental quest of both the men. Siddhartha does not have any authentic self to proclaim his existence whereas Raskolnikov repents having it.

Siddhartha's long and exhaustive journey which reflects a struggle to find Nirvana is indeed very tumultuous. The ups and downs that he chooses for himself is a testament of his constant boredom with the existing state. It is in this framework that he is labelled to be suffering from an existential dilemma. Unwrapping the meaning of life every day and not to permanently resort to one shows his complete non-conformity to the established values and traditions. A Prometheus of his age who wants to experience the fire himself bears inexplicable pain and suffering. Although it is absolutely his choice to walk the path of illumination, he never plans to shun his quest. His emptiness is finally satiated when he emptied himself of all material luxuries.

Raskolnikov on the other hand justifies his actions because he believes to be intellectually superior to others. Therefore, he has the right to navigate the path to virtue for himself and others around him.

Making one's existence meaningful is a debate that has intrigued individuals ever since they grew intellectually. Dostoevsky's attempt to do the same for his hero is nonetheless very macabre. However, the effect of the chapter on

Lazarus is very profound on Raskolnikov which is an allusion to the Bible.²¹ Clearly, the reference as a religious one hints at multiple layers of meanings within the text, a tipping point where he becomes helpless and accepts all accusations in order to find solace.

Furthermore, quantifying and qualifying sins is a theme that pervades *Crime and Punishment*. It is an ordeal for our hero to understand that his act of murder qualifies for sin. Likewise, quantifying his act of murder is yet another trial. Right from the start of the novel, he plans to do something heroic that could put an end to his financial misery. Special reference to his Napoleonic dream that inspires him to commit this act of brutality is a testimony to his utterly hallucinated nature.

However, everything becomes topsy-turvy when he commits two murders instead of one which he had originally planned. Nonetheless, the second murder was the necessity of the moment. Otherwise, his crime could be published.

Looking at this saga with a moralistic viewpoint, sin is a religiously curated term that puts a man's conscience at turbulence. There is not a single measuring tool that offers any solace to any sinner as to the weight of their sins. Additionally, the only authority that decides whether a sin is a sin or a virtue is beyond human deliberation – religion. It is when in the novel Raskolnikov turns to religion for redemption that he truly tries to understand that he sinned. Perhaps, he is weak enough to succumb to religion for salvation and that too in the arms of a woman.

Human nature is complex and yet very simple at the same time. To understand what goes on within one's self is perhaps an ordeal. Whether it is the abyss or the zenith, humans have the capacity to touch both. However, the fundamental question that still intrigues is how to overcome the vicious part of our nature so that the virtuous dominates. Innumerable attempts have been made by some of the wisest individuals but it is a process that is very personal.

²¹ Linda Ivanits. "The Other Lazarus in *Crime and Punishment*," *The Russian Review* 61, No. 3 (July 2002): 341–357.

Fortunately, the best part that surrounds both the stories is an incessant quest for enlightenment and realization. The struggle both the protagonists undergo is actually the real meaning of life.