

Contents

Exploring *Crime and Punishment*, Robert C. Evans xiii

This beginning entry is designed to briefly describe the essays that follow and guide readers in finding the best way to approach both the novel and the critical history of Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment.

The Many “-Cides” of Dostoevsky: Tolstoy’s “Deaths” vs.
Dostoevsky’s “Murders,” Michael R. Katz xxiii

Exploring a major theme of Crime and Punishment, Michael Katz focuses here on “the various kinds of ‘-cides,’ or deaths, depicted in Dostoevsky’s entire body of novels.” The essay also compares Dostoevsky’s works to those of another great Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy.

A Biography of Fyodor Dostoevsky, Lee A. Farrow xlv

An in-depth discussion of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s biography illuminates how events in the author’s own life—Dostoevsky was sentenced to death and actually led before a firing squad before he received a last-minute reprieve and was sent to a Siberian labor camp instead—inform his work as a writer and contribute to the depth and realism of his characters as well as to his approach to big-picture, universal themes.

Critical Contexts

Raskolnikov and Acedia, Christopher Baker 3

This essay adopts an historical approach to deal with the significant theme of acedia—a kind of physical and mental lethargy

characterized by torpor or sloth. Christopher Baker traces this idea back to ideas of certain medieval monks and to some of the earliest Christian sources and then shows its relevance to Raskolnikov's predicament, including his complex personality. Raskolnikov is at times "overcome with ennui but then, surprisingly, with a frantic restlessness that drives him to murder yet plagued with a kind of emotional inertia leading to a self-hatred he cannot shake off."

- Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*: Some Important Modern Essays,
Melissa Anderson. 25

As this volume's critical reception chapter, Melissa Anderson's essay surveys important critics of Crime and Punishment, focusing on the appropriate volume in the Casebooks in Criticism series (Oxford University Press). The Casebook presents nine chapters involving a variety of approaches to the author and the novel, exploring such issues as the harshness of St. Petersburg, the importance of religion, and "how Dostoevsky's novels interweave dreams, fantasy, imagination, and memory."

- Theory and Practice in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*,
Edwin Wong 38

In this critical lens essay, Edwin Wong explores Crime and Punishment by emphasizing the stark contrasts between Raskolnikov's plans and theories and the brutality and senselessness of what actually transpires in the novel, noting a series of ironies that run throughout the narrative. Raskolnikov thinks he will "murder with psychological impunity" and get "rich quick." In reality, he "stuffs a few trinkets in his coat" and "begs forgiveness" for the murder, while "everyone laughs at his ineptitude."

- Chris Hannan's Stage Version of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*:
A Survey of British and American Reviews, Sue Norton 60

In this volume's comparative analysis essay, Sue Norton examines how various reviewers, both in Britain and America, reacted to the recent dramatization of Dostoevsky's novel written by the Scottish playwright Chris Hannan. This survey contains both positive and negative commentary about the "script, stagings, acting, and general stage-worthiness of a play that tackles a difficult but potentially rewarding set of themes."

Critical Readings

- Important Editions of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*,
Lee A. Farrow 87
- Lee Farrow, author of the brief biography of Dostoevsky printed earlier in this volume, now returns with a survey of some recent important editions of Crime and Punishment, especially those likely to be used in high school and college classrooms. She notes that this novel "has confounded readers for over a century and a half, and has elicited a rich tapestry of commentary from literary critics and others fascinated by its exploration of the human psyche, the tension between good and evil, and the competing notions of humanity and rational self-interest."*
- Talking to Himself: Raskolnikov's "Schizophrenia" in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Robert C. Evans. 102
- In this essay, volume editor Robert Evans examines Raskolnikov's habit of talking to himself, sometimes when he is alone but often when he is surrounded by other people. Although the word "schizophrenia" did not exist when Dostoevsky wrote his novel, the condition obviously did, and later psychologists and critics (surveyed here) credited him with accurately describing the condition before it had been given an actual scientific name. "Much of the impact of the novel," according to Evans, "results from Dostoevsky's uncanny ability to get inside Raskolnikov's mind."*
- Irony, Ambiguity, and Psychological Vertigo in Part IV, Chapter 5 of *Crime and Punishment*, Robert C. Evans 123
- Volume editor Robert Evans in this essay examines the famous battle of wits between Raskolnikov and investigator Porfiry that takes place in the latter's office, a scene which makes its way into many film adaptations of the novel. Double meanings and ambiguities abound, so much so that readers can come to feel almost as unsettled, insecure, anxious, and apprehensive as Raskolnikov himself.*
- Heart, Head, Hands: Embodying Affect in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Matthew M. Thiele 141
- Matthew M. Thiele next offers a different sort of "reader-response" approach to Dostoevsky's novel, one that emphasizes the book's many references to hearts, the head, and hands as ways of manipulating readers' varied reactions to the*

text. Thiele concludes that “Crime and Punishment engages readers physically, emotionally, and intellectually in a way that is . . . similar to the effects that comedic and tragic drama are understood to have on audiences.”

Early Illustrations of Various Episodes of Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, Robert C. Evans 154

In this essay, Robert Evans examines several early illustrations of scenes from Crime and Punishment. Evans contends that “talented artists, almost by definition, have to be talented ‘close readers’ of the works they are illustrating, and that what they perceive in a work can stimulate both agreement and disagreement from other readers of those texts.”

Early Illustrations of Raskolnikov from Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, Jordan Bailey 170

In a companion essay to the previous one, Jordan Bailey examines the ways in which various early illustrators have depicted Raskolnikov, comparing and contrasting these visions of the novel’s main character. Bailey concludes that such artists “are expected to think about the books’ characters with the kind of thoroughness, insight, and imagination most readers have no particular need to exercise. In that respect,” she thinks, such artists “ideally function as serious literary analysts.”

Raskolnikov’s Crime: Four Film Versions, Christopher Baker 190

In this essay on four well-known film adaptations, Christopher Baker focuses on a 1935 American film starring Peter Lorre, a 1970 Russian film starring Georgiy Taratorkin, a 1979 BBC miniseries starring John Hurt, and a 2007 Russian miniseries featuring Vladimir Koshevoy. Homing in on the novel’s famous and horrific murder episode, Baker explains that these four films “demonstrate in their varying treatments of the murder scene the difficulty of naming precisely Raskolnikov’s motive for his crimes, although in each he is obsessed with the burden of poverty both moral and physical.”

Three Films (from 1970, 1979, and 2002) of Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, Robert C. Evans 208

Critical responses to three filmed versions of Crime and Punishment are the focus of this essay, as volume editor Robert C. Evans examines reviews of the 1970 and 1979 adaptations already

discussed by Christopher Baker as well as those of a 2002 BBC miniseries starring John Simm in the lead role. Of the three, the 1979 version starring John Hurt generally received the most consistently positive reviews, although all three films have had their champions.

Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*: The 2002 BBC Miniseries,
 Robert C. Evans 235

Another essay by volume editor Robert Evans offers a detailed look at the ways the 2002 BBC production presents the famous scene in the novel in which Raskolnikov visits the office of Porfiry, the police detective who suspects him of the murderous crime that must be punished. Of the three films of the novel produced in 1970, 1979, and 2002, Evans notes that “the one most likely to appeal to non-specialists-and particularly to people who have never yet read the novel-may be the 2002 BBC effort, arguing that, “for any person seeking some sense of the novel before (or even after) reading the book, this film is hard to beat.”

Resources

Chronology of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s Life. 255
 Works by Fyodor Dostoevsky. 261
 Bibliography 263
 About the Editor 267
 Contributors. 269
 Index 271