

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

A sense of superiority involves viewing people as inferior beings compared to the perpetrator, stemming from a prideful way of thinking. Like a double-edged knife, pride can be interpreted as a tool to protect the holder from harm or to lacerate people and the holder himself. Tracy and Robins divided these sides of the coin by classifying them as Authentic Pride and Hubristic Pride (2007). Based on their view, Authentic Pride emerges from goal attainments or accomplishments and is often centered on the efforts to pass the finish line. On the other hand, hubristic pride puts a focus on abilities and strengths, depicted in statements such as, “I am naturally talented” or “I do everything flawlessly” (2007). Hubristic pride is closely associated with narcissism (M. Lewis, 2000), and pride is categorized as the most lethal sin of the Seven Deadly Sins (Dante, 1937). From these explanations, a sense of superiority is closely related to subconsciousness.

Russian literature is considered the expert in capturing the depth of the human's subconsciousness. According to Morson, the 19th century, in particular, is regarded as one of the most prominent periods in world literature, which produced masterworks that have influenced literary traditions globally (2010). Russian literature is characterized by its intense concern with philosophical problems, existential issues, and formal innovation, often defying conventional genres. Russian authors like Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky have been central to this

influence. Dostoevsky's works are known for their deep psychological insights and exploration of existential themes, which have had a lasting impact on Western literature.

Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky is regarded as one of the best novelists and greatest psychologists in the history of literature (Prah, 2020). Many were influenced by his ideas and innovations, such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Mikhail Bulgakov, and many more. His works touch the darkest profundity of the human heart, causing systematic psychological theories to seem shallow (Morson, 2010). Dostoevsky's major works are his novella titled *Notes from the Underground* and four novels: *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Possessed*, and *The Brother Karamazov*. Each of them is remarkable for its psychological depth, notably *Crime and Punishment*.

Published in 1886, *Crime and Punishment* tells the complex story of a highly intellectual, former student named Rodion Romanovich Raskolnikov who lives in a state of destitution and utter chaos in St. Petersburg. The novel accompanies the reader on a tormenting psychological journey of Raskolnikov, the main character, in which he seeks the truth and enlightenment from his philosophical theory by murdering an old pawnbroker. In the novel, he writes a work entitled "On Crime" that states there is an existence of extraordinary people—akin to Napoleon and Alexander the Great—who transgress beyond the law, destroying the present for a great future (Rosenshield, 2020). To attain their desired goals, any kind of method will be allowed—even murdering people in the process—and justified by a so-called "higher purpose" (Yamini & Ramya, 2024). Plagued by this authentic, yet vile mindset, he then develops intellectual arrogance and views others as inferior to him. Thus, when he obtains this enlightenment, he rehearses a plan to murder Alyona Ivanovna, whom he considers a louse—a parasite that sucks blood for a living and brings nothing but harm. He proposes a justification that by killing Alyona

Ivanovna, he could potentially save thousands of lives, which embodies his utilitarian mindset that prioritizes the greater good over personal interests (Ambarsari, 1995).

However, the aftermaths of the murder are severe and agonizing to Raskolnikov's well-being, both physically and mentally. Consumed by guilt and the weight of his sins, his mental state gradually deteriorates, leading to his alienation and isolation. Furthermore, the progressive decline in health makes him enter a delirious state, indicated by high fever, hallucination, and heightened suspicion (Dostoevsky, 1866). These consequences show what ought to happen if individuals internalize superiority complex to mask their inferiority feelings, thus the researcher will discuss these matters through this research titled "The Consequences of the Main Character Superiority Complex in Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*".

1.2. Identification of the Problem

This research analyzes the consequences of the superiority complex possessed by Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*. It originates from Raskolnikov's philosophical view, and the manifestation of it can be seen in his work entitled "On Crime" which states the two classifications of people: the extraordinary and the ordinary. The idea of these classifications is inspired by the existence of influential figures like Napoleon and Alexander the Great who challenge the established order and promote changes for many. Influenced by his philosophical view, Raskolnikov puts this theory to a test by killing Alyana Ivanovna and justifies this gruesome act with his utilitarian mindset. He believes the death of an exploitative, greedy person whom he considers as something useless will benefit society. As a result, he is engulfed by immense guilt and succumbs to profound mental anguish, which eventually leads to suicidal thoughts, alienation, and social isolation.

From this explanation, it could be derived a person who adopts a superiority complex dehumanizes others whom he considers inferior, thereby reducing their value to objects rather than human beings. Since the perpetrator has considered the victims as objects, he can do whatever he desires to them. Additionally, it alienates the perpetrator, which leads to social isolation and creates suicidal thoughts. Hence, this research aims to unpack the consequences of developing a superiority complex as seen in Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*.

1.3. Review of Related Literature

In order to conduct this research, the writer found several related sources for this research. The review consists of a thesis, journal articles, and articles. The aim is to enhance the depth of this research and to acquire deeper knowledge of the issues.

In Mir Mahammad Ali's 2023 journal article, "The Fragmented Self: An Analysis of Raskolnikov's Dualistic Nature in *Crime and Punishment*", published in *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)* delves into Raskolnikov's complex character, focusing on his dualistic nature and mental anguish. The journal article utilizes psychological studies to find the root of Raskolnikov's psychological turmoil. The journal article displays an in-depth analysis of Raskolnikov's character by integrating historical, psychological, and literary context, which provides a profound comprehension of the protagonist's dualistic nature. Ali draws a comparison between Raskolnikov with other literary characters that share similar psychological clashes, such as Hamlet and Macbeth, placing him within a broader literary tradition. Furthermore, by including several critical responses to the journal article, it enriches the perspectives on how to view Raskolnikov's character. However, it seems to contain fewer references to the novel itself and does not utilize sources from more recent scholarship that can

add additional insights to the analysis. Overall, this journal article mainly discusses his inner turmoil and dualistic nature, which will support the writer in completing this research.

About the complexity of Raskolnikov, Umida Abdushukurova's 2024 article from Uzbekistan State World Languages University titled *The Complexity of Human Nature in Crime and Punishment* also discusses Raskolnikov's split personality—the intellectual arrogance and the kind-hearted individual—by employing Nietzsche's *Urbarmensch* and the concept of nihilism to enhance the depth of the analysis. Additionally, by highlighting the theme of guilt, redemption, and socio-economic conditions of Russia in the 19th century, these elements add relevancy to contemporary issues. Unfortunately, there are many repetitions and rather simple deliveries, which create a lack of depth in the analysis. Nevertheless, this article supplies more insights regarding nihilism, the role of Raskolnikov's dream, and the symbolism of urban landscape.

In 2016, Derek Allan from Australian National University employed a psychological analysis, intertextual analysis, moral philosophy, and existential approach to offer a profound enlightenment of how powerful and vile the idea could become through his journal-article entitled "The Power of an Idea: Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*", which was published in *Literary Imagination*. Allan provides a detailed, well-rounded analysis of Raskolnikov's motives for murder by comparing him to other literary figures, such as Merteuil and Valmont from "*Les Liaisons dangereuses*," as well as figures from Balzac's works, which features the similarity in moral struggles, ambition, and the journey to acquire individual worth and authenticity. With this comparison being discussed, it enriches one's understanding to comprehend the character development and philosophical foundations in literature. Additionally, the transformation of a mere idea into robust, strong emotions enhances one's comprehension exponentially to

understand Raskolnikov's complexity. Since this article employs existentialism as a tool to examine the issue, it will help the writer to enhance the knowledge regarding the application of existential criticism to a character.

In 2020, Gary Rosenshield from University of Wisconsin investigated the perplexing relationship between the concepts of the 'great man', specifically as embodied by Napoleon Bonaparte and Raskolnikov's theory in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* through his article entitled *Crime and Punishment, Napoleon, and the Great Man Theory*. Napoleon's noteworthy historical impact inspired the emergence of this theory in 19th-century Europe; it states that history is constructed through the actions and judgments of the extraordinary individual. Rosenshield argues that Raskolnikov's act of idolizing Napoleon evokes the utilitarian mindset, which prioritizes the needs of others rather than the individual desire, leading to the murder of Alyona Ivanovna and her half-sister. By mirroring Napoleon, Raskolnikov concludes the murder can be justified for the greater good and the sake of noble purpose. Furthermore, this article also highlights the notable flaw of this theory, which can be seen in Raskolnikov who fails to ascend to be the 'great man' due to his moral dilemmas and inner turmoil. Hence, the writer will use this article as a supplementary source to support the research.

In 2017, Natalia Ciofu from University of Essex, in her doctoral thesis, *Internal Punishment: A Psychoanalytical Reading of F.M. Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment (1866), L. Rebreanu's Ciuleandra(1927) and P. Ackroyd's Hawksmoor(1985)* analyzes the dualistic nature and inner punishment as a vital literary and cultural troupe in these three influential European literary works: Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Rebreanu's *Ciuleandra*, and Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor*. Ciofy reveals the progression of crime fiction and the changing point of view of criminality over the past two centuries, focusing on the perpetrators' psyche rather than

the detectives. The thesis delves into the protagonists' experience of enduring internalized remorse and suffering, shaped by their psychological angst and socio-cultural context. Ciofu incorporates a psychoanalytical approach from notable theorists such as Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, Jacques Lacan, and Otto Rank, and strengthens the analysis by employing the philosophical perspectives of Søren Kierkegaard and Jean-Paul Sartre, which fosters the depth of the analysis. Furthermore, by utilizing a comprehensive comparative approach to the analysis, Ciofu manages to provide insightful findings on how each author—with their distinctions in socio-cultural, political, and stylistic backgrounds—possesses exceptional narrative skills to present such perplexing complexities exhibited by the protagonists. This research provides the writer with how Raskolnikov's unconsciousness plays a pivotal role in shaping his attitudes, and the powerful influence of his authentic philosophical view that pushes him to cross the moral boundary by committing such a horrendous act to prove to himself whether he is qualified to be an extraordinary being or not.

About existentialism, Karla S. Minar and Anton Sutandio from Maranatha Christian University, in their 2017 article *Shame and Alienation in Kafka's Metamorphosis* features Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism and New Criticism approach to discover the role of shame that Gregor Samsa—Raskolnikov of the novella *The Metamorphosis*—suffers, which eventually leads to his alienation, both from society, family, and himself. Minar and Sutandio analyze how Gregor's shift from the breadwinner of the family into a disgusting vermin plays a pivotal role in causing his miserable alienation, resulted from the look of shame and negative assessment of his family. The article emphasizes the aftermath of alienation that originates from internal and external shame, which is hurled by Gregor himself and his family due to the inability to make a living like he used to do before. Thus, as the story unfolds, Gregor slowly loses his authenticity

as a human and proceeds to embrace the life of a vermin—crawling around the wall and consuming his family’s leftovers. Integrating both Sartre's existentialism and New Criticism approach, it provides a nuanced comprehension of Gregor’s existential crisis and promotes a well-structured framework for examining the intrinsic element of the novel. Unfortunately, the reliance on a single philosophical theory puts a limit on other interpretations of the discussed issues, which declines the reading experience due to a lack of perspectives. Despite that, this paper contributes to increasing the writer's understanding of how shame influences someone to alienate himself, which will be useful in developing the writer's research. Following the theory of Sartre’s existentialism, there dwells the concept of authenticity and bad faith discussed by Ni Nyoman Sarmi, Kheista Sasi Kirana, Kusuma Wijaya, and Rommel Utungga Pasopati in their journal article titled “Authenticity and Its Discontent as Reflected on Heinrich Böll’s *The Laughter*”, which was published in *LET: Linguistics, Literature and English Teaching Journal*. The work tells the story of a man who gets paid by laughing and is recognized as a professional laugher. Although many perceive him as authentic in executing his job, the man, unfortunately, feels inauthentic and alienated from his own emotions, leading to his existential crisis. The laughter—which is supposed to evoke happiness—ironically transforms into the fuel of his sufferings. By employing qualitative methodology and Jean-Paul Sartre’s authenticity and bad faith, the article journal aims to unpack how the character’s laughter—while appears authentic—masks his existential angst and inauthenticity. Thus, the writer will use these findings to foster the research’s depth regarding the application of existentialism.

Milkah Njoki Macharia from the Department of Philosophy, Kenyatta University, also utilizes an existential approach to analyze one of Albert Camus's phenomenal works, *The Stranger*, in her 2022 article entitled *The Incomprehensibility of Life: An Analysis of Albert*

Camus' The Stranger. The article explores the alienation, the absurd, and the meaninglessness of existence that Meursault—the central character of Camus’s novel—experiences without relying on transcendental beliefs or illusory hopes, mirroring the existential struggle of humanity in a post-war context where traditional values have been questioned and stripped away. Macharia applies Jean-Paul Sartre’s theory of Bad Faith and authenticity and Camus’s theory of the Absurd that exponentially enhances the strength of the analysis and offers valuable insights into the psyche of Meursault. However, the paper lacks empirical evidence or real-world examples and puts a heavy reliance on philosophical discourse, declining the paper's relevance and connection to contemporary existential issues. Nevertheless, Macharia’s article provides some valuable knowledge regarding the application of Bad Faith and authenticity to the discussed character, and the aftermath of experiencing the absurdity and the meaninglessness of the existence, which the writer will also discuss in this research.

In 2024, Cheng Zhiying and Zeng Ruiyun’s journal article entitled “An Analysis of The Sea, The Sea from Nietzsche’s Philosophy of *Urbemensch*”, published in *Academic Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*, conduct an analysis to seek the transformation of Charles on how becomes an *Urbemensch*. Iris Murdoch’s *The Sea, The Sea* is a masterpiece by Iris Murdoch, an influential Irish and British novelist and philosopher in the twentieth century, which published in 1978 and brought the Booker Prize. The novel tells the story of a successful, egotistical director named Charles Arrowby who decides to retire and settle in an isolated house by the sea to write his memoir in solitude and strive to be a better person. Despite his intentions to usher in a change to himself, he still tries to control and manipulate people related to him that appear, leading to a series of disasters and inner turmoil. This paper utilizes one of Nietzsche's famous ideas called The *Urbemensch* to reveal the transformation of Charles from being the embodiment of

Übermensch to becoming a being who realizes how futile to live such a life. The writer will use this journal article as supplementary information to support the research, which will also apply Nietzsche's Übermensch.

1.4. Research Questions

There are several issues regarding the consequences of the main character's superiority complex in *Crime and Punishment*. After reading and comprehending the novel, the following questions are formulated:

1. What are the causes of superiority complex from psychological and philosophical perspective?
2. What specific psychological and social consequences arise from Raskolnikov's superiority complex?

1.5. Scope of the Research

This research explores issues related to the consequences of superiority complex found in Raskolnikov in Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. The scope of the research will be limited only to the main character.

1.6. Objectives of the Study

Following the statements of problems, the objective of this research is to identify the consequences of the main character's superiority complex. It also concerns how the sense of superiority served as the source of many issues, which exacerbates an individual's well-being. Another objective of this research is to convey the impact of an idea, intellectual arrogance, dehumanization, alienation, and dualistic nature.

