



The Union of Nature and Conscience in F. Dostoevsky's Novel "Crime and Punishment"

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v5i3.185>

Abstract

The article deals with the problem of conscience in the novel by F. Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment". The concept of conscience is analyzed in an indissoluble union with human nature.

Keywords: *Problem of Conscience; Nature; False Idea; "Satanic Pride"; Voice of Conscience; Sense of Responsibility; Remorse*

Introduction

As you know, the problems of the novel by F. Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment" is very multifaceted. Along with such an important problem as the problem of freedom of the human person, the problem of conscience is acutely solved in it. The author of "Crime and Punishment" has a conscience in an indissoluble union with what Dostoevsky most often calls "nature", finding support and support in it.

To understand what this union means, one should turn to the reasoning of investigator Porfiry Petrovich: "... wit, in my opinion, is a great thing with; ... and what kind of tricks it seems to be able to ask, so where, it seems, sometimes to guess some poor investigator... Yes, the nature of the poor investigator helps out, sir, that's the trouble! And the young people who are fond of wit, "walking through all obstacles", will not even think about it. Let's say he will lie, that is, a person, sir, a special case, sir, ... and he will lie perfectly, in the most ingenious manner; it would seem that there would be a triumph, ... but he clap! Yes, in the most interesting, in the most scandalous place, he will faint...he lied incomparably, but he did not manage to calculate on nature. Here it is, the guile is somewhere, sir! ... The mirror is nature, the mirror, sir, the most transparent, sir! Look into it and admire, that's what!" [1, 362].

Nature appears here as the primordial opponent of the wittiest and most sophisticated mental games of the criminal. She is initially serious and organically does not accept the dead, lifeless lies that the intellect, which is sick with a clouded conscience, is trying to impose on her. The person himself, in

whom the spirit has become ill, filled with inhuman pride, can consider himself infinitely above the ordinary everyday truth of “ordinary” people. The self-loving nature of a person is able to give himself an assessment much higher than he deserves. So Raskolnikov convinces himself that there are no barriers of conscience for a person.

But Raskolnikov’s nature does not obey him in the realization of his false idea; and when this latter forbids him to tell the truth, closing his mouth, nature finds its own way to still utter the words of truth, prompting human flesh itself to speak out. Raskolnikov, heading to the office on a summons, painfully experiencing what he had done and feeling a terrible mess in everything, is already ready to make a confession of his own crime. “If they ask, maybe I’ll say <...> I’ll go in, get on my knees and tell them everything...” [1, 126]. But, having found out the reason for his summons to collect money from him for the apartment, he does not do it. “The triumph of self-preservation, salvation from pressing danger—that’s what filled his whole being at that moment” [1, 130]. But, accidentally hearing a conversation about yesterday’s crime and the murderer, Raskolnikov unexpectedly faints for others.

His nature also fails him in a conversation with Zosimov, when Raskolnikov wants to mislead everyone, but his “arms and legs were numb, as if they were numb”, “his eyes sparkled; he turned terribly pale; his upper lip trembled and jumped; he could not restrain himself”. The gesture of the animate flesh suffering from the untruth imposed on it by a clouded mind is unheard even by the criminal himself, since he does not want to know anything about him, but the voice of conscience is already intelligible to the sympathizing “other”, stubbornly and persistently forcing its way into the shaken, restless consciousness.

It can be assumed that in this case we are talking only about the “natural truthfulness” of a person brought up by good, kind people. But if we recall a casual conversation overheard by Raskolnikov during the period when he was just hatching the idea of a crime, everything will fall into place [3, 287].

“Of course, she is unworthy to live”, the officer remarked, “but nature is here”.

- Eh, brother, but nature is corrected and guided, and without this we would have to drown in prejudices... They say: “duty, conscience” - I don’t want to say anything against duty and conscience, but how do we understand them? Wait, I’ll ask you one more question. Listen up!
- No, you wait; I’ll ask you a question. Listen up!
- Well!
- Now you’re talking and orating, but tell me: will you kill the old woman yourself or not?
- Of course not! I am for justice... It’s not about me...
- And, in my opinion, if you do not decide yourself, then there is no justice here! [1, 100].

To check the truth of your idea is not another, no matter how tempting it may look, but your own nature, try to implement it yourself, and then listen to what your nature itself will tell you. Or maybe you won’t have to listen, everything will immediately become clear, it will be exposed to the bottom. And then Raskolnikov, wanting to master his human nature, that is, “nature”, in the name of obviously false ideas, unlike the student from whom he accidentally heard this reasoning, did so, condemning himself to terrible mental torment. The whole month from the murder to the confession passes for Raskolnikov in incessant tension, not stopping for a second the struggle with himself. No sooner had the meaning of what he had done reached his consciousness, which desperately resisted the comprehension of this meaning, and nature had already said its “no!” to the heinous murder. She continued to stubbornly repeat her “no!”, expressing it in one or another purely bodily way, until Raskolnikov publicly swore to commit the crime.

“I should have known that”, he thought with a bitter smile, “and how dare I, knowing myself, anticipating myself, take an axe and get bloody. I should have known in advance... eh! why, I knew in advance!.. “he whispered in despair” [1, 296].

Heavy emotional experiences, extremely intense psychological duel with the investigator lead Raskolnikov to the idea that he is not a ruler, but an “aesthetic louse”. He is increasingly tormented by the consciousness that the murder of the old woman was an irreparable mistake. “Did I kill the old lady? I killed myself, not an old lady! Then, all at once, he killed himself, forever!... And the devil killed this old lady, not me...” [1, 435]. Nature overcomes calculation.

The fact that Raskolnikov, after these words, still lived, and did not kill himself, was convincing evidence that the “idea” had ceased to be his all-consuming passion. “... You see, Sister, I finally wanted to make up my mind and walked near the Neva many times; I remember that. I wanted to finish it there, but... I didn’t dare...” he whispered, again looking at Dunya incredulously” [1, 528].

The idea that allied itself with “satanic pride” was no longer the same. And only this pride prevented Raskolnikov from agreeing with the words of Porfiry Petrovich: “And you don’t believe your theory anymore...” Finding yourself alone with conscience, whose voice now sounded so clearly and clearly that it could no longer be drowned out by the frantic cry of “idea” - passion, pride could not win. The question of the final victory over pride becomes a matter of time, where “nature” is called upon to play a decisive role - the key to “a future new outlook on life”. The feeling of “meaning-loss” appears here as a loss of conscience, and overcoming this conclusion – as its awakening, “resurrection” from the dead [3, 288].

As Raskolnikov admits in his confession to Sonya, and admits not immediately, but only at the moment when he realizes that he began this confession with lies, the true source of the crime was that he was “proud, envious, angry, vile, vindictive...”. Such a confession sounds like the voice of the conscience of a truly repentant criminal. Along with his conscience, a sense of responsibility began to speak in Raskolnikov, which pushed him to confess his crime, he seems to be on the path of repentance, regret and purification.

Dostoevsky believes that true punishment is determined by a person’s conscience. Raskolnikov also expresses this idea in a conversation with Porfiry Petrovich: “Whoever has it, suffer if he is aware of the mistake. This is the punishment for him - the punishment of hard labor”. [1, 287]. Such is Raskolnikov’s nature.

A kind of spiritual “double” of Raskolnikov is Arkady Ivanovich Svidrigailov. Svidrigailov is a mysterious nature. He is very secretive and cunning and also very smart. Svidrigailov seems to Raskolnikov to be “the emptiest and most insignificant villain in the world”, then a person who can reveal something “new” to him. “This person always has some intentions and projects”. Svidrigailov is trying to convince Raskolnikov that they are kindred spirits, that “there is some common point” between them. Raskolnikov is drawn to him, as if he is looking for something from Svidrigailov, but does not find it.

Svidrigailov seems to many to be a terrible villain surrounded by a demonic halo. There are many rumors about his villainies, he becomes a source of all kinds of misfortunes for others. Dunya was persecuted because of him, he is accused of the death of Marfa Petrovna Svidrigailova. It causes fear and disgust in many people. Dunya says of him “almost with a shudder” that he is a terrible person, more terrible than which it is impossible to imagine. Even the appearance of Svidrigailov (the face is strange, “like a mask”), his demeanor and pastime, in a word – his whole nature seemed to be “demonic” [5, 306].

Unlike Razumikhin, Dunya, Sonya, Svidrigailov accepts Raskolnikov’s crime quite calmly and in cold blood. He doesn’t see any tragedy here. Even Raskolnikov, tormented by suffering and remorse, he seems to be encouraging, calming, instructing on the right path. And then the profound difference

between the two natures is revealed. Svidrigailov is surprised by Raskolnikov's tragic throwing and questions: "I understand what questions you have in the course: moral, or what? questions of a citizen and a person? And you are their side; why do you need them now? Heh, heh! Because it's still both a citizen and a person? And if so, there was no need to meddle; there was nothing to take up one's own business" [1, 498].

Svidrigailov himself crossed the line of permissiveness, strangled a person and a citizen in himself. Hence his indifference and cynicism. There was only one thing left in him – boundless voluptuousness. The pernicious addiction of Svidrigailov leads to the death of a girl; a disgusting marriage to a sixteen-year-old is being prepared, violence against Avdotya Raskolnikova is being planned. Perhaps Svidrigailov is also involved in the death of Marfa Petrovna, who once saved him from being accused of violence.

Having stepped over all obstacles, Svidrigailov experiences inner emptiness, which leads him to suicide. Shortly before his death, Svidrigailov recalls Raskolnikov: "And the rascal, however, this Raskolnikov! I dragged a lot on myself. A big rascal can be over time, when nonsense will pop up, and now he wants to live too much!" Svidrigailov is a hero who follows the path of crime to the end, committing suicide [7].

Another antipode of Raskolnikov is Pyotr Petrovich Luzhin. Luzhin is by nature a cynic who is engaged in self-admiration and has no idea about morality. Even in the matter of marriage, he was not looking for a wife, but for a slave: "He thought with ecstasy, in the deepest secret, about a well-behaved and poor girl (certainly poor), very young, very pretty, noble and educated, very intimidated, who had experienced a lot of misfortunes and completely crouched before him, one who would all my life I considered him my salvation, I was in awe of him, I obeyed him, I was surprised at him, and only to him" [1, 327]. Dunya Raskolnikova was chosen for this role by him.

The only aesthetic criterion for Luzhin is egoism. For morally weak natures, conscience itself does not matter. Therefore, Luzhin is confident in his impunity, does not feel the slightest remorse.

Dostoevsky believed that the fault is always in the person himself. And therefore, the awakening of one's own sense of guilt is more important than a public, judicial accusation. Dostoevsky long before Z. Freud showed that guilt can be viewed as a means of self-punishment, since guilt leads to remorse. Conscience is a sense of guilt that is directly reliable to every person, signaling to him about violations of certain absolute requirements of morality. Punishment by conscience is available only to such a person who is characterized by a subjective sense of guilt, and, consequently, responsibility.

Dostoevsky granted his hero the right to his own trial. He valued the court of his own conscience so much that he rejected the official, legal court in its name. Dostoevsky has only one court – the court of his own conscience. "To find a person in a person" - for Dostoevsky meant to find a conscience in a person and leave him alone with it.

Rightly I. Annensky defined all of Dostoevsky's work as "poetry of conscience" [2, 232].

The significance of Dostoevsky's contribution will remain until the social and moral sanctions against his own misdeeds are completely in the hands of the individual himself, will be prescribed to him only by his own court of duty, honor and conscience.

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