

Assault and Amercement in Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*

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ABSTRACT

The act of crime generates a law and order situation and it is great trouble in the world. The causes of illegal acts are complex, parental neglect, low self-esteem, and alcohol and drug abuse. B.F Skinner introduced that punishment has a more restrictive and technical definition. Even philosophers have presented various definitions of punishment. Punishment can be seen as good in society to prevent people from doing bad things. It can also be seen as cruel, unnecessary, and does not do any good. The path from crime to punishment is not straight, or smooth and it is non-existent. Harshit Walia says that the criminal mind needs consideration rather than the criminal itself. In truth, there are more criminals than those who committed a crime. This paper analyses the measures one takes to acquire a state of peace that makes him do an extreme act to take another person's life which is 'crime'. The entire novel Crime and Punishment portrays the torture the protagonist undergoes as his mind slowly reaches insanity.

Keywords: *Crime, Punishment, Murder, Law*

Russia's St. Petersburg experienced widespread poverty in the 1860s, and many struggled to survive. Due of this, many people turned to committing crimes, particularly sexual assaults on women, which were also common in St. Petersburg, in order to survive. Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky examines how living in the hazardous city of St. Petersburg has a negative psychological impact on the protagonist, the poor student Raskolnikov. The growth of the characters is heavily influenced by the city. Even though he is good, he commits a serious offence, feels lost and unworthy, and decides he wants to take action. The majority of the book is devoted to discussing his punishment, which is a form of torment as his mind steadily devolves into insanity. He robs and kills the pawnbroker Alyona Ivanovna and her imprisoned sister Lizaveta. When he presents the "Silver cigarette case" to the pawnbroker, which she accepts and unwraps, Raskolnikov recognises his chance and hits her, almost "mechanically" with the blunt end of the axe, and she cries very faintly, suddenly sank all of a heap on the floor. He has multiple reasons to kill the pawnbroker, but Raskolnikov is forced to kill Lizaveta and this is more distressing for him, because she is both mentally slow and a good person, and he feels terrible about her murder. He uses the blunt end of the axe to repeatedly and violently strike the elderly woman, killing her. Then, he takes the keys out of her pocket

and tries to open the bedroom's chest of drawers. He returns to the woman's body and takes the purse that was wrapped around her neck after becoming frustrated with the keys. He doesn't even look at the purse as he stuffs it into his pocket. He struggles more with the drawers before looking below the woman's bed and discovering a trunk. Fortunately, Raskolnikov discovers some hidden objects in their clothing. He stuffs these items into his coat without carefully inspecting them. He has regret immediately after committing the crime, and this sensation intensifies until it completely dominates his body and mind. He becomes mentally and physically unwell after this murder. In order to suffer alone, he pushes everyone away and seeks seclusion from society.

Many people experience guilt, a universal emotion, after committing crimes, wrongdoings, or even just simple acts of cruelty. This can be seen in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, where the poor student Raskolnikov develops a theory that the world's extraordinary young men have a right to commit suicide. Raskolnikov sees himself as an extraordinary young man. He kills an elderly pawnbroker and her step-sister to support his theory. Raskolnikov becomes ill right away, loses his mind, and spends several days semi-conscious in his room after committing the crime. When Raskolnikov is feeling better, Luzhin, who is betrothed to Dounia, the sister of Raskolnikov, pays him a visit. Raskolnikov insults Luzhin and excommunicates him because he disapproves of the way Luzhin treats Dounia. Raskolnikov's mental health is deteriorating due to poverty as well as his remorse and paranoia over the murder, and Razumihin, Pulcheria, and Dounia are afraid about this. "He was not completely unconscious, however, all the time he was ill; he was in a feverish state, sometimes delirious, sometimes half conscious. He remembered a great deal afterward. Sometimes it seemed as though there were several people around him; they wanted to take him away somewhere, and there was a great deal of squabbling and discussing him" (119).

Porfiry Petrovitch is made intriguing by Raskolnikov's "On Crime" piece in the *Periodical Review*. This essay is crucial to comprehending his views and has a significant impact on crime and punishment. He contends that a portion of all crimes can be attributed to the environment. The psychology of a criminal is discussed in the text, which was inspired by Raskolnikov's legal studies. Porfiry is particularly disturbed by the conclusion, which makes the case that for some remarkable people, conventional rules do not apply and that these laws must really be disregarded. In an effort to elucidate his claim, Raskolnikov claims that "great men," as defined by society, frequently violate the laws of their period in the interest of new laws or a new morality. Porfiry admits that he liked the article and felt a connection with it. "In his article, all men are divided into "ordinary" and "extraordinary". Ordinary men have to live

in submission, and have no right to transgress the law, because, don't you see, they are ordinary. But extraordinary men have a right to commit any crime and to transgress the law in any way, just because they are extraordinary" (245).

Raskolnikov secretly wonders and frets about what Razumihin would think of him when he hears the truth after speaking with Porfiry Petrovitch and Zamyotov after Svidrigailov leaves and claims they have found Raskolnikov to be the murderer. Raskolnikov then goes to Sonia's flat, but they do not engage in any close talk. He notices her attractiveness when he sees her for the first time. When he discovers that the worn-out Bible was a present from her close friend Lizaveta, he is shocked. Despite Raskolnikov's claim that he does not believe in God, it appears that he asks Sonia to familiarise him with religious doctrine. She initially hesitates to read since she does not want to read to someone who is not a believer, but she eventually reads the full Lazarus account to him. Raskolnikov is drawn to the Lazarus story's unbelievable element. As he prepares to depart, he promises Sonia that if he sees her again, he will reveal who killed Lizaveta.

Raskolnikov and Porfiry Petrovich have a tumultuous relationship. When Raskolnikov shows up for an interview with Porfiry, he is welcomed warmly and presents himself as though it were a delightful social visit, forgetting that one is not kept waiting for a social visit for such a long time. While conversing, Porfiry "resumes and intensifies his insinuating, provocative, ironic chatter, without ever making a direct accusation" (Mirza 54). Raskolnikov makes an effort to keep the meeting professional and speculates that they might discuss the murder, but Porfiry wanders off and talks about the government quarters, a significant issue, particularly theories about crime and crime detection. As the interview drags on and becomes increasingly rambling and irrelevant, Raskolnikov eventually loses patience and informs Porfiry that he has realised the interview has become a "cat and mouse game." Raskolnikov then asserts that he is suspected of being the murderer of "that old woman and her sister Lizaveta," (320) that he demands to be arrested immediately or allowed to leave, but Porfiry reveals that he knows many unusual things about Raskolnikov. Porfiry also explains his approach, saying that while he can always make an arrest, he likes to give a suspect some privacy so that they can reflect on their crime. This demonstrates that Porfiry ultimately wants Raskolnikov to confess to the crime he committed, and that all of the evidence he has against him is psychological. Porfiry's final admission that he was well aware of Raskolnikov's recent behaviour, as well as the fainting and the conversation he had with Zamyotov in the tavern, are startling admissions of guilt.

Raskolnikov is ruffled, but Porfiry is intelligent, in charge, and equipped with a variety of tactics. He pushes himself from the people nearby and reverts to his caustic, proud side, blaming himself for his frailty. His internal struggle between pride and the need to confess becomes more intense, veering back and forth and extending the anticipation of how the battle will end. Raskolnikov faces an unending amount of coincidences and hurdles as Dostoevsky continues to use all of his characters to superb advantage. Raskolnikov is surprised by Nikolai's dramatic confession, which Dostoevsky adds into the story. All of a sudden, Nikolai falls to his knees and admits to killing the victim. Raskolnikov thinks Nikolai's confession is proof that he is the object of some grand design. Raskolnikov is shocked, and Porfiry questions him for specific information about a crime while also using psychological tricks to get him to confess.

The act of confession in *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevsky is the book's climax and denotes significant changes in Raskolnikov's emotional and physical state. Before he ultimately dares to confess his wrongdoing, he endures extended periods of mental suffering and conscience-wracking. Raskolnikov is internally torn between the options of suicide and confession as well as between faith and unbelief. Sonia is the "one who assists Raskolnikov with his arrival at the necessity for confession and reunion with the moral world" (Mirza 24). Raskolnikov's guilt and need to confess were as intense as his wrath prior to speaking with Sonia. Raskolnikov, on the other hand, is relieved of his bodily and moral pain after confessing since he understands the gravity of his crime.

Raskolnikov considers telling the kind, suffering prostitute Sonia about what he did. Their lives have become entwined. He is pressed by Sonia to reveal who killed her friend Lizaveta and her sister. Although he lacks the courage to tell her the truth, he is aware that she has already discovered it. Significant developments include Raskolnikov's confession to Sonia and his pledge to confess to the police. Sonia is stunned to learn the truth and stands still. She expresses her pain for his illegal act and interrogates him about the reason for the crime. But his only answer is "Don't torture me, Sonia." (382). Although he is a remarkable man, he lacks the ability to live with the crime he committed but has the drive to do it. He says, "I wanted to become a Napoleon that is why I killed her... do you understand now?" (383). The real reason to kill the pawnbroker is that she is immoral, cheats on the poor, and considers her as a creature.

Ivanovich, Arkady *Crime and Punishment's* villain could be deemed Svidrigailov. His actions are false atonements since he destroys the lives of people who are close to him. He has no interest in salvation. The person Svidrigailov is evil. Without recognising it, Raskolnikov is captivated to Svidrigailov, who symbolises a certain facet of his personality. Since their first encounter, Svidrigailov has constantly claimed that they had something in common. The vices

that Svidrigailov has are openly discussed in the book. He betrays his wife, pursues his staff, and bullies his nanny. In *Crime and Punishment*, Svidrigailov experiences a storm that may portend disaster or doom. It might represent the evil in his heart or portend his demise. Maybe that is it. The Siberian prison is portrayed in the book as a hospital for criminals, a place to heal and seek forgiveness, rather than as a place to continue their misery. The contrast between Raskolnikov's chamber and the Siberian prison is intriguing.

Raskolnikov's circumstances haven't made him sick since the demanding job, subpar food, and other difficulties of prison life can all be tolerated. He is ill because of his wounded pride. He promises to make up for all of Sonia's losses with love. It is fresh for him only to feel. Raskolnikov feels the thrill of love when he thinks of Sonia. He takes a copy of the New Testament that Sonia gave him out from under his pillow. He feels one with her. The narrator closes the novel by stating that this man's renewal is a matter of another story. "That might be the subject of a new story, but our present story is ended" (501).

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