

A Psychological And Social Examination of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment: A Theoretical Perspective

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Abstract

The study investigates the presence of repressed desires of a person in relation with society. It also explores the presence of inner actions of the person that creates a psychological tension throughout the novel, Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky. As Crime and Punishment is a classic writing by Fyodor Dostoevsky that focuses on social injustice and mental anguish, the study is designed to analyze the examination of social psychological perspective of the main character. These aspects are prominently linked with the protagonist, Rodion Raskolnikov; the person who committed murder and how he was "punished" for it. By applying Freud Psychoanalytic theory, the writer has used the qualitative approach to investigate the reason behind the criminality done by the Raskolnikov by killing a pawnbroker, Alyona Ivanovna and her sister just because he was troubled since the beginning of the story. As the interior monologue of the protagonist forces him to consider himself an extraordinary person causes to do a grisly crime for which he has punished at the end of the novel. The findings of the current study reveal that the inner psyche of a person is more significant in order to explore relationship with societal circumstances. The employed themes for analysis are themes of alienation, morality and society and superman complex and psychology of crime. All these themes interlinked with the features of moral dilemmas of the protagonist. Having established a sample of data for analysis, the researcher reported conclusion that there are several social and psychological aspects that forces the protagonist to commit crime in order to achieve greatness. And this could help the future researchers to explore other characters of the novel as well with the help of these perspectives.

Keywords: Mental anguish, Social injustice, Moral dilemmas, Alienation, Criminality, Superman Complex, Social and Psychological Perspectives.

1.0 Introduction

Crime and Punishment is a classic novel by Fyodor Dostoevsky that focuses on social injustice and mental anguish. These aspects are prominently linked with the main character of the protagonist of the story, Rodion Raskolnikov; a spectacular investigation of a person who committed crime and how he is "punished". The novel explains one-time student of law in the poor areas of St. Petersburg who considers himself an extraordinary and brilliant student and is poignant to achieve intense and highest element of greatness in his personality, he starts to imagine himself a separate and supernatural being. He is of the idea that he is very intellectual who does not need to obey any sort of law. After committing crime, the novel takes amazing turns over and over. Raskolnikov considers him a man who is not ordinary and imagines himself far away from standard moral laws.

Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky was born on 30th October 1821 in Moscow. His debut, the epistolary novella Poor Folk (1846), made his name. Fyodor was the second child in his family. He got his education from boarding school from 183 to 1843 in St. Petersburg. When he completed his education he has realized that he is having artistic skills towards literature. In 1846 he published his first novel "Poor Folk". Dostoyevsky has experienced a spiritual transformation in his real life after some incidents that happened with him, it causes to develop some autobiographical elements in his various novels. He was basically a Russian novelist and a short-story writer, who's majorly, focuses on the psychological writing. The Russian writer had an immense influence on 20th-century fiction that is why he is regarded as one of the finest novelists who ever lived. Dostoyevsky completed Notes from Underground and began work towards Crime and Punishment (1866). The major novels of his late period are The Idiot (1868), Demons (1871-2) and The Brothers Karamazov (1879-80). He died in 1881.

As novel is based on the mental anguish and social injustice, the researcher is going to analyze the psyche of its subjects in the character of Raskolnikov. Some stories delve as deeply into the turns and twirl of the human psyche as this novel of crime and punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky. The novel extrinsically describes the main character Rodion Raskolnikov's vacillating state as he did a cruel crime that becomes problematic by guilt and finally convert himself in that intense problem of crime. Throughout the novel, a very explanatory description of the protagonist's psyche gives us an open picture about the character within the settings of the events. What are those beliefs or situations that forced Rodion Raskolnikov to commit crime? In order to understand the answer of this question, we must explore the character from social and Psychological point of view. And for this the writer is going to do detailed examination of the psychology of the protagonist of the novel. The character is seemed as if he has been in over extended irritable condition at some points or events from the outset of the novel. He represented those characteristics and beliefs from the start of the novel. So the researcher is going to do deep analysis from psychological and social perspective through examination of the character by focusing outer side of the framework. In order to find out the question of the existence of Raskolnikov inside a different context, the researcher must place the main character of Rodion Raskolnikov by putting him in a new context for analysis. As Raskolnikov is a psychoneurotic character who describes a lot of neurotic capacities throughout the story. By Dostoevsky's expressed narration, researcher is able to find out a context that will solve to detect a setting in which meaning behind these psychoneurotic problems. Since Sigmund Freud explicitly deals with neurosis and human psychology, writer would be able to conclude the character of protagonist through these aspects.

1.2 Society and Crime

As the novel specifically based on the internal behavior of Raskolnikov's mind, it is prominently efficient in depicting societal situation with reference to the societal unfair behavior. In what ways the societal unfair attitudes affects the characterization of individuals and their response towards particular situation. There are various questions arises about which historical researches can features about the reason of criminal and his crime. For what reason a criminal did it, there are many factors that causes this behavior such as for transaction of business or some trust issues problems. (Menton, 1957). Sociologist deals with the functioning and programming of societies, on the other hand psychologists linked with the behavior of societies (Meyers, 1987), because psychologists of society directly links with the personality while sociologists decode the functioning of societal norms and values. Wasioleck (1964) stated that this novel is result of terrible incident that depicts many societal as well as from psychoanalysis point of view.

Sigmund Freud also paved his way due to his famous theory of Psychoanalysis as this theory not only directly links with internal or external behavior of a person but also characterizes the causes of those attitudes and behavior. The writer is also going to analyze the current research article on the basis of psychoanalytic theory as the main character of the story is showing linkage of highly repressed desires of feelings in order to make his unconscious conscious. Raskolnikov's morality have gained an 'insight' in order to make his conscious unconscious. As a result the linkage between crime and society, that developed by hero of the story, helps to create the interaction amongs three major elements of the brain; superego, ego and id.

The prominent elements of psychological analytic thinking are significant for the rendering of Raskolnikov's attitude in the novel whose result come up with the conflict that made him criminal. The researcher has deeply shown the substance of conflict that becomes the reason of three components of mind superego, ego and id.

1.1 Research Question

The researcher has devised two research questions relating to the novel, Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostsevesky.

1. What are the factors that force the protagonist to commit a crime?
2. What are the themes that are closely linked with the socio-psychological perspective?

2.0 Literature Review

In this chapter literature has been inspected related to the current study. It filled with extensive developments and characteristics in different field that is; sociology, psychology and linguistic survey. It also focuses on the primary rules and regulations about the psychoanalytic modes due to its directly linkage with the formation of ideologies. Philologists have marked a great impact in this mode in order to carry out work done by the psychiatrist. Harmatan (1959) stated that, "Freudian hypothesis about social-psychology deals with persons' motivation that explore human's intelligence in relation with the societal incidents". For the purpose of present research, it is mandatory to have different viewpoints and reviews of several writers about the struggle of a criminal in society, as the writer has concerned with the reference of sociological as well as psychological factors that forces a culprit to do sin consciously or unconsciously. The aim of this study is to have various ideas and notions about injustice and to have a brief overview about the representation of many characteristics of inequalities that motivate to think rationally that why this world is purposeless.

As the novel specifically based on the internal behavior of Raskolnikove's mind, it is prominently efficient in depicting societal situation with reference to the societal unfair behavior. In what ways the societal unfair attitudes affects the characterization of individuals and their response towards particular situation. There are various questions arises about which historical researches can features about the reason of criminal and his crime. For what reason a criminal did it, there are many factors that causes this behavior such as for transaction of business or some trust issues problems. (Menton, 1957).

Sociologist deals with the functioning and programming of societies, on the other hand psychologists linked with the behavior of societies (Meyers, 1987), because psychologists of society directly links with the personality while sociologists decode the functioning of societal norms and values. Wasioleck (1964) stated that this novel is result of terrible incident that depicts many societal as well as from psychoanalysis point of view. Sigmund Freud also paved his way due to his famous theory of Psychoanalysis as this theory not only directly links with internal or external behavior of a person but also characterizes the causes of those attitudes and behavior.

Juliet Mitchell in her book 'Psychoanalysis and Feminism' (1974) argues that the psyche of men can also effect in the exploitation of women through loss of capitalism, because any change in the status of women should be attained by the loss of capitalism and in male psyche as well. So, the traditional male dominancy with rationality and decisive power whereas females are always regarded as weak, shy, fragile, timid, submissive, nurturing and sentimental. This quotation of Mitchell linked with topic of researcher as the major character has some psychological aspects to develop some concerns of criminality towards a crime and for this he murdered a lady and her companion.

Psychoanalytic approach deals with the psyche of man in relation with different circumstances. This approach highly appreciated as it involves human psychology directly that forces to retrieve our anger to our less or on inferior ones. As psychology of a person changes accordingly the environment he or she is provided with. According to Freud

psychoanalytic theory, the Id is the basic and primitive part of the brain that contains aggressive drives, while super-ego operates as a moral sense and the ego is the true part of mind that speculate between desires of super-ego and Id.

Simone de Beauvoir argued in her most famous work that men in this world are capable of creating mystification for woman. (The second Sex, 1984) This stereotypical factor is instrumental and functional in patriarchy. Because women in turn accepts these stereotypical instruments and get oppressed. Society has developed double standard for both genders, as males are supposed to independent and dominant whereas, females are obliged to think over their dependency and are always in a wait for some help. This is what happens in the current area of study in which the lady who was murdered by the man just because of his ease of earning money more and for his wishes to fulfil.

Marxism is quite visible in the text because class is the major factor that precipitates patriarchy and promotes the violation of rights of the women. This work also suggests about the ways in which the presence of capitalistic concepts and the relating consequences over women economic circumstances are quite evident. As Karl Marx in his book *Das Kapital* (1867) quoted that, "Marxism deals with unequal representation of classes". The present work also suggests about various ways in which, class and cultural factors co relates with gender issues in creating woman's experience.

To conclude the reviewed literature related to the present study about two different ideologies of sociological and psychological perspective in relation with the protagonist is not study yet, because this study could help the future researchers to work on the point of relationship amongst all the characters in which female and male members of the novel are going through with internal monologue as well as with different circumstances, giving it a new dimension and scope. And the researcher gap is quite evident through detailed exemplifications of differences of opinions from different researcher which had done previously in order to highlight the relation between men and women for different investigation, as before this, no one has raised the point on the reflection of psycho-social aspects of this novel by Dostoevsky'. This section aims to explore the inner actions of a person within the society by explaining the theoretical framework of Freud which has been used for the data analysis.

3.0 Research Methodology

A methodology is designed to investigate various interactive designs; which is qualitative methodology in order to interpret societal realization for which language is much important. Contrastively to it quantitative approach is used. (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006).

A qualitative approach is followed for in-detailed analysis of symbols and signs for the proper understanding. The emphasis of qualitative research is to explore the themes that gives rise to literary work in relation with multimodality. Ragin (1994) argued that smaller sample size helps to evaluate the hidden meaning and to unveil the reality behind social constructionism. On the other hand, qualitative researchers are of the notion that bigger sample size will misinterpret the social phenomenon. To qualitatively analyze the psychological factors and social aspects, the result highlighted the different themes. Thus qualitative research helps to evaluate the hidden meaning and their significance in order to interpret thematic analysis.

As the novel specifically based on the internal behavior of Raskolnikove's mind, it is prominently efficient in depicting societal situation with reference to the societal unfair behavior. In what ways the societal unfair attitudes affects the characterization of individuals and their response towards particular situation. There are various questions arises about which historical researches can features about the reason of criminal and his crime. For what reason a criminal did it, there are many factors that causes this behavior such as for

transaction of business or some trust issues problems. (Menton, 1957). To explore those factors, the investigator has analyzed two different theories which are interlinked with each other.

Lois Tyson in his book *Critical Theory Today*(1998) remarks that how male ideology works to keep both gender in traditional gender roles and therefore maintain patriarchal pressure in society that male dominance functions deals in the way that feminists share a lot of important assumptions. Of all one is, Women are oppressed by male dominancy politically, socially, psychologically and politically; and male ideology is the basic means of society.

Same is the case with another theory that is Marxism focuses on class difference majorly and how economical pressure have been exploited by patriarchal rules and regulations to keep female politically, socially, and economically repressed bas an underclass. As Karl Marx relates in his book *Das Kapital*, “Marxism actually deals with the unequal representation of different classes”. As lower class repressed by upper class in the same way females are oppressed by patriarchal society economically.

Moreover, Psychoanalytic approach deals with the psyche of man in relation with different circumstances. This approach highly appreciated as it involves human psychology directly that forces to retrieve our anger to our less or on inferior ones. As psychology of a person changes accordingly the environment he or she is provided with. According to Freud psychoanalytic theory, the Id is the basic and primitive part of the brain that contains aggressive drives, while super-ego operates as a moral sense and the ego is the true part of mind that speculate between desires of super-ego and Id.(Sigmund Freud, Introduction to Psychoanalysis; 1901)

The study investigates the presence of repressed desires in human through psychoanalytic approach, it also explores the presence of capitalistic concepts and the relating consequences over society through Marxist approach. This section aims to explore the inner actions of a person within the society by explaining the theoretical framework of Freud which has been used for the data analysis.

4.0 Data Analysis

This section highlighted the data collection extracted from the text of novel, *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky. The important elements of psychoanalytic theory by Freud helps to interpret the actions of Raskolnikov in the novel whose clash results in making the three components of minds such as super ego, ego and the id in the character who is struggling with these elements throughout the novel. The researcher has majorly focuses on the attributes of the main character Raskolnikov whose psyche is combating with desperate surroundings. This cruelty or injustice by Raskolnikov, faced by an old woman in the result of her death, gives strange attributes of his actions that ended up in form of criminal by his fate.

"Surely it isn't my punishment coming upon me?" (Part II - Chapter I)

Considering the title of the novel, the line is quite significant. Raskolnikov has just committed a crime that he believed would benefit hi, and others. The line suggested that he feels that punishment for committing the crime was inevitable, and that he will pay for it one way or another.

To make it short, the researcher has analyzed those perspectives based on her research questions. These aspects are prominently linked with the main character of the protagonist of the story, Rodion Raskolnikov; a spectacular investigation of a person who committed crime and how he is “punished”. The novel explains one-time student of law in the poor areas of St’ Petersburg who considers himself an extraordinary and brilliant student and is poignant to achieve intense and highest element of greatness in his personality, he starts imagine himself

a separate and supernatural being. He is of the idea that he is very intellectual who does not need to obey any sort of law.

The moment when Raskolnikov wakes up as a dull person from the beginning of the chapter 3, part 2:

"Sometimes he fancied he had been lying there a month; at other times it all seemed part of the same day. But of that – of that he had no recollection, and yet every minute he felt that he had forgotten something he ought to remember."

After committing crime, the novel takes amazing turns over and over. Raskolnikov considers him a man who is not ordinary and imagines himself far away from standard moral laws. Human chasm can be seen so deeply through this atonement and guilt classic reading as the novel is the epitome of social, religious, philosophical and psychological aspects and a quintessential reading of wrong doings and indemnity. The following textual lines clear this statement:

"If he has a conscience he will suffer for his mistake. That will be his punishment—as well as the prison."(Part III - Chapter V)

Before starting the analysis of Raskolnikov's psyche, the researcher has found the two categories of psychoanalysis. One is about Second element of the psychological stress found when Raskolnikov started to face hallucination and nightmares; gives the reflection not only to the protagonist but also to the readers about what happened in the past. Crime and Punishment is a substantial novel where identification of the misdeed guilt and gruesome crime.

"It seemed to him, he had cut himself off from everyone and from everything at that moment..." (Part II - Chapter II)

This textual line shows how inner thoughts of the protagonist change his personality from evilness to humanity.

Another major component in this chaotic psyche of Raskolnikov is that it directly links with the strange and distressed society. Crime is a figurative declaration of stress and clashes in the minds of the criminal. The inconsistent actions and reactions of Raskolnikov develop erratic mindset full of societal factors and psychological aspects. This is happened due to the transitions of character from being kind to being cruel. This cruelty in his behavior pave the way towards his downfall as the character is the outcome of desolate and tortured society that also helps him to produce some chaotic psyche; concluding his crime to punishment due to his erratic behavior.

4.1 Thematic Analyses

Themes are basically a belief or a message depicted underlining meaning of a story. Through thematic analysis the researcher has come up with those general ideas and beliefs which can relate with socio-psychological perspective. These socio-psychological aspects can connect with the inner mindset of the body and soul and generates erratic behavior. Same is the case with the protagonist of the story, Rodion Raskolnikov. Some of the major themes are themes of alienation, morality and society and superman complex and psychology of crime which are following.

Theme of Alienation

The above mentioned themes are quite evident as it links with the character about which the writer has selected to analyze the psyche of its subject. In order to obtain the element of greatness, Rodion Raskolnikov alienated himself from the rest of the characters of the novel. Throughout the novel, the protagonist has erratic behavior until he accepts the love of Sonya. This factor of alienation is significant for the chaotic psyche of Raskolnikov that directly links

with the strange and distressed society. Crime is a figurative declaration of stress and clashes in the minds of the criminal. The inconsistent actions and reactions of Raskolnikov develop erratic mindset full of societal factors and psychological aspects. This is happened due to the transitions of character from being kind to being cruel. From the inception of novel, Dostoevesky depicted how certain things affected on Raskolnikov to become an alienated person the crowds, the city, the heat and the odor.

“All contributed to irritate the young man’s already excited nerves.”

Theme of Psychology of Crime

The theme of psychology is important because it develop a mental conflict not only within the mind of the protagonist but also in the minds of the reader. This inner psyche also helped the researcher to decode the meaning of interior monologue. As the novel specifically based on the internal behavior of Raskolnikov’s mind, it is prominently efficient in depicting societal situation with reference to the societal unfair behavior. In what ways the societal unfair attitudes affects the characterization of individuals and their response towards particular situation. There are various questions arises about which historical researches can features about the reason of criminal and his crime. For example, the reason behind the selection of the axe to murder lady is the psyche of his crime to consider himself an extra ordinary person.

“The more final they were the more hideous and the more absurd they at once became in his eyes.”

Theme of Morality and Society

Sigmund Freud also paved his way due to his famous theory of Psychoanalysis as this theory not only directly links with internal or external behavior of a person but also characterizes the causes of those attitudes and behavior. The writer is also going to analyze the current research article on the basis of psychoanalytic theory as the main character of the story is showing linkage of highly repressed desires of feelings in order to make his unconscious conscious. Raskolnikov’s morality has gained an ‘insight’ in order to make his conscious unconscious. As a result the linkage between crime and society, that developed by hero of the story, helps to create the interaction amongst three major elements of the brain; superego, ego and id. . These socio-psychological aspects can connect with the inner mindset of the body and soul and generates erratic behavior. The prominent elements of psychological analytic thinking are significant for the rendering of Raskolnikov’s attitude in the novel whose result come up with the conflict that made him criminal. The researcher has deeply shown the substance of conflict that becomes the reason of three components of minds superego, ego and id.

"Aren't you half expiating your crime by facing the suffering" (Part VI - Chapter VII)

After confession of his guilt, Raskolnikov is ready to suffer for his crime. The text lines show the expression of Dounia who has the similar beliefs like Sonia. This textual line shows themes of sacrifice that linked with morality and society.

Theme of superman complex

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of alienation is significant for the chaotic psyche of Raskolnikov that directly links with the strange and distressed society. Crime is a figurative declaration of stress and clashes in the minds of the criminal. The inconsistent actions and reactions of Raskolnikov develop erratic mindset full of societal factors and psychological aspects. This is happened due to the transitions of character from being kind to being cruel.

Theme of Nihilism

Nihilism means state of nonexistent, about which Dostovesky has focused on throughout the story. This is the element of nothingness due to which humanization can be regarded as void and reacted by human beings on morality and practical grounds. This is what happens in the novel, when to get highest achievement in society or wishes to be alienated from other beings becomes the reason to act sinfully. As Raskolnikov is a brilliant student since his childhood and once he has shown some compassion towards a horse that develop a conflict in the character because being a compassionate person is not the characteristics of Raskolnikov as he commits gruesome execution of pawnbroker; Ivanovna and her sister.

"If he has a conscience he will suffer for his mistake. That will be his punishment-as well as the prison." (Part III - Chapter V)

This happened when Policeman Porfiry wants to investigate about the murder and commented about the murderer. This conflict raises the inner psyche of Raskolnikov due to reason when his personality fluctuates and he decided to plan a murder.

5.0 Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, the writer would like to draw the conclusion that exploration of two major aspects; psychological as well as social are connected with each other. Crime and Punishment is a classic novel by Fyodor Dostoevsky that focuses on social injustice and mental anguish. These aspects are prominently linked with the main character of the protagonist of the story, Rodion Raskolnikov; an incredible examination of a man who commits murder and how he is "punished" for it. By applying Freud Psychanalytic theory, the researcher reported the conclusion that there are several social and psychological aspects that forces the protagonists to commit crime. Before starting the analysis of Raskolnikov's psyche, the researcher has found the two categories of psychoanalysis. One is about the Raskolnikove who is depleted and exhaust character who commits two grisly murders. By reading the novel, reader can acknowledged the features of other characters that are facing various downfalls in the story. But the major character of Raskolnikov' crime and afterwards of his punishment that happened almost at the ending part of the story.

The novel is deprived of the positivity and hope due to the reflection of oppressive, shabbiness and inequity society. As Raskolnikov is a brilliant student since his childhood and once he has shown some compassion towards a horse that develop a conflict in the character because being a compassionate person is not the characteristics of Raskolnikov as he commits gruesome execution of pawnbroker; Ivanovna and he sister. This conflict raises the inner psyche of Raskolnikov due to reason when his personality fluctuates and he decided to plan a murder. This is the psychological tension that developed by Dostoevsky throughout the novel, because reader is the only person who witnesses the crime from the beginning and wait so long for the punishment of protagonist. Second element of the psychological stress found when Raskolnikov started to face hallucination and nightmares; gives the reflection not only to the protagonist but also to the readers about what happened in the past. Another elaborative factor that is vital is of Nihilism; nihilism means state of nonexistent, about which Dostovesky has focused on throughout the story. This is the element of nothingness due to which humanization can be regarded has void and reacted by human beings on morality and practical grounds. This is what happens in the novel, when to get highest achievement in

society or wishes to be alienated from other beings becomes the reason to act sinfully. *Crime and Punishment* is a substantial novel where identification of the misdeed guilt and gruesome crime results in punishment. To make it short, the writer has concluded that, human chasm can be seen so deeply through this atonement and guilt classic reading as the novel is the epitome of social, religious, philosophical and psychological aspects and a quintessential reading of wrong doings and indemnity.

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