

Chapter 3

Raskolnikov's Wrong Implementations of Nietzschean Overman Theory

Raskolnikov, the main character in Dostoevsky's novel *Crime and Punishment* has an overman theory. Raskolnikov believes that there are two kinds of men. First is the ordinary man and then the extraordinary man. According to Wasiolek (1964) Raskolnikov carries Nietzsche's theory which states that mankind is divided into two categories slave and master morality. In this chapter the thesis writer shows Raskolnikov's wrong implementation of the theory into several aspects in his life such as his motives of murder, action of murder, way of life, relationship with Sonya and his punishment.

3.1 Towards his motive of murder

The main character of the novel is totally contradicting personality. One part of him is his personalities, which are warm and compassionate. This is the side OF him that does charitable acts and fights out against the evil in his society. The other part is his intellectual. He is cold, unfeeling and inhumane. He exhibits tremendous self-will. It is the side that enables him to commit the most terrible crime, take another human life.

Raskolnikov's humanistic and compassionate nature are revealed in his attempts to protect the young girl. He gives almost all of his money in order to send her for a cab. Then he changes his views and says to "let them be." Here we can see how suddenly his cold intellectual overman aspect of his personality takes over.

It is difficult to understand why he murders the old pawnbroker. **As** a compassionate person, Raskolnikov finds the idea of murder abhorrent. Thinking about his plan to murder Alyona Ivanovna, he dreams of an incident from his childhood when several peasants beat a horse to death slams a crowbar into the creature and finally kills it. The young Raskolnikov runs to it, sobs, and kisses it then tries to attack Mikolka. This dream works as the evidence that Crime and Punishment has relation with Nietzsche. **As** Grossman (1964) states that actually Nietzsche draping himself around the neck of an old horse which was being brutally beaten in the street (p.64)

As stated in the novel that after the nightmare Raskolnikov tries *to* formulate his reason or his motive so that he can justify the murder he wants to

commit. Then, he comes up with his first motive soon after he hears a conversation of two men at a bar. One declared:

“I could kill that damned old woman and make off with her money without the faintest conscious-prick.....for one life, thousands would be saved from corruption and decay... .besides, what value has the life of that sickly, stupid, ill-natured old woman in the balance of existence.” (p.84).

It means that actually this motive does not originally come from his own thinking. While as stated by Hayman (1964) that actually Nietzschean Overman, should assert his power over oneself. And this power is manifested in the overman's independence, creativity and originality.

When Raskolnikov formulates his first motive, he thinks that he can get enough money to build a foundation to do some greater for mankind. He convinces himself that he is willing to perform this act of violence in order to benefit his family.

Raskolnikov thinks that he can use the money that the old pawnbroker is squeezing out of the poor people. Then, he thinks that by distributing the money among the families, it will save hundred of people from ruin and destitution. He wants to distribute the money to the needy.

With Alyona's money, Raskolnikov wants to help his mother who lives in the province, and saves his sister, who is employed as governess in the house of a landowner who is trying to seduce her. As he says:

“My poor mother, my poor sister. I meant it for you. If it is a sin I decided to take it on me, but only so that you would happy; to die

proudly, having paid with a mountain of helpful good deeds for the trivial and ridiculous crime of my mouth.”(p. 84).

With this reason, he is convinced that his crime can be justified. Here he still presents himself as a humanist thirsting to defend the humiliated and injured ones. “I am not a person who would permit a scoundrel to destroy a defenseless, weak creature.” (p.78). He does not seek power out of vanity. He wants to acquire power in order to devote himself entirely to service to human beings. He wants to use power only to help other people the good of people, as he says: “I take power, I acquire the strength, whether force or money, to do harm. I bring happiness.” (p.62). He was so sure that through his prayer after he comes home from the Marmeladov, the murder will not be a vanity. This is surely against the Nietzschean overman, which actually one should not prompt by any type of nobility. As Hayman (1988) states that the most aim of overman is self-gratification and nobility belongs to ordinary man.

The second motive that occurs to him is that he wants to see if he had the courage to take the power or not, as he say to Sonya: “Do I dare commit this murder and therefore prove myself to be a man by proving that my will is strong.” (p.431). According to Wasiolek (1964) that states, Am I real man of power? This is his concern. This statement has trapped Raskolnikov into understanding that he is only ordinary after all, since the Overman has no need for test, he simply realize that he is superior.

The essence of Raskolnikov’s theory which is influenced by Nietzsche is that mankind is divided into ordinary people, who lives according to laws and exist

only to reproduce the human race, and extraordinary people, who may break laws in order to advance humanity. He publishes this concept long before he commits the murder. Raskolnikov thinks that being great relies on breaking from the common mold of society. Because as Hayman (1988) states that the extraordinary man or the overman does not conform to tradition including the laws (p.25). That is why, overman has the right to decide his own conscience whether or not to overstep the law or any obstacle that stands in the way of the Fulfillment of his idea. For example, Raskolnikov's opinion about Kepler that:

“if the discoveries of Kepler or Newton could be made known only by sacrificing the lives of one, or a dozen, or a hundred, or even more men who made these discoveries impossible or in any way prevented them from being made, then Newton would have has the right, and indeed would have been in duty bound, to-to eliminate the dozen or the hundred people so as to make his discoveries known to all mankind.” (p.276).

It shows that the great man is obligated to give the world his new word and if it means killing a few ordinary men in order to do so, then the great man must do that. Here he served as Nietzsche's overman who is cruel and go beyond good and evil. However, although Nietzsche says that cruelty is the basis will to power, according to Hayman (1988), Nietzsche also points out that in the process of seeking to bring another under one's power, physical harm would appear a very poor method. One can find many more subtler and intelligent ways to exert one's will to power than the violent or the forceful. No matter what situation Individuals find themselves in, according to Nietzsche, their will to power comes through in one way or another.

3.2 Towards his Action of Murder

According to Kaufman (1977) Nietzsche divides morality into two categories. First is the master morality and the second is the slave morality. In the master morality “good” has always meant “noble” and “evil” meant “vulgar”. The noble type of man regards himself as the creator and determiner of values. He does not **look** outside of himself for any approval of his act (p.171).

Throughout the novel Raskolnikov thinks about his extraordinary man theory and its relation to the murder. His extraordinary man theory states that it is acceptable for an Extraordinary man, **like** himself, to transcend the law. He had the right to kill a detestable part of society (p.276).

The clashes between the two sides of him, which are his dark grim, side and a warm loving side help Raskolnikov commit the murders. His intellectual, emotionless side was able to murder without remorse. It should be noted that he had two victims, one was planned the other was not. The murder of Alyona, the cold detestable old pawnbroker, was planned. However, there was also an unexpected murder of her kind, gentle, sister in law, Lizaveta. The dual murders represent his dual personality Raskolnikov was able to block his emotional side and used his intellect to commit the murders.

In the dual murder scene, it is noted that Alyona is murdered with the blunt side of Axe and Lizaveta is murdered with the sharp side of the axe. In this dual murder, he has killed one person who is mean, wicked and cold (Alyona) and a second, Lizaveta who is warm, friendly, humane, and compassionate. Later on Raskolnikov seldom thinks of the murder of Lizaveta. but is always troubled about

the murder of Alyona. He obviously considered Alyona as an obstacle, but how was Alyona preventing the practical fulfillment of any idea? His “new word” (the part of his theory that asserted that the killing of innocent people was sometimes acceptable) did not actually require the elimination of any person to make it known. It was after all, made known to people when it was published in a magazine; therefore, he didn’t have the right to kill Alyona in the first place.

The fallacy of Raskolnikov’s supposedly rational reasoning behind the crime is that his unplanned murder of Lizaveta destroys all his justifications. Although Raskolnikov assures himself that he is committing a principled act in doing so with Alyona, the murder of her harmless sister has none of the utilitarian consequences that Raskolnikov believes the death of Alyona will have. Rather, killing Lizaveta is a selfish act that serves only to protect Raskolnikov from arrest.

Next is since Raskolnikov’s murder will be based partially on the rationale that certain people fit into a category of being louse, then this theory should apply directly to Marmeladov, especially when Marmeladov cries out, “dare you assert that I am not a pig”. (p.33). Rather than despising Marmeladov as a louse or detestable person like Alyona, Raskolnikov feels great sympathy and pity for his suffering, thus contrasting with the overman theory as Nietzsche says that sympathy, the kind helping hand, the warm heart, patience, diligence, humility and friendliness are parts of the slave morality not the parts of the master morality. Moreover according to Kaufman (1977) in The portable Nietzsche, pity is the ultimate tool of the weak and it cuts away the will of the strong until they were no longer able to manifest their power (p. 98). ‘These are the things that Nietzsche despises.

From the first section of the novel, Raskolnikov hates the criminals who lose their senses and leave a lot of trifles, which can make them to be caught. Raskolnikov dwells on the fact that the extraordinary criminals pay attention to the details that can eventually lead to their downfall. He often comments that trifles can ruin everything.

He spends days counting the number of steps; it takes to reach his victims apartment, and maliciously wraps a fake, wooden pledge in cloth, constructs a noose to conceal the axe in his coat, and spends time memorizing where Alyona keeps her keys; all for the sake of performing a perfect crime.

However, when he does eventually place his plan into action; “he was in a terrible haste, and he kept making mistakes” (p. 22). Raskolnikov runs into many complications when trying to complete his crime including Natasha’s presence in the kitchen when he need to steal the axe, his inability to use the right key to open Alyona’s drawer, his carelessness in smearing blood all over Alyona’s chest box, and Lizaveta’s coincidental appearance when he is committing the murder. The “Tri Res” that pervade his crime are to prove that Raskolnikov’s “overman theory” is false, and shows that he is weak, if not weak he is just an average criminal. As Razumikhin comment upon the murder”.

“What I say is that he is neither clever nor experienced and that it’s most certainly his first crime! Assume that the crime had been careful planned and that the murdered was a clever brute and the whole thing becomes improbable. But assume an in experience man... he did not even know how to rob-all he knew was how to

kill! It was his first crime. He lost his nerve, and he got away by a lucky chance and not because he had planned his escape.”

(p. 169).

3.3 Towards his way of life.

According to Kaufman (1997), Nietzschean overman does not need consolation from anyone and he must be able to live totally alone (p.570). After the original introduction of his extraordinary man theory (p. 276). Raskolnikov contends that the extraordinary man must be self-reliant, depends on no one, and cut off from society.

After he kills Alena Ivanovna, Raskolnikov finds himself unable to live as before. His pride separates him from society. He sees himself as superior to all other people and can not relate to anyone. Within his personal philosophy, he sees other people as tools and uses them for his own interest. After the murders, his isolation grows. He stumbles on the street, confused and tortures with uncertainty and doubt. He can not relate to the rest of humanity. By murdering Alyona Ivanovna he has set himself apart from the masses. He is alone, separated by his actions and beliefs; finally he is unable to care for anyone else, unable to care about living anymore. He pushes away the people who are trying to help him.

He makes his way to Razumikhin, his best friend, and finds he has nothing to say. Razumikhin kindly offers Raskolnikov a chance to translate to German for money, which he knows Raskolnikov needs it. Raskolnikov can not bring himself to do it. He simply does not care anymore.

He realizes that by murdering Alyona and Lizaveta, he has completely isolated himself from society. His separation, which began before the murders, is now complete, as he has truly crossed over the bounds that formerly kept him tied to the rest of humanity. Meanwhile as Kaufman (1997) states that is the test of Nietzschean Overman is that he must not allow his will to be influenced by the wishes of others (p.570). Thus, the assertion of the will isolates man from society. It leaves him in complete solitude. Consequently, when he tries to assert his will, he finds himself cut off from the society. It is dreadful solitude which makes him confesses to become a part of the society again.

It is difficult for someone to live alone without relied on other people. This is also why Raskolnikov goes periodically out to find someone to talk with such as when he went to the bar and found Marmeladov, and talked with him (p.27), or when he had to go to find Sonya to confess himself, because he could no longer bear the burden that was placed on to him by keeping silent about the murder. And by separating himself from everyone he loved. Therefore, according to Pisarev (1961) Raskolnikov's longing for communion proves that he does not fulfill his own requirements of his own requirements of extraordinariness (p. 22)

His other wrong implementations according to Wasiolek (1964) occur because of his warm and compassionate character that it operates without an interceding thought process (p. 9). His first and immediate reaction to any situation represents this aspect of his personality. Consequently, he will often act in a warm, friendly, charitable or humane manner, and then when he has had a chance to **think** over his actions intellectually, he regrets them. For instance, when he spontaneously

gives Marmeladov his last money then shortly after that he regrets that he has given them the money. If he stays in this situation there is a chance that he will sacrifice himself for other. This is opposed with Nietzschean overman who should not be prompt by any type of nobility.

Here we can see there is a conflict inside him, one is the part of him which want to care over other people. It leaves him in confusion. It is best seen when he tries to help a girl in the street who has been raped and left to the whims of anyone who finds her. Raskolnikov tries to protect her from the evil of the street, but then stops himself when he feels disgust by the wickedness of his society: “Why did I take it upon myself to interfere? Was it for me to try to help? Let them eat one another a live- what is it to me.” At one time he is both caring and concerned and yet he is able to push aside the whole affair by being totally indifferent. This illustrates the imbalance acting out inside of him. This imbalance causes Raskolnikov to ostracize his emotional outbursts.

Meanwhile, Raskolnikov’s pain is not the pain that Nietzsche meant. According to Leipzig (1997) the pain should be the spur for exerting power to overcome an obstacle, whereas pleasure can represent a feeling of increased power (p. 378). However, Raskolnikov’s pain comes from the guilt that torments him after he murders Alyona and Lizaveta. In addition, his recurring faintness at the mention of the murders serve as proof to him that he is not made of the same stuff as a true overman. **As** he says

“the old woman was a mistake perhaps, but she’s not the point! The old woman was merely a sickness... I was in a hurry to step over... it wasn’t

a human being I killed, it was a principle! So I killed the principle, but I didn't step over. I stayed on this side...all I managed to do was kill. And I didn't even manage that, it turns out... "(p.291).

It shows that Raskolnikov is still trapped in Overman mindset, he believes that the only thing that matters is success in one's endeavors. Raskolnikov feels anxious not because he is murderer but because he is an unsuccessful murderer, unable to use the crime to his advantage and dismiss the guilt

3.4 Towards His Relationship with Sonya

Raskolnikov's pride leads him to perceive others as inferior. He sees Sonya as a fellow transgressor, someone who has stepped over the line between morality and immorality. Sonya is a prostitute in St.Petersburg. The people of the city **look** upon her as a disgrace and she must suffer because of this. Though Sonya has an occupation considered to be very immoral, her own individual situation may justify her immoral act. Sonya is a very poor young girl. Her entire family looks to her for support. She is a woman who believes and takes the role of the mother for her sisters and brothers. She loves actively with her body, she sacrifices herself for her family. So she decides to suffer for the sake of her loved ones, and becomes a prostitute to support her family.

Sonya in her infinite capacity for understanding begins to care deeply about him. Instead of being horrified with his crimes, she is concerned more with his soul and mental well-being. There is a crucial difference between their transgression that Raskolnikov is unwilling to acknowledge: she sins for the sake of others, whereas he

sins for no one but himself. Nothing in the world forces him to commit the crime. Instead he searches the environment around him for excuses and opportunities that allow him to justify the horrible action that he is about to take.

Raskolnikov sees Sonya as the person transgressed against life and asks her to join him so that they can go together. In asking Sonya to join him, he symbolically breaks out of his isolation caused by the crime. **Also** he begins to deny overman theory which declares that man must stand alone and apart from all other people.

Sonya may seem separated from humanity by her actions as a prostitute, but her love for others and her belief in their inner goodness transcend this separation and redeem her as a part of humankind. For Raskolnikov, to overcome his alienation from the world entail the death of his belief in himself as extraordinary, as superior to the rest of humanity, and a rebirth in his identity, an acceptance of himself as ordinary and capable of moral wrong.

When he praises Sonya as his fellow transgressor, he restores the sense of lost power out the hands of Sonya. For instance, When finally he decides to confess about the crime to the police station it is not because he realizes about his crime but it is the sight of Sonya, not the suspicions of the police or his own turmoil, that pushes him to finally make his confession. Sonya's role in encouraging Raskolnikov to confess foreshadows her indispensability to Raskolnikov's eventual start toward redemption. Raskolnikov relationship with Sonya makes him downfall as superman or as overman.

He is unable to abandon his intellectual conviction that he may be right that, as an overman he can step over the law without being punished. It is different from Sonya's conviction which states that man is a child of God and has a moral nature that cannot be violated by impunity. Raskolnikov must first acknowledge that man's nature is confessing his wrongdoing; only then he can begin the path of regeneration toward salvation.

This is really opposed to Nietzsche's overman. A master, an overman does not passively allow others to dictate him what was good or evil, just or unjust, reasonable or absurd. However, Raskolnikov who thinks that he is an extraordinary man that surrenders to Sonya who suffers because the effects of poverty and the importance of devotion to family. Raskolnikov has relinquished his will. He let Sonya tell him that what he has done was cruel and bad. She also convinces him that he needs to confess his crime so that he can gain happiness in his life.

3.5 Towards his Punishment

As Nietzsche (1997) says on Genealogy of Morals that "When murders and treacheries cease to be sins, regrets are considered to be errors" (p. 146). While in this novel, Raskolnikov convinced that his crime was an error not a sin and his regrets actually derive from the feeling that he has disgraced the nobility of the idea. He feels that he fails to prove his theory and he is contemptible.

When he goes to the police station in order *to* turn himself in, he does not think that there is anything for him to repent of. As he says to his sister, Daunia:

"Crime ? what crime.... If I had succeeded I should have been crowned

with glory, but now I am trapped...forthe whole idea was not so stupid as it seems now that it has Failed (everything seems stupid when it fails) (p. 530).

Despite his conviction that he was right, he goes and denounces himself, and accepts punishment for his crime, which in his opinion he had not committed something higher than the considerations of reason wins over his will. When the conscience or the moral instinct, which Raskolnikov can not understand finally he is already languishing in prison. His reason still does not surrender, but refuses to acknowledge that it had been mistaken.

When he feels guilty because he can not live according to the overman concept. He decides that he needs to be punished because of that. **As** Nietzsche says in his second essay “Guilt, bad conscience and the like” on the Genealogy of Morals guilt occurs since someone feels he owed something and the punishment is simply a form of securing repayment (p. 175). Therefore we can say that his punishment is repayment for his failure. **All** great human beings, according to Nietzsche are, criminals in some respect that they are courageous enough to act in a way that goes against the conformity of the herd. The criminal thus appears to Nietzsche as someone whom society should potentially value because he awakens that society need to be changed

Nietzsche states that to make the criminals regrets, he should not be locked up, because the best punishment for them to ~~let~~ them tortured by their own guilt upon their crime. Indeed, Nietzsche points out that superior man will not be afraid to take

the punishment or even to turn himself in to the police soon after he commits his crime.

Through this point, Raskolnikov should not wait until he is asked by Sonya to confess his crime to the police. If he admits that he is one of the kinds of the overman he should turn himself soon after he kills Alyona and Lizaveta. It takes a long time for Raskolnikov to confess his crime. There is a space of time between the murder and the confession time, which gives Raskolnikov time to think about everything he has done. Through this space of time the tension and the feeling of alienation from the society causes him to feel estranged from the rest of humanity and this suffering constitutes his true punishment.

Although he is sentenced eight years in Siberia, he did not feel remorse for his crime. He can not let go his extraordinary individual theory, which has brought him so much grief as he tells himself

“My conscience is easy, of course, an illegal action has committed; of course the letter of the law has been broken and blood had been spilt; well take my head to satisfy the letter of the law.. and let that be all! Of course, if that were the case, many benefactors of mankind who did not inherit poor but seized it for themselves, should have been punished at their very first steps. Rut the first steps of those men were successfully carried out, and therefore, they were right, while mine failed which means I had no right to permit my self that step (p. 552).

Moreover, his punishment causes the suppression of a revolt, meanwhile as Nietzsche statement in The portable Nietzsche, overman must be one who is in

constant rebirth and constant change (p. 96). The thesis writer sees that this punishment ends his cycle to grow especially his chances to exert his will to power. And finally he fails to reach the stage as an overman.

Finally, based on the analysis above, the thesis writer concludes that Raskolnikov's dual personality especially his compassionate side which always encourages him to support and help the weak one. In doing so, he has no power left and finally he has relinquished his will.