

**MORAL CONFLICT IN FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY'S
"CRIME AND PUNISHMENT"**

*Abatbaeva Uldaulet - the 1st year student
of English Linguistics department of Karakalpak state university
named after Berdakh*

Abstract: This article explores the moral conflict in Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel Crime and Punishment, analyzing the psychological and philosophical struggles of Rodion Raskolnikov. The study examines his theory of extraordinary individuals, his crime, and the resulting guilt, fear, and spiritual suffering. Special attention is given to Sonia Marmeladova, a symbol of morality and redemption, and other key characters who influence Raskolnikov's transformation. This research highlights the relevance of the novel in modern society and underscores the significance of moral conscience and responsibility. Findings demonstrate that ethical conflict drives the narrative, revealing the tension between good and evil inherent in human nature.

Keywords: moral conflict, psychology, Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, guilt, redemption, literature

Introduction

Literature reflects human life, emotions, and moral values [2,14] . Through literary works, writers explore complex questions about good and evil, justice, and responsibility [2, 94]. Fyodor Dostoevsky is celebrated for his exploration of the human soul and psychological struggles. His novel Crime and Punishment (1866) remains a profound examination of morality and conscience.

The novel tells the story of Rodion Raskolnikov, a poor student in St. Petersburg, who murders a pawnbroker and faces intense psychological and moral consequences [1,120-130] . The story shows that punishment is not only about the law, but also about a person's mental and spiritual suffering. The aim of this article is to analyze Raskolnikov's moral conflict, the roles of other characters, and the novel's continuing relevance.

Literature Review

Scholars have extensively examined Crime and Punishment. Terry Eagleton emphasizes that literature mirrors human experiences and moral dilemmas [2,10-15] . Raskolnikov's inner struggle shows a common human conflict — the fight between logic, morality, and feelings [3,55-60].

Vladimir Terras highlights Dostoevsky's use of psychological realism to portray Raskolnikov's thoughts and emotional conflicts. Researchers note that his moral conflict also reflects societal pressures, poverty, and the harsh social conditions of

19th-century Russia [3,130-140].

Sonia Marmeladova is frequently discussed in literary studies as a symbol of moral guidance. Her kindness and strength are very different from Raskolnikov's pride, showing that human empathy can help a person change and become more moral [1:435-440]. Scholars also study Raskolnikov's idea that some people are "special" and above others. Fyodor Dostoevsky shows that this kind of pride is dangerous and can make people think crime is acceptable [1,45-60].

Raskolnikov's Theory and Motivation

Raskolnikov feels alienated from society and believes he is superior. He categorizes humanity into ordinary and extraordinary individuals, believing extraordinary people can act beyond moral laws if it benefits society. Historical figures like Napoleon inspire his reasoning [1,45-50].

Raskolnikov murders a pawnbroker he considers harmful, motivated by philosophical ideas, poverty, and social frustration [1,50-55]. After the crime, He feels scared, guilty, and very suspicious of everything around him [1,120-130]. This struggle between his conscience and his pride moves the story forward and is the main focus of the novel.

Psychological Struggle

Dostoevsky portrays Raskolnikov's psychological state in detail. He suffers from fever, anxiety, nightmares, and mental instability [1,120-130]. Even when he tries to explain his actions logically, he still feels guilty, showing that moral punishment cannot be avoided.

The novel demonstrates the universal human struggle of balancing personal ambition with ethical responsibility [3,130-140]. Raskolnikov's torment reveals that crime carries consequences beyond legal punishment, affecting the mind and spirit.

Role of Other Characters

Sonia Marmeladova

Sonia represents goodness, kindness, and strength. Her help and support guide Raskolnikov to face his guilt and think about making things right [1,435-440]. She demonstrates that empathy and human connection are essential for moral growth.

Porfiry Petrovich

Porfiry, the investigating officer, plays a psychological role, prompting Raskolnikov to confront his conscience [1,120-145]. Through indirect questioning and psychological insight, Porfiry points out the problems in Raskolnikov's "smart" excuses, showing the struggle between thinking logically and doing what is morally right.

Razumikhin

Raskolnikov's friend Razumikhin represents loyalty, practical support, and social morality [1, 50-55]. His presence shows how important friendship and doing the right

thing are when dealing with society's difficulties.

Quotes from the Novel

"I did not kill a human being, I killed a principle!" – Raskolnikov's rationalization of his crime [1,50].

"Go at once, stand at the cross, and tell him the whole truth!" – Sonia urging confession [1,435-440].

"Man is not born to be destroyed, but to be reformed." – Dostoevsky's moral philosophy revealed through the epilogue [1,450].

These quotes highlight the moral and psychological struggle central to the story.

Punishment and Redemption

Raskolnikov eventually confesses and is sentenced to Siberia [1,440-450]. His journey shows that true punishment is both legal and spiritual. Through reflection and Sonia's support, he embraces humility, responsibility, and moral growth. Dostoevsky illustrates that ethical redemption is attainable when one acknowledges guilt and strives to live morally.

Discussion

The moral struggles in the novel still matter today. Modern readers also face choices between personal benefit and following society's rules [2,92-94]. Raskolnikov's intellectual pride demonstrates that rationalization cannot excuse wrongdoing: ethical responsibility remains universal.

The difference between Raskolnikov's pride and Sonia's kindness shows how human empathy helps people grow morally [3,138]. The story makes us think about our choices, showing that being moral is connected to our relationships with others and our responsibilities in society.

Conclusion

The study shows that exploring moral conflict and human responsibility in literature is highly relevant for both young people and society. The novel demonstrates the role of conscience, guilt, and personal reflection in shaping behavior, emphasizing that understanding and accepting one's mistakes is essential for moral growth. In our view, analyzing such literary works not only helps students develop critical thinking and ethical awareness but also encourages them to reflect on their own actions and responsibilities. By engaging with these themes, participants can gain deeper insights into human nature, improve decision-making skills, and foster social responsibility, making the research valuable for educational and community programs.

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