

LUƠNG THỊ THU HƯỜNG*
NGÔ THỊ HƯỜNG**

RASKOLNIKOV'S CRIME: PREDESTINATION OR KARMA

Abstract: *The story of the murder of a law ex-student named Raskolnikov is told in Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment". After suppressing his crime for several days in tremendous agony and terrible suffering in his conscience, Raskolnikov resolved to confess his wrong doing to his companion, Sonia. In his confession, Raskolnikov reveals some motives for his crime, but he does not explain exactly why the elderly woman ought to be murdered. The tale then presents a mystery, a crime, as a result of Raskolnikov's predestination. The purpose of this article is to prove that the motive of Raskolnikov's crime is not his destiny, but rooted from his mind.*

Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment", first published in Russia in 1866, is one of the masterpieces of the great Russian writer Fyodor Mikhailovitch Dostoevsky (Dostoevsky). This well-known work has been widely translated and popularized in many countries. The Constant Garnett's English translation was utilized in this study, which was published as a pdf file with a total of 685 pages.

Keywords: *God; Buddha; Fyodor Dostoevsky; Raskolnikov; crime; predestination; karma.*

Introduction

Dostoevsky was born in Moscow in 1821 and died in Saint Petersburg in 1881. After his mock execution and imprisonment in Siberia from 1849 to 1854 due to political activities, Dostoevsky

* University of Transport and Communications.

** Vietnam Buddhist University, branch Ho Chi Minh City.

focused on penetrating the deepest recesses of human souls as well as unrivaled moments of illumination. The problems of insanity, murder, suicide, emotions of humiliation, self-destruction, tyrannical domination, and murderous rage are central themes in Dostoevsky's works. His five renowned novels of ideas including *Notes from the Underground*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Possessed* (*The Demons/The Devils*), and *The Brothers Karamazov* have had an immense influence on psychological, philosophical, political and religious aspects.

In "Crime and Punishment", Dostoevsky describes the crime of the protagonist, a law ex-student named Rodion Romanovitch Raskolnikov, who lived in the city of Saint Petersburg, Russia in the nineteenth century. Being influenced by a variety of conditions from his insufficient family and crisis society, Raskolnikov soon pursued an erroneous idea that led to the murder of an elderly woman. From then on, he sank into his internal conflicts between good and evil, confession and evasion. Later, Raskolnikov confessed his crime to the state and accepted the punishment in prison. After realizing that, happiness cannot be attained through a rational plan of existence, but must be gained through suffering, Raskolnikov ceased all the torments of the past and took a new gradual rebirth with Sonia's love.

Right after "Crime and Punishment" was publicly introduced, the crime of Raskolnikov is analyzed from psychological, philosophical, religious, and literal angles to examine the reasons for Raskolnikov's evil. However, his true criminal cause is still a mystery to some researchers. The main content of this study points out while Dostoevsky till sought an exact doctrine revealed where evils were in innocent souls, in term of karma from the Buddhist perspective absolutely dealt with this issue towards human beings more than 2.600 years ago.

Results and Discussion

Through the novel, researchers and readers can examine several motives for Raskolnikov's crime. In his confession moment with Sonia, Raskolnikov rejects almost all of his murderous intentions. Initially, Raskolnikov maintained that he did not murder the woman because he required funds to support his family. Then he states that he did not wish to help society by utilizing the stolen money from the useless elderly woman. As a third motivation, Raskolnikov admits that he had no right to go beyond the bounds of regular human laws.

The criminal motivation as his destiny is concluded when Raskolnikov says before the murder that he did know beforehand: "how dared I, knowing myself, knowing how I should be, take up an axe and shed blood?" [Constance Garnett, 1956: 348]. His dream about the horse being thrashed by intoxicated villagers metaphorically exposes this purpose. The peasants severely thrashed the horse with an axe till it died. When Raskolnikov wakes up, he instantly exclaims: "Good God, can it be, can it be, that I shall really take an axe, that I shall strike on her head, split her skull open, that I shall tread in the sticky warm blood, break the lock, steal and tremble, hide, all spattered in the blood" [Constance Garnett, 1956: 81].

The notion of predestination, due to its inspired teachings, have had a great appeal to Western nations in general, and Russia in particular, throughout Dostoevsky's lifetime in the nineteenth century. Christians are told in the Holy Bible that their lives and souls would be preserved eternally if they put their trust in God [Holy Bible, 2011, John 3:16-18, John 6:37-40, John 14:6]. Christians also get assurance from the knowledge that their salvation will be glorified in the end since God predestines salvation for those who he calls [Holy Bible, 2011, Romans 8:28-30].

In truth, the idea of predestination teaches us that before the world was created, God predetermined the eternal destiny of all intelligent beings, including angels and humans. God's decision to save certain sinners by grace is referred to as election, while God's decision to condemn certain sinners to their rightful punishment is referred to as reprobation. Predestination is a part of God's decree, his eternal plan, in which he has predetermined all that will occur, ordaining everything for God's glory to be displayed [Cowburn, 2008: 97-101]. The question is whether or not the God of predestination is truly a loving and compassionate God. Why would he limit his promise to "those who love God" [Holy Bible, 2011, Romans 8:28] and "those who are called according to His purpose" [Holy Bible, 2011, Romans 8:28] if God had unlimited power. Such ambiguities lead to some complicated interpretations that make it impossible to rejoice in God's love.

Saint Augustine (354-430), a later Christian, claimed that God moves the will, yet the will is free to move. At the same time, the agent cannot be completely blameless for both his positive and negative activities. Despite the fact that reprobates are punished entirely for their sin, ultimate perseverance in grace takes precedence over merit. While God decides to freely rescue some people without assessing their worth, he chooses to eternally punish others regardless of their crimes. Augustine's conception of predestination was unchallenged by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). Aquinas expressly stated that predestination comes before any expected merits, and that original sin has made living a perfectly virtuous life impossible without grace. God's judgment to save one person while permitting another to sin and be condemned has no justification.

Other interpreters disagreed with Augustine and Aquinas' points of view to differing degrees. People are not autonomous beings capable of weighing good and bad courses of action and deciding on one or the other when they say their choices are free. Fallen

man's freedom of choice is just the freedom to sin unless aided by God's grace. People are free and capable of doing evil on their own volition, but they are unable to freely select the good. People are free of virtues and free to do evil in and of themselves. As a result, modern science appeared to provide mechanistic knowledge of the world in the seventeenth century, posing a danger to human liberty.

René Descartes (1596-1650), the father of modern philosophy, promoted a dualism system in which physical occurrences are deterministic but human activities have the freedom of indifference since the soul is not material. Descartes believed that human activities should be unrestricted, and that a free agent should be able to select among a variety of uncertain options. However, the theodicy of Descartes has the same difficulties as traditional Christian theodicy, such as combining human freedom with divine foreknowledge and predestination, which is difficult to resolve. Because the will is such a powerful instrument, it is the principal factor by which we bear God's likeness and image. Then, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) underlined that the concept of fate should not be limited to the life of a single person. Kant's philosophy is distinctive in that it is the only one in which fate and destiny principles determine a goal rather than the means by which that goal is accomplished. A man's actions will always be dictated by his own logic. Even though Kant is a stronger supporter of crucial components of Christian Orthodoxy than the traditional interpretation has been willing to accept, one must overcome the practically unavoidable urge to seek support for even more. Kant could improve on the notion of grace, but there are no practical routes to freedom across Kantian territory.

Had applied all fundamental philosophical concepts to look for the appropriate answer himself about where humans' original evil was from, Dostoevsky perfectly encountered the severe failure since he could not only know what saved humans from evils during many lives. Dostoevsky argued that man has the ability to thread

the path of truth through the darkness and horrors of separation and tragedy to ultimate freedom. Limiting or even eliminating human liberty would definitely make this long journey through virtue and evil much easier and faster [Donald Attwater, 1934: 72-73]. That is why Dostoevsky assumed Raskolnikov's murder as a result of his "daring to kill the principle" to get rid of his destiny and achieve freedom. However, what appeared to be Raskolnikov's fate being predetermined which led to his crime was a Dostoevsky's drawback.

The Buddhist concept of karma could help Dostoevsky overcome his constraints. The Pāli words karma (Sanskrit: karma) and kammaphala (Sanskrit: karmaphala) are key Buddhist principles that explain how purposeful actions keep people bound to the reincarnation cycle (Pāli/Sanskrit: saṃsāra). In Buddhist moral philosophy, karma not only provides the primary motivator for leading a virtuous life but serves as the predominant explanation for the presence of evil.

Karma, literally "action" refers to actions motivated by desire, a deed done consciously in previous and current lifetimes through one's own body, speech, or thoughts [Bodhi, 2005: 963]. A wholesome karma produces positive consequences, whereas an unwholesome karma generates negative results. To identify the current circumstances of one person's life, several karma units may collaborate. At the point of death, the unexhausted units of karma move on to a new existence with one's awareness. It is the karma that allows a person to go through the rebirth cycle. No new karma is formed when man achieves the cessation of defilements and rounds of suffering (Pāli: nibbāna; Sanskrit: nirvāṇa) through meditation practice. However, the impacts of earlier karmas may have to be endured.

Karma was mentioned numerous times in preachings of the Buddha. Once, when was requested what reasons and conditions determine human beings' lives as inferiority and superiority; short-

lived and long-lived, sick and healthy, ugly and handsome, insignificant and influential, poor and rich, low-born and high-born, stupid and wise, the Buddha emphatically answered that is their kamma. The Buddha went on to say that “beings are owners of their actions, heirs of their actions; they originate from their actions, are bound to their actions, have their actions as their refuge. It is karma that distinguishes beings as inferior and superior” [Nanāmolī, 2005: 1053].

From a Buddhist perspective, the destination of a human being is unquestionably predetermined by no one, but his karma. The majority of individuals have no idea how karma works. This explains why Raskolnikov felt overwhelming hatred for the lady “at the first glance, though he knew nothing special about her” [Constance Garnett, 1956: 86]. If Raskolnikov’s crime is predetermined, he did not feel nauseous and horrified: “that it was base, loathsome, vile, vile” [Constance Garnett, 1956: 81-82]. If Raskolnikov’s crime is predestined, he did not have an absolute confusion in his mind: “My God! Anyway, I couldn’t bring myself to it. I couldn’t do it. I couldn’t do it. Why, why then am I still” [Constance Garnett, 1956: 82]. If his murder is predetermined, he did not pray: “Lord, show me my path, that I renounce that accursed dream of mine” [Constant Garnett, 1956: 82]. If his crime is predestined, he did not feel “doggedly, slavishly sought arguments in all directions, fumbling for them, as though someone were forcing and drawing him to it” [Constance Garnett, 1956: 96]. Raskolnikov’s indecisive and tormented behaviors prove his crime was absolutely not predestined, but his previous karma.

On the other hand, if Raskolnikov is granted the right to kill, he should acknowledge his mistake and accept his suffering because “suffering is being a Christian” [Holy Bible, 2011, Peter 4:12-19]. However, just right after his murder, Raskolnikov was so tremendously horrified that he muttered: “God! I must fly, fly” [Constance Garnett, 1956: 109]. This obviously demonstrated his

crime was not predestined by God. Then, Raskolnikov did not accept his suffering in order to receive his life back from God as Sonia's advice [Constance Garnett, 1956: 526], since he assumed it was just a phantom. Furthermore, when his murderer's examining magistrate, Porfiry Petrovich requested him to suffer and pray to God for his benefits, Raskolnikov straightforwardly denied it, believing that his life had not been planned by God [Constance Garnett, 1956: 573-74]. Finally, in his abrupt fit of indignation, Raskolnikov exclaimed: "I am not thinking of it and I am not thinking of expiating it" [Constance Garnett, 1956: 648] when his devoted sister, Dounia, persuaded him to embrace suffering. Accepting suffering, for Raskolnikov, does nothing to change his crime, but is totally an aesthetic form [Constance Garnett, 1956: 649]. Undoubtedly, the crime of Raskolnikov was not predetermined, so he vehemently refused all religious advices for him.

Good individuals suffer greatly as a consequence of the karma-results, but evil ones always experience luck and success, as is widely observed. In other words, a virtuous guy is reaping the consequences of a former wicked karma. He will, nevertheless, reap the rewards of his current good karmas in the long run. In the same manner, the evil man is reaping the benefits of his previous excellent karmas. However, he would have to suffer in the future when the fruits of his negative karmas mature. By understanding the works of kamma, some researchers and readers can discover how and why Raskolnikov, a kind student, dared to become a murderer. As readers are told that Raskolnikov was once betrothed to the daughter of his landlord in spite of her disease and ugliness [Constance Garnett, 1956: 294]. Moreover, when Raskolnikov was a student at the university, "he had helped a poor consumptive fellow student and had spent his last penny on supporting him for six months, and when this student died, leaving a decrepit old father whom he had maintained almost from his thirteen years, Raskolnikov had got the old man into a hospital and

paid for his funeral when he died” [Constance Garnett, 1956: 667]. Raskolnikov had also “rescued two little children from a house on fire and was burnt in doing so” [Constance Garnett, 1956: 668]. All of these present favorable karma had a certain positive influence on Raskolnikov’s punishment. Indeed, he was sentenced to penal servitude in the second class for a period of only eight years instead of death [Constance Garnett, 1956: 668].

The theory of karma-results also explains why Raskolnikov felt happy and free while he was in prison [Constance Garnett, 1956: 676]. That was due to his will-to-transform his previous bad karma. A vital concept in this sense could be described as follows, the optimal attitude toward the consequences of karma in future incarnations is one that encourages and strengthens a preference for moral behavior and wisdom development. Any belief in karma-results that does not aid in the development of this predisposition for kindness but instead enhances craving and attachment should be recognized as erroneous and corrected. Raskolnikov’s karma, not God, clearly dictates his fate.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that Dostoevsky did not explicitly express his disagreement with the theory of predestination, the entire process of Raskolnikov’s murder is undeniably a clear message to Dostoevsky’s world about the evil of human beings. First and foremost, Raskolnikov undoubtedly acknowledged that he had already killed a principle since he did not want to wait for the “happiness of all” and instead wanted to live his own life, or it was better not to exist at all [Constance Garnett, 1956: 348-49]. Raskolnikov subsequently assured himself that he was pleased with his life without dialectic once he recognized that all the torments of the past, including his crime, punishment, and exile, seemed odd and alien to him [Constance Garnett, 1956: 684]. That is why Raskolnikov placed the New Testament beneath his pillow without even opening it [Constance Garnett, 1956: 684]. Instead,

Raskolnikov compensated with his immeasurable love for Sonia [Constance Garnett, 1956: 684]. Indisputably, loving-kindness and compassion should always be practiced in order to generate good karma in this life and hereafter. /.

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Appendences

(John 3:16) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

(John 3:17) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

(John 3:18) Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

(John 6:37) All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

(John 6:38) For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

(John 6:39) And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.

(John 6:40) For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.

(John 14:6) Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

(Romans 8:28) And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who I have been called according to his purpose.

(Romans 8:29) For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

(Romans 8:30) And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

(Peter 4: 12) Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

(Peter 4: 13) But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

(Peter 4: 14) If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

(Peter 4: 15) If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.

(Peter 4: 16) However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

(Peter 4: 17) For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

(Peter 4: 18) And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

(Peter 4: 19) So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.