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### Crime and Punishment

Dreams can be described as a series of images, ideas, or emotions one has while sleeping. Sometimes they can be about a person's wild fantasies, hopes, aspirations and ambitions, invoking feelings of delight. They can also arouse feelings of intense, inescapable fear, horror and distress.

"At times monstrous images are created, but the setting and the whole picture are so truth like and filled with details so delicate, so unexpected, but so artistically consistent, that the dreamer, were he an artist like Pushkin or Turgenev even, could never have invented them in the waking state. Such sick dreams always remain long in the memory and make a powerful impression on the overwrought and deranged nervous system" (Dostoevsky 48).

Psychologists say that dreams are windows into the subconscious and their purpose is to help give a person insight into their life. In Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment, dreams function to symbolically confront and challenge characters' ideas and actions.

In the first dream in the novel, Raskolnikov has a fearful dream where he imagines he is a child again. As he walks by a tavern with his father, they see a drunken peasant, Mikolka, trying to make his old horse pull a heavy wagon full of people. But when the crowd laughs at this ridiculous spectacle, "Mikolka flew into a rage and furiously thrashed the mare, as though he supposed she really could gallop" (51). He beats the horse so ferociously that he kills it. The compassionate boy then runs over and puts his arms around the horse and kisses its eyes.

Raskolnikov's mind is challenging his ideas about killing Alyona Ivanovna and questioning his theory. Raskolnikov's dual nature is represented by the compassionate boy and the drunken Mikolka. The old nag is personified as the pawnbroker, who died the same way that Raskolnikov planned to murder the pawnbroker, with the blunt end of an ax. Raskolnikov is disgusted by the dream though and immediately after waking up says "Lord,... show me my path- I renounce that accursed... dream of mine" (54). In

essence, Raskolnikov is renouncing his plan to kill Alyona Ivanovna because of his disgust with the actual idea of killing. "Can it be,... that I shall really take an ax, that I shall strike her on the head, split her skull open..." (53). Raskolnikov takes the side of the compassionate boy in his dream, and this compassion shows that Raskolnikov is incapable of being an extraordinary man, therefore making his theory invalid.

Unfortunately, Raskolnikov does not see this and ironically decides to he must go through with his plan not much later when he sees Lizaveta in the Hay Market and hears she will be gone. After the murder, Raskolnikov becomes sick and has a delirious hallucination. He dreams that the police officer Ilya Petrovitch is beating his landlady on the stairs. While Explosive Lieutenant is beating and cursing at Praskovya Pavlovna, Raskolnikov thinks that he is about to be caught, "For no doubt... it's all about yesterday. ...Good God!" (103). He wanted to latch the door, but he found himself unable to.

This dream is symbolic of his desire to confess and his fear of persecution. The Explosive Lieutenant embodies the ideas of law, suffering and persecution. Praskovya Pavlovna represents Raskolnikov's weakness. It is because of this weakness that Raskolnikov wants to confess. Raskolnikov wants to suffer, "He would have fastened his door with the latch, but he could not lift his hand...besides, it would be useless" (103). His weakness is also proving his theory to be wrong because he is weak and will be caught. The extraordinary are never caught. His fear of persecution is represented by the crowds of people who come to watch the landlady being beat. Raskolnikov consistently shows his fear of being humiliated which also proves Raskolnikov is not an extraordinary man, otherwise he would isolate himself from society. He would not allow his will to be influenced by others. Raskolnikov is so weak though, that he is unable to even tell the dream was a delusion, "In a morbid condition of the brain, dreams often have a singular actuality, vividness and extraordinary semblance of reality" (48). The detachment he feels from humanity because of the dream make Raskolnikov feel timid and worried.

Raskolnikov is strong enough to keep from confessing immediately, and even under heavy pressure from Porfiry Petrovitch, he is strong enough to resist his desire to confess. After the interrogation by the police, he goes home and has a dream where he attempts to murder the pawnbroker. When he strikes the pawnbroker though, he cannot harm her.

"He was frightened, bent down nearer to try to look at her; but she, too, bent her head lower. He bent right down to the ground and peeped up into her face from below, he peeped and turned cold with horror; the old woman was sitting and laughing, shaking with noiseless laughter, doing her utmost that he should not hear it." (241).

He tries to hit her with all his force but she only laughs harder. Then he tries to run away but outside are crowds of people all silently waiting in expectation.

Raskolnikov's dream symbolically denounces the extraordinary man theory by showing he is incapable of being an extraordinary man. The laughing pawnbroker represents the downfall of his theory. Because he is incapable of executing the murder, he is therefore incapable of being an extraordinary man. She also represents how ridiculous, meaningless and degrading the murder is, "Of all the lice I picked out the most useless one..." (239). Raskolnikov trying to hit the pawnbroker harder is his mind telling him that no matter how hard he tries, he will never be extraordinary. The more Raskolnikov tries to isolate himself from humanity, the more desolate he becomes in his loneliness as his weaknesses begin to poke holes in his theory. The silent mass of people represent all of mankind, whom Raskolnikov was trying to help, but failed to bring them the "new word". The people then remain stuck in the common rut because of his failure.

Raskolnikov's contradicting dual nature is what inevitably causes his failure as an extraordinary man. The cold and inhumanely callous part of Raskolnikov's nature is represented by Svidrigailov, whom after trying to rape Raskolnikov's sister, goes home and has a dream. He imagines that he wakes up during the night to go out and walk in the middle of a rain storm. Hiding behind a cupboard he finds a five year old girl taking shelter from the storm. He takes her back to his room, and puts her to bed. She doesn't go to sleep though, but instead fakes it. Svidrigailov suspects and as he watches, she transform into a shameless French harlot. As he raises out his hand strike her, he awakens. Then he goes and commits suicide.

Svidrigailov's subconscious symbolically rejects his entire life and all his ideals. The child represents Svidrigailov's good actions and what becomes of all of them. It shows that all of Svidrigailov's good deeds are invalid because the only reason he does them is because the action of the moment gives him pleasure. They are ultimately perverted when his only motive is to serve his own ends. Like Raskolnikov,

Svidrigailov regrets being good "What folly to trouble myself...what idiocy...damn the child!" (438). The child also represents all the women Svidrigailov has had in his life. It is symbolically saying that all of his women were whores, all who meant nothing to him because he either raped them or seduced them for the sole purpose of having sex. The dream denounces his evil actions and self gratifying life.

In all the dreams, the characters subconsciousness confronts them with the faults of their beliefs. By challenging them, it gives them a chance to change their actions in order to survive. These self-revelations are always rejected by the characters and inevitably lead to their downfalls. The weaknesses shown to them were disregarded as insignificant because the character deemed their dreams unimportant. The chance to change their ways was ignored.