

11 E

Crime and Punishment:
Dostoevsky

Notes to accompany the lecture to be given on:

The Symbolism of the Kiss of
Submission

- 1) The act of the Kiss of submission emerges from ancient myth. The background of original interpretation can be found in Pushkin's story The Queen of Spades, of which it is obvious from his notes, Dostoevsky was most familiar and fascinated.
- 2) Common to both Herman the protagonist of Pushkin's story and Raskolnikov the protagonist of Dostoevsky's story, are certain traits:
 - a) social envy;
 - b) personal ambition;
 - c) an introverted and impenetrable nature;
 - d) the iron control of a passionate temperament by a will concentrated upon a single purpose;
 - e) an almost pathological combination of unbridled fancifulness and cold calculation,
 - f) an unconscious, magical urge to subjugate reality to their own demands.

The earth power symbolized by both the ancient countess of The Queen of Spades and Alyona Ivanovna the moneylender.

Mother Earth: (see a Classical Dictionary for the complete significance) Mother Earth is a chthonian being--early Greek mythology. (Mother Nature - Mother of the world, therefore of man: constantly referred to, in Greek mythology as Gaea or Gaia, Mother Earth.) Man's revolt against Mother Earth--her resentment, and appeasement by the expiation demanded by her and to her.

Raskolnikov: --the turbulent revolt of human arrogance and insolence against the primitively sacred decrees of Mother Earth. (Nature) The Kiss of submission is the symbolic climax of the entire action. It symbolizes the conflict and the reconciliation between her and the proud son of the Earth.

The guilty erring son receives absolution through his expiation made to the earth.

Ideas concerning Raskolnikov's isolation and incarceration.

A man who shuts himself up in solitude therefore dropping out of the comprehensive unity of mankind--out of the influence of moral law is exercising the formula of negative self-determinism--isolation.

Raskolnikov's incarceration is the expression of his free will to isolate himself from society. The sequence is not from crime to incarceration but conversely.

We do not recognize Raskolnikov as the rebel repentant of his crime, but as one who refuses to endure the isolation.

His redemption will be made possible only when acknowledges mankind outside of himself and makes confession.

The sharing of ignominy and humiliation--union in suffering. The apostate rebel not only sins against himself--church and society, but also contranaturum--against nature.

Salvation through atonement--the cult of The Passion. (Please note that The Passion of Christ is the most important aspect of the Russian Orthodox Church--make research in this area).

One of the most significant notes that Dostoevsky made concerning his intention for Crime and Punishment is:

He who is incapable of loving breaks away entirely from the partnership of all men in both sin and salvation.

- e) an almost pathological combination of unbridled fanaticism and cold calculation,
- f) an unconscious, surgical urge to subjugate reality to their own demands.

The earth power symbolized by both the ancient goddesses of The Queen of Earth and Alyona Ivanovna the honeylander.

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