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EXTRAORDINARY MAN THEORIES

Raskolnikov's views about the ordinary man versus the extraordinary man are based on two philosophers and can be divided into three separate sections. That is, parts of the theory are based on Hegel, parts on Nietzsche, and parts are Raskolnikov's own thinking. Therefore, if the theories seem to be contradictory at times, it is not a result of Dostoevsky's carelessness; quite the contrary, Dostoevsky intentionally made the theory contradictory at times. The point is that Raskolnikov had to commit the murder before he had completely formulated the theory. Dostoevsky wanted to show the young intellectual being influenced by various theories and then using these theories before he had a chance to analyze them. For example, a typical contradiction would be that Raskolnikov will at one time maintain the murder was committed to benefit mankind; but then he will in turn maintain that the extraordinary man must be above mankind and not be concerned with what mankind will think of him. Such an incomplete understanding of his own thoughts and such contradictory statements are the rationale which leads Raskolnikov to the possibility of redemption. A careful analysis of the various ideas will show what aspects of the theories are borrowed and what aspects are the result of Raskolnikov's own thinking.

THE HEGELIAN SUPERMAN

Hegel, a German philosopher, had written in many of his works on the general nature of superman. His ideas were never formulated into one consistent thesis. But generally extracted from various parts of his philosophy, his views may be consistently stated. In its broadest statement, the Hegelian superman exists for noble purposes in the view that if the ends are noble then the means can be justified. The emphasis is always on the ends rather than the means. As applied to Raskolnikov's crime, the theories have relevance in the following ways:

1. The old pawnbroker is an evil person who is actually harming society by her vile and cynical grasp on the poor people who come to her for pawning. According to Hegel, any harmful segment of society should be removed. Therefore, Raskolnikov reasons that by murdering the old pawnbroker, he will be removing a harmful "thing" from society.
2. If the ends are noble then the means can be justified. The old pawnbroker has a lot of money which will be "wasted" upon useless masses and requiem services after her death. With this money, Raskolnikov will be able to complete his education without being cramped and then can devote himself to the service of humanity.
3. One small crime can be wiped out by thousands of good deeds. With the money that the old pawnbroker is squeezing out of the poor people, Raskolnikov could use this money and by distributing it among families, hundreds of people would be saved from ruin and destitution.

The Hegelian superman is one that stands above the ordinary man, but works for the benefit of all mankind.

NIETZSCHEAN THE MOETZSCHEAN SUPERMAN

Dostoevsky probably first heard of the Nietzschean superman theory when he visited Germany about five years before writing Crime and Punishment. These ideas which are attributed to Nietzsche, therefore, are not as a result of Dostoevsky's reading of the published works but rather they came to him from the intellectual ideas that

were "in the air" at the time of the writing of the novel.

The Nietzschean superman does not exist for the benefit of society. Instead he exists for his own personal gratification. His aims are not prompted by any type of nobility. His most important aim in life is self-gratification. This type is represented in the novel by Svidrigailov. It is not necessary to go into all of Nietzsche's reasoning behind his superman theories, but we should see those aspects which affect Svidrigailov's actions.

Through a complex reasoning process, the Nietzschean superman and also Svidrigailov come to the conclusion that God is dead. Svidrigailov would reason thusly:

Since there is no Will (or Power) beyond that of my own, then I must completely assert my own Will until it is totally free of all restraint against it. Since there is no Power beyond me which has functions to punish, I am free to assert completely my own Will. The question is which shall prevail? The "I" (is, the individual Self) which is known to me OR some power which no one knows or understands.

Therefore, the Nietzsche superman is the one who possesses the strongest will and is able to make his desires and his power dominant over others. The superman refuses to recognize any will beyond that of his own will. Consequently, Svidrigailov can rape a thirteen-year-old girl so as to satisfy his will, he can be the instrument causing the death of a servant or his wife, and he can pursue Dounia without any fear of some power punishing him. He asserts his own will in order to gratify his own desires.

The test of this type of superman is that he must stand completely alone and must not allow his will to be influenced by the wishes of others. Thus, this assertion of the will isolates man from society. It leaves him in complete solitude. Consequently, when Raskolnikov attempts to assert his will, he finds himself cut off from the rest of humanity. It is this dreadful solitude which Raskolnikov cannot stand and which makes him confess so as to become again a part of humanity.

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