

Louse in the Hay Market: The relationship between the Urban Space and the Consciousness of "Man" in *Crime and Punishment*

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Abstract: In literary works, the construction of urban space serves as both a canvas for the subjective perceptions of the novelist towards society and a mirror reflecting the objective social order of a particular era. Within Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, the city of St. Petersburg in the 19th century emerges as a central backdrop, with the bustling Hay Market serving as a focal point. Dostoevsky adeptly captures the city's darkness and oppressive atmosphere, presenting it as a microcosm of societal complexities. This essay delves into the lives of St. Petersburg's lower-class denizens as depicted in the novel, using Dostoevsky's portrayal of the city's "dark panorama" to examine its broader implications. Rather than merely serving as a backdrop, the city becomes a reflection of human consciousness, encapsulating the author's nuanced understanding of social dynamics and psychological intricacies. Through an analysis of urban space in *Crime and Punishment*, this paper aims to elucidate Dostoevsky's exploration of the interconnectedness between societal structures and individual psyches.

Keywords: *Crime and Punishment*, Hay Market, Human Being.

1. Introduction

Most of Dostoevsky's works are set in St. Petersburg, and *Crime and Punishment* contains a large number of depictions of Petersburg's urban space. The streets and alleys of Petersburg, which were originally unremarkable, become an important part of the city's mythology because of the writer's novels, and the Hay Market in *Crime and Punishment* is one of them.

Donald Fanger called *Crime and Punishment* Dostoevsky's "undoubtedly best Petersburg work." [1]. Writers don't just use Petersburg as a physical space and a setting for their stories, but see Petersburg as an object of equal importance to their characters. Bradley Woodworth and Constance Richards point out that humanitarian themes and the process of transmutation of Dostoevsky's thought are uncovered and observed in the changing relationship between the city and its characters. [2] Мережковский argues that Dostoevsky, though he knew and hated the city, chose to forgive and deeply love the land, the land that still carries the soul of Russia. Бердяев argues that in Dostoevsky the city is a factor in the tragic fate of man, and that the chaotic, squalid urban environment is a metaphor and symbol of the inherent tragic fate of the characters. All this is in the service of the core of his creation--man.

Domestic scholars have also deepened their research on the city writing of *Crime and Punishment*. Zhang Yiying of Liaoning Normal University analyzed the specific cityscape of Petersburg in Dostoevsky's novel in greater detail. The Hay Market, the basement, the Neva River, the tavern, etc. not only constitute the survival space of the lower class in Petersburg, but also become a true portrayal of the spiritual space of Petersburg. [3] Tian Hongmin of Shanghai Normal University points out that Dostoevsky's writing about the city of Petersburg is meant to be an expression of the mind and soul, an interpretation of religious writing, and a philosophical contemplation of time and space. [4] Ying

Xinhong of Zhejiang University analyzes and explores the positive and bright side of Petersburg's city image in *Crime and Punishment* to understand Dostoevsky's spiritual world in a more three-dimensional way. [5].

All of the above articles have well analyzed the role of the image of Peterborough in *Crime and Punishment*, this paper will take the Hay Market, a specific location in the urban context of Peterborough in *Crime and Punishment*, as an example, and use the activities of the characters in the Hay Market to specifically analyze the relationship between the Hay Market and the characters of the novel.

2. The Hay Market and Peterborough's Urban Space

The Hay Market, situated amidst the labyrinthine streets of St. Petersburg, emerges as a focal point in *Crime and Punishment*, epitomizing the squalor and chaos prevalent in the slums of Dostoevsky's nineteenth-century setting. Originally a bustling hub for commerce, the Hay Market deteriorated into a haven for the destitute, characterized by dilapidated dwellings, low-class taverns, and brothels. Within the narrative, Dostoevsky deftly juxtaposes the Hay Market's stark poverty with the opulence of neighboring bourgeois neighborhoods, underscoring the stark class divisions pervasive in Petersburg's urban fabric.

The Hay Market was originally full of filth and clutter in the early days of Petersburg, a gathering place for produce, firewood, livestock, and forage. At the time Dostoevsky wrote *Crime and Punishment*, the Hay Market was a place for the poor, and the area around it was run down with many low-class taverns and brothels. [6] "At the market, merchants, vendors engaged in various trades and farmers gather to sell their wares. At every step one can see the faces of ordinary Russian people." [2] In *Crime and Punishment*, the Hay Market is even more contrary to the freedom and openness of the city street space, showing a strong atmosphere of disaster and death. Petersburg, represented by the Hay Market, is

closed to the Russian underclass, and it gradually pushes the poor and kindly slum dwellers to the brink of extinction, causing them all to fall into the streets of Petersburg.

In this novel, the main character Raskolnikov rents a small attic located on Stalyani Street, the street of the Hay Market, which the writer refers to in the novel as "S Street". The historian of Soviet literature Rashnikov described the condition of the houses in this area in Dostoevsky's time: "The rooms and courtyards were very dark. The low exits were often characterized by claustrophobic arches. Behind these exits were rows of small, crowded yards so deep that they could not be seen, like deep wells where the sun never shone. The inhabitants here are the poorest of this capital's population. There are many small stores and taverns in the subterranean and semi-subterranean places-both in the Hay Market and in Sadovaya Street, which leads to Voznesensky Street.[2] "

In the novel, the urban space is coalesced on the Hay Market and the rich neighborhoods, which play the roles of the underclass and the bourgeoisie of Petersburg, respectively. The Hay Market shows the extreme poverty and squalor of the environment, and the people who live in it face physical and mental repression.

At the beginning of the novel, Raskolnikov, walking up the street from his dooryard, is confronted with such a street: "The heat in the street was terrible: and the airlessness, the bustle and the plaster, scaffolding, bricks, and dust all about him, and that special Petersburg stench, so familiar to all who are unable to get out of town in summer--all worked painfully upon the young man's already overwrought nerves. [7]" "Owing to the proximity of the Hay Market, the number of establishments of bad character, the preponderance of the trading and working class population crowded in these streets and alleys in the heart of Petersburg, types so various were to be seen in the streets that no figure, however queer, would have caused surprise.[7] "

This urban space in Dostoevsky's writing is a gray, sickly existence. A few brushstrokes depict the mud and dust of Petersburg, the black and gray vectors of the city's environment that impact the senses and make the surface of Petersburg's squalor and chaos visible. On the other side of the Hay Market is "a brightly painted summer villa standing among green foliage.....in the distance smartly dressed women on the verandahs and balconies, and children running in the gardens.[7] "All this and the dirty and filthy Hay Market just a line away from each other, forming a strong contrast contrast, the two diametrically opposed spatial images together fused into the nineteenth century Petersburg. This kind of foreground for the capitalist opulence of the neighborhood, but the background is a dilapidated slum setting, forming a sense of spatial depth, which implies the social relationship is self-evident, is a serious class division of the spatial manifestation.

The city of Petersburg does not serve the lives of the poor. It was a city planned by imperial power, with those neat and grandiose landscapes reflecting the total control and penetration of modern reason over the city, closely aligned with the will to power as a showy monumental complex displaying royal authority and honor. It was a city built for the monarchs and existed for the aristocracy; the common people could only be subjects of the empire who had the right to live here, and the meaning of their existence was to serve the monarchs and the nobles, and their individual dignity and value were so low that they could be ignored.[6].

In *Crime and Punishment*, Towers paints a "dark picture" of St. Petersburg, hidden behind the glittering splendor of the imperial Russian capital. The main content of this "dark picture" is the world of poverty in St. Petersburg, that is, the "miserable world" of the poor people struggling at the bottom of the Russian imperial capital. However, the darkness of the city and the era embodied in the Hay Market is not what Dostoevsky wants to focus on. *Crime and Punishment* breaks through the fence of Petersburg, and the function of the city is embodied in the field of the writer's interrogation.

3. The Hay Market and the Sins of Man

The mixed nature of the Hay Market and the sinful nature of the characters, who are self-absorbed and contemptuous, match the spirit of the Hay Market, as they "not simply driven by necessity, but in some peculiar way inclined to live in those parts of the town where there are no gardens nor fountains; where there is most dirt and smell and all sorts of nastiness. "[7] In a way, the Hay Market reveals the sin of man and the irrational nature of the city of Petersburg. The author reveals the darkness of the society under the fall of faith and the bitter fate of the lower classes, full of suffering, in the social picture "Poverty makes the men poor, hunger makes the women depraved, and darkness makes the children weak".

3.1. The Crime of Extreme Poverty

The novel is called *Crime and Punishment*, and the central plot is the "crime" and "punishment" of the main character Raskolnikov's "murder". The central plot is the "crime" and "punishment" of the main character Raskolnikov's "murder". But at the beginning of the novel, before Raskolnikov's "sin" is put into action, it is clear that the first thing in front of the main character and the readers is the sin of extreme poverty, which is not a sin in the sense of the law, but the injustice of the city is the biggest source of it, and the environment of the Hay Market is in a sense a representative of the sin of extreme poverty, and the people in the Hay Market are also suffering from extreme poverty. The environment of the Hay Market is in a sense a representation of the sin of abject poverty, and the people in the Hay Market suffer from abject poverty.

The Marmeladov family is a typical representative of the novel's sin of abject poverty. They are not only a tragedy of their own temperament and personal conditions, but also a symbol of the state of existence of the urban people at that time, as well as a metaphysical symbol of the predicament of human existence and spiritual robbery. Marmeladov points out in desperation without complaints that "poverty is not a vice, that's a true saying. Yet I know too that drunkenness is not a virtue, and that that's even truer. But beggary, honoured sir, beggary is a vice. In poverty you may still retain your innate nobility of soul, but in beggary--never--no one.[7] " The tragedy of Katerina's fate embodies the three-pronged conflict between the female subject consciousness and the patriarchal society, the good and evil of human nature as well as the individual's tenacious vitality and the heavy social reality, and it also exposes all the evils of hypocrisy, indifference, selfishness, and greed as well as the indifferent socio-cultural psyche of the Russian upper class in the mid-to-late 19th century. She embodies the reflection and questioning of the crime of extreme poverty on the extreme poverty in Russia at that time.

More than poverty, extreme poverty deprives people of

their will and dignity while depriving them of the minimum material conditions to sustain their existence, leaving them in a desperate state of collapse, both in terms of material survival and spiritual sustenance. Through the extreme poverty of people in an urban environment, Dostoevsky further interrogates the existence of human beings, whose will and dignity are destroyed and stripped away in abject poverty, which is the evil that Raskolnikov wants to interrogate and change.

3.2. The Crime of Faith

"In Dostoevsky's work, there are two basic choices for the characters-'god-man' and 'man-god,' i.e., either to hold fast to their faith in Christ and revert to divinity through a process of deconversion, or to reject faith-based introspection and become 'man-gods' with unlimited expansion of the self. faith and return to divinity through a process of deconcealment, or reject faith-based introspection and expand their egos indefinitely to become 'man-gods' who reign over all things.[8]" God-humanization emulates Christ and is characterized by fraternity, humility, and holy foolishness; anthropomorphism leads to the expansion of personality, usurping God, and the desire of man to do God's work in his stead. In the face of the widespread tendency towards anthropomorphization in Russian society, Dostoevsky proposed to anthropomorphize, to follow and imitate Christ. Raskolnikov is a prominent representative of man's divinity. His "vice" is not mere murder, but turning his back on God, attempting to become a "god" and performing God's functions in his place, and his "punishment" is not mere sentencing on the material level. His "punishment" was not merely a punishment on the material level, but a self-punishment and self-exile on the spiritual level.

Enlightenment rationality brings about a collapse of man's faith and an inflated ego, with Raskolnikov believing that he holds the truth and presuming to usurp God. But when man becomes a god, the equality of souls between men breaks down. Raskolnikov believes in the rationality of crossing the blood of billions of people for a noble goal: "if the discoveries of Kepler and Newton could not have been made known except by sacrificing the lives of one, a dozen, a hundred, or more men, Newton would have had the right, would indeed have been in duty bound...to /eliminate/ the dozen or the hundred men for the sake of making his discoveries known to the whole of humanity.[7]" " , "legislators and leaders of men, such as Lycurgus, Solon, Mahomet, Napoleon, and so on, were all without exception criminals.[7]" Raskolnikov's view embodies the Napoleonic idea of the superman, that society must be guided by a superman and that this superman must have power over the masses, which does not escape from the heroic view of history. In order to prove that he is a "superman" and the "master of destiny", he does not care about anything and even kills people. However, "I will retaliate if I am wronged", the one who sends down punishment must be God, individuals have no power to inflict retribution on others, and Raskolnikov's theory does not work.

Raskolnikov's final choice to turn himself in is also closely related to the torment of faith. Dostoevsky's hope for mankind is fully embedded in the Christian spirit symbolized by Sonya. To be punished in suffering is a necessary way to atone for one's sins, "to be inspired by Jesus Christianity, to regard suffering as sacred from the bottom of one's heart, to believe that the soul that has not experienced suffering is sinful, and that only poverty and suffering can redeem the sins of human

beings and make the sinful soul pure, so that it can be truly close to God and restore the divinity that human beings originally possessed. [9]" That is why both Duniya and Sonya, who are devout believers, persuade Raskolnikov to turn himself in and atone for his sins by accepting hard labor in order to obtain God's forgiveness. Humanity must follow the path guided by God, and if it turns its back on Him, it will become an "orphan" who has lost its home and has a barren soul.

4. The Narrative Function of Hay Markets

Many of the stories in *Crime and Punishment* take place in the Hay Market area, where the main character, Raskolnikov, rents a cramped room. The seemingly ordinary Hay Market is where the twist in the protagonist's fate takes place. "It is Petersburg's 'hinterland' in the true sense of the word, and in *Crime and Punishment* it focuses on the pivotal moments of Raskolnikov's inner transformation as he commits his crime and endures his punishment. Everything that happens on this site - it's for everyone, for the world." The Hay Market is a part of Raskolnikov's body, and his inner turmoil, his melancholy, his sense of depraved confusion and loss brought on by his sin, all coincide with the spirit inherent in the Hay Market, and his ambivalent attitude toward it.

On the one hand, he was physically and mentally incapable of enduring the harshness of the place, and he loathed it. He lives in the attic of the Hay Market, which is "more like a cupboard than a room"[7], and is physically and mentally disgusted by everything here, and his "rationality" is incompatible with the "chaos" of the Hay Market. His "rationality" was at odds with the "chaos" of the Hay Market. He is a self-proclaimed "extraordinary man" who refuses to be associated with the "ordinary people" in the Hay Market. He is not willing to accept his "rag" like fate and always wants to change his situation with a gesture of resistance. He always wanted to change his situation by fighting against it. On the other hand, this place makes him feel at ease, and the psychological distance between him and the Hay Market is inexplicably close, and the Hay Market has an indescribable attraction for him. The people who live around the Hay Market are, like Raskolnikov, people plagued by poverty. The Hay Market reflects the grayness and poverty, the degradation and confusion of the underclass as opposed to the brightness and prosperity of Petersburg, which corresponds to Raskolnikov's own melancholy and confusion. According to Fanjie, this is because he belongs to this place, and there is an ontological resonance between this "anti-city", which has developed against the laws of nature, and this "anti-hero", who is detached from his normal life. [2].

The Hay Market is also iconic throughout Raskolnikov's surrender, and is the turning point in Raskolnikov's fate. Raskolnikov had "returned by the Hay Market where he had no need to go[7]" when he planned to kill the old woman, and later recalled this period as a time when he decided that the detour to the Hay Market prior to the murder had been of decisive significance to him, and that this chance encounter "was able to exert the gravest and most decisive influence on his whole destiny.[7]" In the Hay Market, Raskolnikov saw the meanness and cruelty of Alyona, the extreme individualism and "Bianchinism" of Luren, and the shameless philosophy of Svirigalov, but these people, whom he detested, were enjoying their prosperity alone, while the quiet and

gentle Lizaveta was always being violated, the kind-hearted Sonia was reduced to a prostitute, and the upright Dunya was being criticized by the people. the righteous Dounia is being talked about. He has witnessed too many crimes go unpunished, too much justice is not served. He can't stand this world based on the suffering of the innocent, but he can't do anything about it. He can only fantasize himself as a "hero" through the "theory of superman" to punish the evil and promote the good. However, Raskolnikov is not a hero living in the "epic", but a living human being. When he killed the gentle, kind-hearted Lizaveta out of fear, the "nobility" of his behavior was questioned, and he was plunged into mental confusion. At this time, Raskolnikov did not realize that when he killed Alyona in the name of "justice", he had already moved from the superficial humanitarianism to the real anti-humanitarianism.

The fact that Raskolnikov finally listens to Sonia's advice to kiss the "desecrated earth" of the Hay Market before turning himself in is also rich in meaning. On the one hand, from the perspective of Dostoevsky's Christian values, kissing the earth is a figurative representation of Raskolnikov's repentance for his sins, and it is a confidence that as long as he repents, God will forgive him, and man can gradually restore his original divine connection with the earth; at the same time, according to Christian doctrine, man is nothing but God's creation out of the dust, so kissing the earth also implies man's humbling of himself and his reverence for God. On the other hand, from the point of view of Dostoevsky's "soil theory", kissing the earth is a manifestation of Raskolnikov's unloading of his pride, searching for his roots, and returning to the people. The consequence of killing is isolation, but from the moment he kisses the earth, he has a substantial connection with the people represented by the "earth", and after the bankruptcy of the "superman theory" of solitude, he is reconciled with the people, and he can also be in the "soil" of the motherland. After the bankruptcy of his arrogant "superhuman theory", he was reconciled with the people, and was able to feel in the "soil" of his homeland the real power to contribute to the development of the society and to his own life.[3].

The Hay Market has changed from a place that could only bring Raskolnikov chaos, disgust and meanness to a place that could finally serve as a "support point" for him to reveal his inner self. What has changed is Raskolnikov's own vision and attitude, as well as the writer's expectation that a good urban square space should provide such a supply for the public. In

such a public space that can give him a "foothold", Raskolnikov removes his disguise, realizes reconciliation, expresses himself, humbles himself and confesses, and is able to take a step towards a "new life" outside the square.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the Hay Market represents the gloomy and chaotic corner of the city of Petersburg, which not only embodies the darkness and evil of the society, but also profoundly demonstrates the relationship between people and the city, and shows the value stance of the classes existing in a specific area. The Hay Market is the living space and field of resistance of the poor in *Crime and Punishment*, and it is also the externalization of the hidden secrets of the characters' hearts. The sin of man and the degeneration of man and the city are closely related, and the sick, chaotic land and man need to be redeemed. The mission of a literary scholar should be the same, to always expose and criticize the filth and irrationality faced by the people, and to call on them to cleanse themselves of all "crime and punishment".

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