«THE UNDENIABLE INNER COMPASS»: FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY'S *CRIME AND PUNISHMENT* IN LIGHT OF MOHAMMAD TAGHI JAFARI'S CONCEPT OF CONSCIENCE

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ABSTRACT: Though originated from a different historio-geographical background, Mohammad Taghi Jafari's definition of moral conscience in his book *The Conscience* helps to further explore Fyodor Dostoevsky's thematic concern with the same notion in *Crime and Punishment.* The following study probes into the concepts of self-evaluation and repentance as reflected in the novel. It then explores the manifestation of a phenomenon called the «ugliness of conscience» and all its implications ranging from hallucinations and self-hatred to paranoia and nightmares in this classic work of fiction. Moreover, this paper also studies Dostoevsky's narrative for any sign of emphasis on the priority of «moral conscience» over «intelligence» and «individuaity», as it is also philosophically proposed and stressed by Jafari.

KEY WORDS: Mohammad Taghi Jafari; Fyodor Dostoevsky; *Crime and Punishment*; Moral Conscience.

«El innegable compás interior»: Crimen y castigo de Fiodor Dostoyevski a la luz del concepto de conciencia en Mohammad Taghi Jafari

RESUMEN: A pesar de haberse originado en distintos contextos histórico-geográficos, la definición que Mohammad Taghi Jafari da de la conciencia moral en su libro *La conciencia* ayuda a profundizar en el interés temático de Dostoyevski por la misma noción en *Crimen y castigo*. El siguiente estudio se introduce en los conceptos de autoevaluación y arrepentimiento tal y como se reflejan en la novela. Posteriormente, pasa a investigar la manifestación en esta obra de ficción de un fenómeno denominado «la repulsión de la conciencia» y todas sus implicaciones, desde las alucinaciones y el autodesprecio hasta la paranoia y las pesadillas. Más áun, este artículo también estudia la narrativa de Dostoyevski en busca de cualquier muestra de énfasis en la prioridad de la «conciencia moral» sobre la «inteligencia» y la «individualidad», del modo en el que filosóficamente lo propone y remarca Jafari.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Mohammad Taghi Jafari; Fiodor Dostoyevski; *Crimen y castigo*; conciencia moral.

Introduction

> The delicate dove, called conscience, will continue battling against the hungry birds of prey, called desires and lusts, as long as it is alive, as long as it has not been downtrodden to death. (Jafari, 2005, p. 268)

Conscience is an abstract concept with a subjective character. Such complex nature hinders scholars from giving this notion any objective or universal

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definition. Throughout history, scholars from different fields as diverse as psychology, theology, and social sciences have proposed different hypotheses and speculations concerning the epistemic function of this faculty. Some of the contemporary researchers suggest that our moral inclinations are nothing but a construct of our brain influenced by the activity of its different regions and neurochemicals. Therefore, the moral judgments we make are mainly personal and can barely determine the moral value of an act or an idea. While this can be an acceptable explanation for the nature and origin of what we know as conscience, the following paper will only be concerned with those philosophical positions that take conscience as a psychological entity that receives its frame of work from external sources and laws and enable individuals to distinguish right and wrong based on those inputs. Such philosophical standpoints fall into two general categories. The first group defines conscience as a theologically implanted innate force that determines the way each person perceives the right and wrong based on the divine law without depending on the faculty of reason. However, not all thinkers concur that conscience is a shared faculty in all human beings with a fixed input. Secular theorists such as Sigmund Freud, John Locke and many others question this claim by arguing that moral judgments are socially conditioned and are rooted in one's upbringing and environmental —cultural and educational— experiences. In other words, the moral force individuals feel originates from their families and societies. To support their claim, these theorists highlight the fact that as each society has its unique moral system, people coming from different cultures differ in the way they perceive good and evil and, thus, there exists no single and universal boundary between these two.

Mohammad Taghi Jafari synthesizes these two different outlooks on the epistemic function of conscience and proposes that both the individual's discretion and society's instructions are the determining factors in the way each person judges the good and evil. Comparing conscience to an undeniable innate compass in need of cultivation, he asserts, «[this] compass is brought by men from the time they are born, but it is the society that determines the pole» (Jafari, 2005, p. 63). According to Jafari, conscience acts as an inner guide leading one to the path of salvation. This compass, albeit innate, receives its frame of function from the laws and regulations that the society, culture, and religion define.

This could be well perceived in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. The story follows the protagonist, Rodion Raskolnikov, who commits a murder to put to test in himself the *übermensch* or superman theory. However, the restlessness and delirium that plagues Raskolnikov after his crime suggests that conscience, as represented in this novel, is an innate force in human beings that even a radical non-believer like him is unable to evade. It is not just about the inner struggle the protagonist has; in fact, the society he lives in also contributes to how his guilty conscience haunts him. His initial social isolation explains why he believes in such radical ideas that later on fade away once he starts confiding his sins to other members of the society like Sonia and his sister, Dounia. Their opinions that represent the society's moral attitude eventually determine the poles of the protagonist's compass of conscience. This paper aims to take a closer look at this and other similarities between *Crime and Punishment* and Jafari's philosophical speculations about the nature and functions of the moral conscience.

1. Critics on the Role of Conscience in Crime and Punishment

First published in 1866, *Crime and Punishment* narrates a journey from pride to humility. This classic work of fiction explores themes of love, morality, sacrifice, religiosity, poverty, and justice in its almost 670 pages. A considerable number of research has been done to investigate the different psycho-social and literary merits of the novel, including its serious engagement with conscience.

Keqi Liu explores the importance of love in the cultivation of conscience in *Crime and Punishment*. As she notes, «Raskolnikov's [initial] confession is not the awakening of his conscience but the mere release from his nerve-racking mental struggle» (Liu, 2012, p. 163). She highlights Sonia's role and Raskolnikov's love for her as driving forces leading him to his final heartfelt repentance. According to Liu, «[the] moment Raskolnikov feels his love for Sonia and Sonia's love for him, his conscience and humanity come […] back to him» (*ibid*. 163). Mary L. Bellhouse, in agreement with Liu, writes, «With Sonia [, Raskolnikov] will eventually humble himself and "settle" for love: as he gives up his drive for superiority, his conscience is revitalized» (Bellhouse, 1986, p. 93). Bellhouse (1986) studies the concept of conscience in *Crime and Punishment* in light of Rousseau's theories. She explains how pride and rationality are lamented in both contexts and notes, «Raskolnikov eventually discovers what Rousseau understands, that abstract reason twisted by pride should not overrule conscience»(*ibid*. 90). The idea of love's victory over pride and rationality, as represented in the novel, also interests Predrag Cicovaski (2007). According to him, «Dostoevsky is convinced that conscience is stronger than any mode of reasoning and any existing law, just as it is stronger than self-interest and pride» (Cicovacki, 2007, p. 282). Cicovaski also investigates the concept of punishment in *Crime and Punishment*. He believes that as Dostoevsky demonstrates, the inherent conscience in individuals detects immoral deeds and inflicts punishment upon the guilty soul (*ibid*. 281). Based on this argument, in the case of Raskolnikov, experiencing pangs of conscience is much more effective than being imprisoned by law.

Dan E. Stigall's study (2005) of Raskolnikov's behavior, despite its legal nature, deals partly with this character's moral dilemma as well. Stigall argues that Raskolnikov is aware of the evil nature of his act. According to him, «[there] would be no reason for Raskolnikov to wash the blood from the murder weapon if he did not know that what he had done was criminal». And «there would be no need for Raskolnikov to hide evidence if he did not know that evidence could lead to his conviction» (Stigall, 2005, p. 57). He further refers to the misleading information Raskolnikov provides Illya Petrovitch with at the police station and states, «in criminal law, […] an attempt to create a false alibi constitutes evidence of the defendant's consciousness of guilt» (*ibid*. 59). Stigall also highlights Raskolnikov's «agitation, nervousness, and extremely unusual behavior after his crime», as another instance reflecting the anxiety caused by his sense of guilt (*ibid*. 63). His psychology of crime also targets the way the murderer flees the crime scene. According to Stigall, Raskolnikov attempted «concealing himself» that an innocent man of no guilt would barely consider (*ibid*. 62).

2. What has M. T. Jafari in Common with F. Dostoevsky?

Born in 1923, the Iranian philosopher, and theologian, M. T. Jafari had earned the title of *mujtahid* —clergyman practicing religious jurisprudence in Islam— when he was only twenty-three. During his lifetime, he composed several books on subjects as diverse as politics, modern sciences, jurisprudence, anthropology, ideology, art, aesthetics, moral ethics, literature, and philosophy. The concept of conscience, however, was what Jafari more often would like to return to. He believed that this area deserves more attention as a tool «to recognize man's real position in the world of existence and his fundamental value», and to «save [him] from being fallen in degradation»" (Jafari, 2005, p.12). To fill this gap, he wrote *The Conscience* in which he puts forth a study of conscience and tries to propose some solutions for the ambiguities associated with it.

In *The Conscience*, Jafari distances himself from a sheer religious outlook and provides several references to different works of psychology, literature, and science to support his argumentation. He explains the duties of conscience and ascribes to it different states such as ugliness, torture, judgment, and responsibility. Jafari endeavours to logically prove the authenticity of the force of conscience in man. According to him, individual differences in faculties like reason and desires like sexual drive by no means can negate the authenticity of their existence altogether. Likewise, the appearance of unconscionable characters like Napoleon or Hitler throughout history fails to deny the general innate inclination of humankind towards the good (Jafari, 2005, p. 52).

Fyodor Dostoevsky was raised in a religious environment. In *Dostoevsky: A Winter in His Time* (2009) Joseph Frank writes, «Dostoevsky was to say later that the problem of the existence of God had tormented him all his life, but it only confirms that it was always emotionally impossible for him to accept a world that had no relation to a God of any kind» (Frank, 2009, p. 24). The success and fame brought up by the publication of the *Poor Folk* (first published in 1845) enabled Dostoevsky to enter the literary socialist trend established by Vissarion Belinsky in the 1840s. Belinsky, the utopian socialist, introduced Dostoevsky to the atheistic ideas advocated by Left Hegelian agents like Ludwig Feuerbach. These ideas gradually planted the seeds of doubt in Dostoevsky's mind. In this regard, Frank remarks:

> The effect of all this on the young Dostoevsky is not difficult to foresee. Nobody has portrayed more brilliantly the tragic inner dialectic of this movement of atheist humanism and if Dostoevsky had no effective answer to Belinsky in 1845, he amply made up for it by the creation of his negative heroes. For when such characters reject God and Christ, they invariably engage in the impossible and self-destructive attempt to transcend the human condition, and to incarnate the left Hegelian dream of replacing the God-man by the Man-god. (Frank, 2009, p. 128)

Despite such influence, the time Dostoevsky spent with the faithful inmates in his prison years strengthened his faith in God and Christ. From that time on, Dostoevsky's mentality revealed some affinities with the Christian existentialism established by Soren Kierkegaard (*ibid*. 128). Lev Shestov considers Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard as doubles with closely comparable philosophy of life. Both of them believed in the irrationality of faith, or as they put it «the objective uncertainty»

(*ibid*. 221-2), and propagated the idea of the separation of faith and reason in opposing Friedrich Hegel's attempts to reconcile them through his so-called «philosophy of the spirit» (Shestov, 1969, p. 22). Kierkegaard maintains, «[the] leap of faith —a leap that is preceded by an awareness of our freedom and the fact that we might choose wrongly, but we must make a choice— must be one which causes us to surrender ourselves totally to God rather than to insist on reliance upon our reason» (Cline, 2016: para. 3). Accordingly, for Dostoevsky as another follower of Christian existentialism, this world is but «as predictable, orderly, and reliable as it appears to be», therefore; we should base our ineluctable choices on our faith rather than the power of reasoning (*ibid*.).

The affinities between of M. T. Jafari and Dostoevsky have been of interest to Seyed Javad Miri (2013). As he notes, «Allama Jafari is, indeed, the only Iranian thinker who has dared to bridge between *hekmat* [wisdom] and literature based on a specific theoretical position, i.e. the theory of universal human culture» (Miri, 2013, p. 57). Miri identifies «the perennial character of [the] problems which Dostoevsky worked upon along his turbulent intellectual sojourn», (*ibid*. 58) as the primary reason for which he relates the philosophical worldviews of this Russian novelist to the ideas of M. T Jafari. According to Miri, though these two figures lived in different times and places, they have almost comparable views towards life, reason, and religion. Miri then draws a parallel between these two thinkers in different cases; namely, the appreciation of the sublimity of the infinite world, prioritizing the intellect over reason and having a «critical perspective on the modern civilization» (*ibid*. 60). Another common ground between Jafari and Dostoevsky that Miri cursorily points out, but does not elaborate on, is their fascination with the concept of conscience and its relation to free will; an interrelationship that this article aims to investigate.

Conscience and the way it works is a common focus in both Dostoevsky's fiction and M. T. Jafari's philosophy. Jafari repeatedly refers to Dostoevsky's works in supporting his arguments regarding the notion of conscience. He even allocates one of the chapters of his book to the captivating philosophical arguments interwoven in the *Notes from the Underground*. This chapter titled as «Wanting» revolves around the idea that human being is by nature an abyss of desire and concludes that the conscience is the only force that could restrain this natural tendency. Jafari also uses excerpts from Doestoevsky's *The Memories of the House of Dead, Brothers Karamazov* and *Crime and Punishment* in support of his ideas on the torture and tranquility of conscience. In the light of this, the present article studies how Dostoevsky's tale of murder in *Crime and Punishment* could be explained based on a picture Jafari gives of moral conscience in *The Conscience*, first published in 1998.

3. Reading Crime and Punishment in the Light of The Conscience

Mohammad Taghi Jafari believes that «literatures of different nations all over the world eloquently express their commitment to the moral conscience» (Jafari, 2005, p. 70). *Crime and Punishment,* as an example of Russian literature, thematically engages with the same subject. In his long tale of sorrow and regret, Dostoevsky

demonstrates how inevitable the pangs of conscience are and observes the process through which a nonbeliever comes to realize the existence of an inner force driving him towards goodness and light.

Jafari's observation of the nature of conscience refutes Raskolnikov's theory of dividing people into two groups of ordinary and extraordinary, a division that gives the latter the right «to commit breaches of morality and crime» in the service of a greater good (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 225). In opposition to Raskolnikov's attempts to disregard his conscience for a higher purpose, Jafari notes, «It is not in human nature to act unconscionably, for man has the faculty of conscience or at least is endowed with the talent to have an active conscience. It is at this point that we see man self-consciously and deliberately negate what he finds in himself» (Jafari, 2005, p. 74). Dostoevsky presents the same idea in one of Razumihin's dialogues where he says, «you sanction bloodshed in the name of conscience […], but that sanction of bloodshed by conscience is to my mind […] more terrible than the official, legal sanction of bloodshed» (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 310).

In *Crime and Punishment*, conscience serves as a psychological burden that eventually brings characters like Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov to their knees. The stress that this novel puts on the undeniability of such an inner force is manifested in Porfiry Petrovitch's dialogue with Raskolnikov the moment he refers to «man's temperament» and the way it «reflects everything [inside] like a mirror» (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 402). Acknowledging the existence of this inner force, Jafari defines this agent as «the entity which can invite all human beings to the logical coexistence» (Jafari, 2005, p. 74) and ascribes to it a set of functions ranging from making moral judgments to *inflicting guilt*-motivated self-*punishment*.

3.1. Conscience as a Touchstone for Judgment

According to Jafari, conscience is responsible for the task of observation and making moral judgments. Just like an ear that hears and perceives sounds, this faculty can determine the nature of any thought and action. «Conscience», Jafari remarks, «[is] like a thermometer measuring the good or evil deeds we do» (Jafari, 2005, p. 164). He acknowledges both the innateness of conscience and the effect of other external factors on its nature. Drawing on his metaphysics of Judgment, Jafari emphasizes the importance of judging one's actions based on the norm. Concerning this, he defines conscience as the judge who «examines a human word or deed according to a specific law and proves whether he is guilty or not» (*ibid*. 179). In other words, he prescribes a contentious judgment based on a law with articles «discovered through intellect, religion, or social customs» (*ibid*.). Characters in *Crime and Punishment* serve their duties of moral judgment either consciously or unconsciously. They observe and judge the actions of their own and the ones performed by the people around them. They, consequently, condemn immoral actions like injustice, alcoholism, child molestation, murder, prostitution, ignorance, duplicity, and falsehood and treat them all with repulsion and disapproval.

Raskolnikov's case illustrates this claim. Although he rationally finds no fault with his murder plan, he hesitates to carry it out. It takes a while for him to feel courageous enough to put that plan into action. In the meantime, he repeatedly

abandons his murder plans knowing that he cannot overstep his moral boundaries. His moral conscience shows him how vile, loathsome, and base the whole idea is. «How dared I», he ponders, «knowing myself, knowing how I should be, take up an ax and shed blood! I ought to have known beforehand… Ah, but I did know!» (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 322). While still in a moral dilemma, he dreams of a horse being beaten and killed by its drunken owner (*ibid*. 68-73). This dream and his reaction to it show that, despite his attempts to disregard his conscience, he still can distinguish right from wrong and justice from cruelty. This hesitation lingers on to the time of the murder. Although he is quite sure about the theory that gives him the right to murder the pawnbroker, he never «could believe in [actually] carrying out his plans» (*ibid*. 85). At times, he thinks of giving it all up and releasing himself from «[that] spell, […] sorcery [and…] obsession» (*ibid*. 74). After committing the murder, being aware of the notoriety of his deed, he utters, «Surely it isn't the beginning already! Surely, it is not my punishment coming upon me. It is!» (*ibid*.109). As such evidence suggests, Raskolnikov believes himself to be a sinner who deserves punishment. Furthermore, the way other characters find his act repulsive and evil is also of importance. In line with Jafari, this signifies how society provides the inputs for the protagonist's moral compass of conscience. His social isolation plays an important role in how he initially justifies his vile intentions. At the university, «[Rakolnikov] kept aloof from everyone, went to see no one, and did not welcome anyone who came to see him, and indeed every one soon gave him up. He seemed to some of his comrades to look down upon them all as children, as though their beliefs and interests were beneath him» (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 52). He begins to see the true immoral nature of his evil deed only when Sonia blames him for it and urges him to make a confession in public, Dounia cries desperately at the thought of her brother shedding blood, and Svidrigailov suggests that he can only make up for his vileness by doing thousands of good deeds.

Marmeladov, too, is aware of the baseness of his uncontrollable drinking habits. He refers to himself as «a useless worm» (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 15), a weak «scoundrel» (*ibid.* 16), and the cause of the humiliation and depravity of his family. In addition to his alcoholism, he also feels guilty for the fact that he and Katerina Ivanovna led his daughter, Sonia, to prostitution. He expresses an overwhelming sense of shame and remorse as though he knows what a vile thing they have done (*ibid*. 21). Moreover, this character's remarks about The Day of Doom confirm that he has already judged his actions and is convinced that he deserves punishment; «I ought to be crucified», he says, «crucified on a cross» (*ibid*. 26). Relying on the observations of his conscience, Mameladov also judges the actions of others and, in that regard, labels Katerina and Sonia as sinners whom God will forgive because through suffering they have already paid for their sins.

Conscience, according to Jafari (2005), both comprehends the nature of ideas and actions and stimulates an individual towards the ideal personality (*ibid*. 153-4). Jafari compares conscience to a compass leading the way towards the utmost virtue. Any action incongruous with the direction that this compass leads to is a sin that causes «the ugliness of conscience» (*ibid*. 157). Such an ugliness brings about an inner torment that manifests itself in different ways. For instance, the ugliness of Raskolnikov's conscience that causes him to experience remorse, regret, and paranoia first divulges his secret shame when Nastasya brings up the news of

the murder of Lizaveta, «he felt his arms and legs as lifeless as though they had been cut off. He did not attempt to move but stared obstinately at the flower [on the wallpaper of his room]» (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 161). Later on, the protagonist also expresses his regret while confessing to Sonia. He admits that he was stupid to undertake such a wicked action only to prove himself that he belongs to the group of extraordinary people to whom no rule of morality applies.

A constant sense of paranoia is another mental obsession that haunts Raskolnikov. He imagines that everyone knows his secret and interprets all their actions and words as signs of a mind game going on against him. The pain, nevertheless, is not limited to paranoia. «As personality is the most precious asset of a man», Jafari maintains, «then self-loathe would be the most agonizing of tortures for a guilty soul» (Jafari, 2005, p. 157). By saying, «I murdered myself not [the old woman]», Raskolnikov admits the destructive effect of this evil deed on his spirit (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 489). In addition to all these mental sufferings, his family is also afraid of him as if they could sense the wickedness of a soul responsible for an evil act; Dounia admits being scared of her brother and Pulcheria crosses herself in fear while going upstairs to meet his boy. Furthermore, the fact that Sonia welcomes Raskolnikov with «no trace of repugnance, no trace of disgust, [and] no tremor» (*ibid*. 514) startles this character as if he senses the fear and disgust others feel towards him and, thus, believes his corrupted soul is unworthy of such kindness. Raskolnikov's physical illness following the murder is also a manifestation of such conscientious torture in the novel. Based on doctor Zossimov's diagnosis, «[his] illness was due partly to his unfortunate material surroundings […], but it had partly also a moral origin. [It is] the product of several materials and moral influences, anxieties, apprehensions, troubles, certain ideas … and so on» (*ibid*. 243). The paranoia, self-loathe, and physical illness all take roots in the ugliness inflicted upon Raskolnikov's conscience, which its removal is dependent on the elimination of the cause. Jafari argues:

> If the cause of moral tribulation is not removed, the ugliness [of conscience] would continue to be. Could that agent of ugliness not be removed (e.g. he has killed someone criminally), one can compensate it by surrendering oneself to the court of justice to be punished. Of course the surrender to the court of justice may save him from the ugliness if he feels sorry and is regretful, otherwise if he is drowned in ugliness and pollution in such a way that he overlooks himself unconsciously and does not intend to surrender to the court of justice that ugliness could not be removed. (Jafari, 2005, p. 155)

Raskolnikov achieves this goal through the voluntary confession he makes. His desire to confess begins the day after the murder when he receives a notice from the police department. Feverish and disturbed, he decides to put an end to his misery by surrendering himself to the police, but the swings he experiences between his moral drive and his rational judgment stops him from doing so. Later on, his moral fatigue and «intense desire […] to put his tongue out» (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 194), once more provokes him to confess, this time to the head clerk of the police department, Zametov. Seemingly, the only solution to Raskolnikov's inward conflict is to let others know everything about his evil deed. In a section of the novel that demonstrates both the condition of an ugly conscience and the inevitability of

the criminal's surrender, Porfiry Petrovitch elaborates on the psychological root of Raskolnikov's urge to confess and remarks, «[f]reedom will lose its attraction. [The criminal] will begin to brood, he'll weave a tangle around himself, he'll worry himself to death! […] He will provide me with a mathematical proof. […] He'll fly straight into my mouth and I'll swallow him» (*ibid*. 400). Tired of the anxiety, nightmares, and hallucinations, Raskolnikov eventually opens up to Sonia. However, as Jafari puts it, «what can reduce the ugliness […] is a conscious voluntary activity done to remove that shame and not mere mechanical reaction» (Jafari, 2005, p. 155). Therefore, in the case of Raskolnikov, it is the heartfelt regret during his time in prison that eventually removes the cause of his conscience's ugliness and brings him peace and salvation.

Like Raskolnikov, other guilty characters in *Crime and Punishment* each struggle with their internal torment and try to alleviate it in different ways. Sonia, for instance, finds solace in the word of God. She takes refuge in the Holy Bible from the vileness of prostitution and her strong faith purges her conscience from its ugliness. In the case of Katerina Ivanovna, this purification takes place through tribulation and suffering. As she puts it, God should forgive her because he knows about the suffering and misfortune that has burdened her (Dostoevsky, 2009: 506). By suffering here, of course, she means her physical illness, depravity, humiliation, and poverty. Svidrigailov is no exception; he, too, senses «the compulsory result» (Jafari, 2005, p. 155) of his evil actions and tries to compensate for them by supporting Sonia and her stepsiblings and offering Dounia some money. None, however, can bring him peace as he refuses to confess to Marfa Petrovna's murder and escapes the punishment. As Jafari puts it, «[i]f [a human] drowns in ugliness and pollution in such a way that he overlooks himself unconsciously and does not intend to surrender to the court of justice [,] that ugliness could not be removed» (*ibid*. 155); the unbearable ugliness of conscience eventually drives Svidrigailov to commit suicide.

Although the elimination of the so-called ugliness of conscience requires the removal of its root cause, according to Jafari, «some good acts [may still] reduce the pain of some conscientious sorrows» (*ibid*. 156). For instance, Sonia's compassion, faith, and sacrifices lighten her burden of guilt and maintain her purity and innocence despite being a prostitute. Some evil actions, however, have the potential to ruin the moral and conscientious deeds one performs (*ibid*.). Raskolnikov, as an example, helps the poor, saves some children from a fire, and looks after people in need, but his filthy act of murder overshadows all his noble actions altogether and «disturb[s] and agitate[s the] joy and contentment of [his] conscience» (*ibid*.).

Being in harmony with one's ideal, Jafari says, is another determining factor in keeping the tranquility of one's conscience (Jafari, 2005, p. 173). Maintaining this inner harmony helps Sonia survive her sense of guilt. She never strays from the path of her religious ideal and sticks to her beliefs throughout the plot. Likewise, the roots of Razumihin's tranquility go back to the same cause. He believes in the natural goodness of man and renounces the progressive science-oriented ideas. Razumihin argues, «you can't skip over nature by logic», because «logic presupposes three possibilities, but there are millions!» (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 302). Living in harmony with the commands of his inner moral guide is the cause of the tranquility of his conscience. He is a selfless man of action who cares about people around him

and has some plans for his future. Unlike these characters, Raskolnikov proposes and follows an ideal so much against his nature. The incongruity between his moral temperament and his inhumane theory of Superman inflicts pain and punishment on his guilty conscience. However, as Raskolnikov himself puts it, «the butterfly flies to the light» (*ibid*. 291). This metaphoric comparison of his conscience with a butterfly indicates his inherent inclination towards the light of goodness.

3.2. Conscience as an Archive of Memories

M. T. Jafari defines the most prominent function of conscience to be its capability to preserve one's memories. Nonetheless, the type this faculty records «are such specific memories as good or bad [ones], [experiencing] convulsion, shame» and not «those indifferent phenomena which have no connections with our personality» (Jafari, 2005, p. 126). In *Crime and Punishment*, this function of conscience is represented in the shape of haunted memories, ghosts, and nightmares. In the first part of the novel, Marmeladov starts describing his shame memories once he meets Raskolnikov in the tavern. He tells his companion about the day he and his wife persuaded Sonia to provide for the family by working as a prostitute, as the father was unable to support them due to his alcoholism. He keeps recalling the past, and when it comes to the memory of selling his wife's stockings to get a drink, the guilt-ridden soul calls himself a «beast by nature» (Dostoevsky, 2009, p. 17). He remembers losing his job again and asking his daughter for some money that he wasted on new clothes and, of course, some liquor. He talks about the hope his new position had brought to his family and how he failed them repeatedly (*ibid*. 19). Eventually, the load of shame and regret leave Marmeladov in such great distress that he chooses to end his life by ignoring the warnings of the coachman so he can finally die, rest in peace, and be free from the pangs of his guilty conscience.

The way Raskolnikov recalls every single detail about the convulsive moments of the murder he committed is another example of conscience's function as an archive of memories. He vividly recalls the moment he deceives the pawnbroker, his victim, into trusting him and opening the door. It was the moment that «stood out in his mind vividly, distinctly, forever» (*ibid*. 92). He also remembers how «collected and careful» he was at the crime scene to eliminate any possible trace left behind (*ibid*. 95). In part III, the protagonist utters, «I remember everything even to the slightest detail, and yet —why I did that and went there and said that I can't clearly explain now» (*ibid*. 267). This confession is another proof that conscience merely records events that directly affect one's personality and it barely concerns itself with the logical justifications of those incidents.

Nightmares are one of the other agents of conscience in Dostoevsky's moral fable. The frightening dreams that stem from the real memories of the characters traumatize them with visions of their sins. The delirious Raskolnikov, for instance, has a nightmare that simulates the exact scene of the crime he committed. It seems as if he has returned to that same flat in which «everything […] was as before, the chairs, the looking-glass, the yellow sofa, and the pictures in the frames» (*ibid*. 326). In that nightmare, he encounters the traumatic experience of killing the old pawnbroker once more and feels the convulsion and fear of that moment all over again.

Raskolnikov, however, is not the only character suffering from nightmares that reflect his shame memories. Svidrigailov, too, is not immune from such warnings of his guilty conscience. In chapter six, he dreams of a little girl to whom he gives shelter in his hotel room. To Svidrigailov's surprise, the innocence of the girl's face vanishes the moment he puts her in bed. He witnesses «something infinitely hideous and shocking in [her] laugh, in those eyes, in such nastiness in the face of a child» (*ibid*. 595). This nightmare is, in fact, a projection of a crime Svidrigailov committed a long time ago. Once Svidrigailov's chain of unfair behavior drove a little innocent deaf and dumb girl of fourteen to commit suicide by hanging herself, and now it seems that the memory of that incident is haunting him in his dreams.

The conscience-stricken characters of *Crime and Punishment* struggle with delirium and hallucinations, too. Seeing ghosts is the ultimate manifestation of such an unstable mental condition. For instance, the ghost of the ones Svidrigailov mistreated in the past keep following him throughout the story and his guilty conscience makes sure that he never forgets the pain he inflicted upon them. He encounters the ghosts of Marfa Petrovna, his late wife, and Philip, his servant, both of whom died because of him. These phantoms are mere pictures projected by his guilty conscience to make him remember his immoral past. As Svidrigailov himself remarks, «the ghosts only appear to the sick […] as soon as one is ill, as soon as the normal earthly order of organism is broken, one begins to realize the possibility of another world; and the more seriously ill one is, the closer becomes one's contact with that other world» (*ibid* 339). This other world is the world of conscience, and the illness he talks about refers to the depth of vileness one is drowned in and the pangs of conscience he feels.

3.3. Triumph of Conscience over Intelligence

In *Crime and Punishment,* «intelligence» is associated with utilitarianism and is introduced as «essentially an evil power» (Beebe, 1955, p. 153). This force forbids compassion (Dostoevsky, 2009:15) and «tells us, love yourself before all men, for everything in the world rests on self-interest» (*ibid*. 177). Raskolnikov stands for such expedient ethical ideology in the novel. This tendency to divide all men to ordinary and extraordinary prefigures late-nineteenth-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of *Übermensch* or superman. Based on Raskolnikov's worldview, the men who fall under the category of extraordinary human beings are not bound to obey ethical and legal rules as they have a higher goal in mind. He sheds blood to test this idea and to determine to which of these two groups he belongs. As Jafari maintains, following any progressive ideas aimlessly and without taking conscience into account will lead to destruction (Jafari, 2005, p. 148). In *Crime and Punishment* this is the destruction of the innocent lives of an old pawnbroker and her mentally challenged half-sister that tells of this situation. The fabric of the novel condemns disregarding conscience and highlights the eventual victory of conscience, this inner moral compass, over intelligence. In Jafari's words:

> Ingenious criminals perform their job with remarkable intelligence and precise mental activity. But conscience, which is metaphorically known as «heart», is reluctant to act in a way other than the material or spiritual interest of individual or society. The structure of «heart» [e.g. conscience] is such that it can merely act

> under direction of good deeds and pure intentions while thought is not endowed with such a structure and is only a tool by whichever entity it is used and would end in an intelligent result. (Jafari, 2005, p. 133)

Thought, science, and reason are, therefore, mere tools that fail to explain human emotional dispositions. It is the reason why Raskolnikov's guilt expresses itself in the form of physical and mental problems not long after committing the crime he surmised would not affect him. Sonia's influence leads Raskolnikov, who believed that no moral law applies to him, to a spiritual awakening and a heartfelt repentance. Sonia is the emblem of morality and conscience while Raskolnikov is an educated man who attempts to deny the inevitable pangs of conscience. «Although science and knowledge illuminate our mind, change our life, and man can do nothing without them», Jafari maintains, «they can never become the object of man and cause any intellectual development, if not being mixed with [a] human conscience» (Jafari, 2005, p. 148). As a result, Raskolnikov gradually loses his faith in his utilitarian outlook and realizes that he is unable to step over his moral values and beliefs. It is only in the epilog that he finally surrenders and reconciles with the Holy Book. Before that, «he did not know that the new life would not be given him for nothing, that he would have to pay dearly for it, that it would cost him great striving, great suffering» (Dostoevsky, 2009, pp. 641-2). This reconciliation with his inner compass of conscience leads him to «the beginning of a new story —the story of the gradual renewal of a man, the story of his gradual regeneration, of his passing from one world into another, of his intuition into a new unknown life» (*ibid*. 642). Sonia and Raskolnikov's symbolic match at the end forms the perfect couple destined for salvation and a bright future.

Dostoevsky also highlights the power of conscience to curb the intelligence in Razumihin's character. Unlike Raskolnikov, his friend is a man of balance. «There [is] no limits to his drinking powers, but he [can] abstain from drinking altogether; he sometimes [goes] too far in his pranks [,] but he [can] do without pranks altogether» (*ibid*. 63). This sense of balance is what distinguishes him from Raskolnikov and gives him the ability to survive poverty and harsh life circumstances. Razumihin is an educated man who, unlike his idealist friend, is more of a pragmatist. Along with his academic background, he has a powerful faith in man's faculty of conscience. He believes, «desire for good exists, though it's in a childish form, and honesty you may find, although there are crowds of brigands» (*ibid*. 176). Moreover, he is the one who genuinely expresses his disagreement with Raskolnikov's inhumane theory. «Those who have the right to murder», he objects, «oughtn't they to suffer at all even for the blood they've shed?» (*ibid*. 311). After all, a bright future in both his academic path and his personal life is the reward Dostoevsky grants to this man whose conscience has his intelligence under control.

Conclusion

Indeed, Raskolnikov's initial flaw but final renewal and growth, Sonia's adherence to religion, Marmeladov's contrition, and Svidrigailov's inclination towards compensation serve to indicate how the fundamental moral conscience in the

literary creation of Dostoevsky and Jafari's philosophy of conscience coincide. This study endeavored to uncover the profound mysteries related the internal conflicts of the characters in *Crime and Punishment* and their undeniable conscientious drive based on Jafari's proposed theory for moral conscience. In other words, this study manifested that no matter how different their outlooks might be, Jafari and Dostoevsky picture the same pattern of how conscience works and how it guides humankind through life and saves them from the abyss of pain and suffering.

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