

# **The Role of Observation and Reinforcement in the Formation of Raskolnikov's Character in Crime and Punishment Based on Albert Bandura's Theory**

## **Extended Abstract**

### **Introduction**

Analyzing Raskolnikov in this way enables us to analyze critical moments in the narrative not only as narrative events but also as moments of learning and identity re-formation. In his encounters with characters such as Marmeladov—a poignant image of failure, remorse, and passivity—and Sonya—a symbol of moral surrender, unrequited love, and endurance in suffering—he reaches a pattern of value confrontation and visionary transformation. This process, from Bandura's perspective, is an example of observational learning and vicarious reinforcement; that is, he is led to revise his own beliefs by observing the consequences of others' actions.

Thus, this article attempts to present a more scientific picture of Raskolnikov's internal transformation process by using Bandura's theory and showing how a character steps from the abyss of crime to the threshold of self-awareness and moral reconstruction; not through direct advice, but through emotional, observational interactions, and social learning. Considering the structural and psychological complexities of the novel, an analytical approach based on social psychology opens new horizons in understanding the reasons for Raskolnikov's actions and the path of his return to humanity.

### **Methodology**

The aim of this research is to analyze and recognize the role of observational learning and reinforcement components in the process of formation, deviation and reconstruction of Raskolnikov's character in the novel *Crime and Punishment*. In this analysis, Albert Bandura's social learning theory is used as a conceptual framework and the interaction between the social environment, individual cognition and behavior is examined in depth. The research method is qualitative and based on textual content analysis. To achieve the goal, examples from the novel's text are extracted and adapted to Bandura's theoretical components (attention, maintenance, reproduction, motivation and reinforcement). This method helps to better understand the causal relationships between the character's lived experiences and his behavioral transformation.

### **Discussion**

Raskolnikov and the Observation Process

#### **- Observation and Attention to Power Patterns**

In Raskolnikov's dialogues with friends and characters such as Razumikhin, Luzhin, and Svidrigailov, signs of attention and role-playing are clearly observed:

For a large part of the novel, Raskolnikov is observing patterns of behavior in the society around him. He carefully observes the fate, behavior, and power of others and compares them with his own situation.

In a conversation with his friend Razumikhin, he praises Napoleon: "Didn't Napoleon kill thousands of people? And people still praise him. If I can do something great, don't I deserve admiration?" (p. 249)

Here, Raskolnikov shows attention and maintenance of this pattern by paying attention to Napoleon's powerful behavior. His motivation for imitation comes from the reinforcement of substitution — imitating the success of others without directly experiencing power.

He also looks at the behavior and attitudes of influential men like Luzhin and Svidrigailov and sees how they pursue their own interests without any remorse: "He (Svidrigailov) shamelessly exploited helpless women, and yet he had a respectable figure in society." (p. 374) "Svidrigailov plays with women and abuses his position, but everyone seems to ignore this" (p. 375).

Raskolnikov wonders why he himself cannot achieve a great goal with a small murder? Svidrigailov's ruthless and selfish behavior, which is accepted in society, shows Raskolnikov that it is possible to achieve power and success without observing moral principles.

Raskolnikov is not only influenced by social conditions and poverty, but also learns from the behavioral patterns around him. For example, in his interaction with Porphyry, the investigator, Raskolnikov is repeatedly seen to be influenced by his psychological insight and analysis:

"Porphyry looked at him calmly and sharply, as if reading him, and then asked quietly: 'Don't you think that ordinary people also have the right to kill others?'" (p. 423)

Here, Raskolnikov observes a model of an analytical and powerful individual who can read the minds of others without violence. This observation is later reflected in his contradictory behavior; he simultaneously desires to dominate and fears being exposed.

Bandura emphasizes that people learn and imitate by observing the behavior of others and their consequences. (Bandura, 1977) In the novel *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov shapes his beliefs and motivations by observing and internalizing the behavior of characters such as Napoleon, Svidrigailov, and even the lives of ordinary people.

### **Conclusion**

The character of Raskolnikov in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* is a complex and multi-layered example of the influence of psychological processes on the formation and development of the human personality. Based on Albert Bandura's social learning theory, we can analyze the process of psychological collapse, moral crisis, and gradual reconstruction of conscience in this character.

According to this theory, human behavior is the result of a three-way interaction between individual factors (cognitions, beliefs, emotions), environmental factors (motives, models, social consequences), and previous behaviors. In Raskolnikov's case, the formation of criminal thoughts and the decision to kill was the result of his observations of social conditions, behavioral patterns of those around him, and his own mental ideology. At this stage, "observational learning" played an important role; he modeled behaviors such as the old woman's cruelty, Luzhin's selfishness, and social passivity, and based on them found justifications for violating the law and morality.

Subsequently, "negative reinforcement" (such as psychological pressure, guilt, anxiety after the murder) and "positive reinforcement" (such as Sonya's kind behavior and emotional support) led to the formation of a kind of self-regulation process in Raskolnikov. In the light of various experiences, his personality entered the "reflective" stage; that is, he evaluated his past behaviors from a higher perspective and gradually reconstructed his conscience. This process of psychological reconstruction shows that even in critical situations, social learning mechanisms such as observation, modeling, reinforcement, and self-regulation can lead to fundamental personality changes. Also, the influence of the moral environment, the presence of a spiritual role model (Sonya), and confrontation with the institution of power (Profiro) were among the factors that played a key role in Raskolnikov's behavioral reform.

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