The flood in the heart of Dostoyevsky

Dostoevsky is a Russian writer deeply influenced by Christianity. Figuring out Dostoevsky's religious views is necessary to interpret his works. This paper tries to analyze the relationship between *Crime and Punishment* and *The Bible* with respect to the water image, to find out Dostoevsky's deep understanding of Christian theology.

The prototype criticism theory was popular in the twentieth century. Northrop Frye believed that *The Bible* is the theoretical starting point of the mythological prototype. He applied the archetypal criticism theory to literary studies. He argued that the source of literary evolution is myths, including the mythology in the Bible.

*The Bible* begins at the beginning of time and ends at the end of time, as described in Revelation. Between the beginning and the end, with the two names of Adam and Eve as a symbol, summarized the history of mankind, with specific images appearing repeatedly met with a kind of integration principle. Christian tradition regarded *The Old Testament* as a series of predictions and *The New Testament* as prototypes for these predictions. Predictions are symbols while Prototypes are realities. The *New Testament* and *The Old Testament* are both of mythological nature and represent their own understanding of faith. Dostoevsky reconstructed these prototypical themes and images, reflecting Dostoevsky's deep thinking about religion. Specifically, water image, one of the most important image in *The Bible,* was well-designed in *Crime and Punishment*.

Water represents rebirth or new life. In *Exodus,* when Israelites were almost dying of thirst, the God told Moses to put a twig into the sea water and the water became cold and sweet. Then, they travelled on to an oasis called Elim. Without the appearance of water in the desert, Israelites would probably die. This is similar to the day dream of Raskolnikov when he was ill and dying. “He fancied that he was in Africa, in Egypt, in some sort of oasis . . . But he was drinking water from a spring which flowed gurgling close by.” Raskonikov got a fever after his crime and got cold and blue water in his dream. He lied in bed with general weakness and malaise for a long time but recovered his strength after the dream. This scene implied that he hoped to regain his life which he lost in the murder.

Water represents purification*.* In *The Bible,* the community of Israel used water for the purification ceremony. “To remove the defilement, put some of the ashes from the burnt purification offering in a jar, and pour fresh water over them.” (*Numbers 19)* In *Crime and Punishment,* the water prototype also has this function. Raskolnikov washed the blood on his axe and throw the stolen goods into the river after the crime symbolized that he was washing away his sins. Millions of drops dripped on Svidrigailov’s head before his suicide, which also represented purification.

In Frye's opinion, water is also demonic image in the sense of the wrath and revenge of God while it can also be a salvation image dialectically. When Moses led the Israelites out of the Red Sea of Egypt, he, with the help of the God, separated the Red Sea with the rods, forming the way for the Israelites to pass, after which the Red Sea drowned the Egyptian pursuers. Similarly, in the story of the flood, creatures on the Ark were saved while others were destroyed. In *Crime and Punishment,* water images also have these two opposite symbolizations.

When Raskolnikov saw a tall woman jumping into the river, “the filthy water parted and swallowed up its victim for a moment”. “Filthy” and “swallowed” conveyed the power of destruction and the feeling of terror. The tall woman became the victim of the water, like Egyptian army and those people out of the ark. If Raskolnikov, following the tall women, invoked death for her relief and deliverance by jumping into the river, he would not have the chance to get salvation later.

Lots of water image appear before Svidrigailov’s suicide. The description of the water in the text is as follows: "The water fell not in drops, but beat on the earth in streams . . . Svidrigailov was wet through . . . The rain had ceased and there was a roaring wind . . . He began shivering, and for one moment he gazed at the black waters." This rain, like the rain sent by God in Genesis, intended to clean the city and purify people full of crime. Differently, everyone who was willing to contact with God in the city would get a chance to purification and salvation. However, after the rain, Svidrigailov thought: "I never have liked water . . . even in a landscape." At his end of life, he still refused to contact with God and chose a cheap punishment, suicide, to get rid of his crime. Thus, the rain became a prelude of destruction for Svidrigailov.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).” In *The Bible,* those believing in God were saved by water while those opposing to God were punished. In *Crime and Punishment,* the water image could uncover different attitudes to God by Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov and then the reason Raskolnikov received salvation while Svidrigailov failed.

Raskolnikov’s oasis dream was bright, open, beautiful, and pleasant. “And it was so cool, it was wonderful, wonderful, blue, cold water running among the parti-colored stones and over the clean sand which glistened here and there like gold…” The “glistened sand” and “parti-colored stones” shaped a bright image, the double use of “wonderful” emphasized his joy when he saw water in his dream, and the color “blue” conveyed Raskolnikov’s feeling of relaxation.

However, the water in Svidrigailov’s dream before his suicide was dark, dirty, and disgust. "By morning it will be swirling down the street in the lower parts, flooding the basements and cellars. The cellar rats will swim out, and men will curse in the rain and wind as they drag their rubbish to their upper storeys . . .” The dark basements and cellars, the rats and rubbish disease, and the curse, making people sick and fear, were driven by the water with in Svidrigailov’s perspective.

Thus, these different unconscious association related water by Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov represents their different attitude to God and salvation. Raskolnikov was willing to contact God. He abandoned his idea of suicide, undertake punishment, and then receive his salvation, Dunya. In contrast, Svidrigailov’s dislike of water implied that his refusal to the baptism and the salvation. He tried to, if ever, make up his crime by easily pulling the trigger. But this was a cheap punishment and Dunya would not give him the opportunity to be redeemed.

We should first explore the reasons for the suicide of Svidrigailov. In *Crime and Punishment*, Svidrigailov was easy controlled by his lust and disloyal to his wife, and he tortured her to death. Killing the servant and tarnishing the young girl tortured his conscience. But after he met Dunia, the situation changed when Dunya tried to save him. Perhaps her constant discouragement and tears touched Svidrigailov so that he began to do good deeds. Before he decided to commit suicide, Svidrigailov used his knowledge of Raskolnikov's crime to force Dunya to be with him. I think that Svidrigailov's admiration for Dunya was not only the impulse of lust but also the desire to get redemption from Dunya. At the time of his fall, Dunya's pure soul shook him, pushing him to examine his soul. But at the same time, he could not escape the lust of enticement. Svidrigailov was complicated. On the one hand, he was eager to be saved and he treated Dunya as the life-saving straw. On the other hand, his lust was so shameless and despicable. Finally, when his reason and conscience let her go, he realized that he had completely lost Dunya, which was his chance of salvation. His inner struggle and split personality brought him to the pain of the abyss so that his heart was full of helplessness. As a result, Svidrigailov decided to commit suicide. But before his suicide, Svidrigailov helped Sonya settle the orphan of Marmeladov, giving his young fiancée’s parents a large sum of money. These reflected the human side of Svidrigailov. Christ's body contains the infinite nature of the human soul, but its budding exists in the soul of all, even if it is degenerate! The soul of the guilty person contains the bud but also has good qualities, which makes redemption possible. Although the road to redemption closed, he, for short while, experienced the desire to do good, which paved way for his struggled decision to death.

In *Crime and Punishment,* Raskolnikov

For the fish in the flood, Frye gave the explanation: "In the symbolic sense, the flood never retreats, and we all live in the symbolic sense of the underwater imagination of the world's fish. The same is the later symbolism of the darkness and death of Egypt, so Noah's floods and through the Red Sea in the "New Testament" is considered a different form of sacred baptism in the baptism.” The baptized people were symbolically submerged in the old world, and woke up to reach the other side of the new world.

Based on Frye’s theory above, in *Crime and Punishment*, the rain right before the death of Svidrigailov symbolizes his Baptism.

In the dream, Svidrigailov felt the chill, dark, and dampness outside the window, but flowers appeared. In the dream, Svidrigailov was looking forward to the swollen water in the morning, flooding the basements and cellars. In the dream, Svidrigailov could not wait to go to the Park and was desperate to let millions of drops drip on his head.

Although he was rejected by Dunya, although, although he desperately end his life by suicide, Svidrigailov eventually received a baptism in a special way. The rain did not come down drop by drop but fell in torrents, washing his sins away and renewing his soul. This is exactly the theme of the Dostoevsky's works: salvation. Dostoevsky would give the hope of salvation to any individual, no matter what kind of crimes the person might have committed, as long as the person still has a soul. As a result, at the end of Svidrigailov's life, a grand baptism came to him. The following description in Psalms perfectly matches the state of Svidrigailov: "Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck. I sink in the miry depths, where there is no foothold. I have come into the deep waters; the floods engulf me. I am worn out calling for help; my throat is parched. My eyes fail, looking for my God."(Biblical Psalm 69: 1-3) Svidrigailov wanted to look for his God but failed. He hoped to get redemption but was unable to extricate himself from his lusts. He waited for God but his eyes were blinded, ending up in death.

The floods in the Bible had exterminated all creatures outside Noah's ark, but, undoubtedly, the fish in the water were exempted. Jesus and fish, dolphins and fishing have appeared many times in the Biblical New Testament. The first letter of Greek words for "Jesus", “the Son of God”, and "Savior" constitute the word "Ichthys", which means fish. In the representative works of Dostoevsky's, most of the main characters were in poverty and distress, like those big fish living in the old world underwater. They were eager to get into a new world after the baptism.

In conclusion, this article analyzes the religious theme contained in Dostoyevsky's works by analyzing the figure of Svidrigailov in the *Crime and Punishment*. Dostoyevsky would give final salvation even to a man full of evil and crimes. Perhaps the big flood in the heart of Dostoyevsky never receded.

And it was so cool, it was wonderful, wonderful, blue, cold water running among the parti-coloured stones and over the clean sand which glistened here and there like gold…

I’ll go out at once straight to the park. I’ll choose a great bush there drenched with rain, so that as soon as one’s shoulder touches it, millions of drops drip on one’s head . . . He was picturing the waters of the Little Neva with a look of special interest, even inquiry.

believe in god while for the difference. The water in Raskolnikov’s view and dreams looked more pleasant than those in Svidrigailov’s. In the oasis dream,

who chose God God and punishment, while, who refused God and punishment,