

Characterization in Dostoevsky's Novels from the Perspective of Religious Culture: Take the Brother Karamazov as an Example

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Abstract: Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky is a dazzling star of the bright Russia literary arena in 19th century. The Brothers Karamazov is Dostoyevsky's last work. Also, some people thought this is the work which represents the writer's belief and the objective. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoyevsky creates two main characters, Dmitry and Ivan, who are both dualistic in their thoughts. By revealing their different fates, the author shows his own extremely complex and contradictory meditation on the world, and the thought behind this tension points to the Christian faith. Facing the evil in the world, Dostoyevsky stands on the standpoint of faith. When reason is no longer just a specific means of cognition, the rational admirers may lose the normal head and into the false. Dostoevsky opposes excessive worship of reason, refuses any rational moral historical or political salvation plan, but to choose a free love and harmony with God.

1. Introduction

Dostoyevsky is Russia's most contradictory literary genius, as well as a writer of great controversy and magic charm. Throughout his whole life, his novels contain extremely rich and thought-provoking humanistic care, which highlights the profound ideological connotation, complicated contradictions and conflicts of human nature in the real society. And it also embodies Dostoyevsky's identification and thinking of religion in the depths of the text. In his works, especially in later works, religious thoughts are ubiquitous. *The Brothers Karamazov*, as a vivid epitaph and a rich summary of his life, reflects Dostoyevsky's pursuit and thinking of religious belief.

Dostoyevsky's works mainly describe the torture and suffering of human beings after losing their faith. The question of God has always run through in Dostoyevsky's works. He clearly expressed his confusion about faith, thinking that the main problem which consciously or unconsciously pained in his entire life is the existence of God. He not only doubted the existence of God, but also showed a fanatical attachment to religion. In Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, the main characters are all dualistic, and the writer always put the opposite poles into one character, making them contrast each other and collide in a complicated and subtle situation. This is especially reflected in Fyodor Pavlovich's first son Dmitry and second son Ivan.

Dmitry is a veteran officer who inherited his father's lustful trait, having an irritable personality and unrestrained life. But Dmitry is not a thin lascivious character, but a man of both the sublime and the mean. From the second half of the novel, we can see that he is not only thinking about carnal life, but also pursuing beauty and nobility, thinking about human suffering. Therefore, although he has not killed his father, he is still willing to take the punishment.

He would cleanse himself in suffering, purify his soul and repent his sins. Ivan is different from his brother Dmitry. He advocates rationality, studies natural science, and strives to understand the meaning of life. He does not believe in the eternal soul and denied God, saying that God does not exist and everything is allowed. However, when he learns that Smerdyakov has killed his father according to his thoughts, he is shocked and considered himself as the ideological murderer. He confesses everything in court and completely abandoned his original thoughts. It can be seen that Ivan's thoughts have been in a fierce conflict.

We can see that the whole of the novel is an unfolding of the souls of the characters. And more importantly, these unfolding souls are filled with great shakes. Faced with the duality of Dmitry's and Ivan's mental struggles, we can't help asking about the origin of their thoughts. Dostoyevsky created "the highest sense of realism" of experience based on his religious utopian thinking and understanding of reality. And his religious values of extreme complexity and contradiction were also reflected in the sharp opposition of the characters.

2. Dmitry: between Noble and Despicable

2.1. Mix of Good and Evil

Dmitry is a man of feverish impulsiveness and reckless scruples. He is arrogant and can spend a lot of money overnight just to have a good time and indulge in carnival. He has a bad temper, quarrels with others in the pub, and even bully the weak on a whim. The main criticism of Dmitry is that he inherits his father's obscenity. Dmitry abandons his fiancée and becomes obsessed with Grushenka, mainly because of the temptation of beauty, and his rivalry with his father aroused his strong passion. Unable to control his passion, he spends a lot of money like a prodigal to amuse Grushenka. Also for Grushenka, in order to seize the heritage to leave with his lover, he nearly kills his father and knocks down the old servant of the family.

It is such a man of violent character and dissipated life that we shall find it impossible to classify him merely as a villain. Dmitry, who leads a rambling life but often chides himself, is seen many times in the novel as having a clear understanding of his actions: "though I may be base in my desires and in love with baseness I'm not dishonorable...", "Before the one I am a scoundrel and before the other I shall again immediately appear as a scoundrel..."[1] Dmitri was deeply aware of his own shortcomings, and in this frank confession he spoke of his own pain, reflecting his inner turmoil. In addition to his struggles in thought, his actions also let us see the sparks of good in his darkened soul: Contrary to his original intention, he generously helped Katerina preserve her innocence and the honor of her family; He restrained himself in his rage and did not murder his father...Perhaps the most baffling thing towards the characters and readers is that Dmitry, who has betrayed Katerina, wants to pay back the money he owes her even if he needs to murder someone, and it is this determination to pay back leads to the subsequent events.

In the second half of the novel, we can see that he is not only thinking about carnal life, but also pursuing beauty and nobleness in his heart, thinking about human suffering. After his father is killed, he is mistaken for the murderer and is greatly shocked. After his trial, he dreams of a bleak picture of poverty made up of burnt farmhouses, a thin dark mother and helpless hungry babies. This dream, a

symbol of human suffering, fills his heart with an unprecedented feeling of compassion, and he is aware of the cruelty of the world and his own baseness, so that although he has not killed his father, he is willing to bear the punishment. He will cleanse himself in suffering, purify his soul and repent of his sins.

We can't help asking which one should we believe to be the real Dmitry, the one with noble impulses and pious regrets, or the opposite of it, such a disgusting negative? The truth may be that, while he is genuinely noble, he is also genuinely mean. This is the duality of Dmitry, as stated by the prosecutor in court, this Karamazovian nature is "capable of accommodating all kinds of opposites and of contemplating both abysses, the abyss above us, the abyss of the loftiest ideals, and the abyss below us, the abyss of the very lowest, stinking degradation." [1]

2.2. Discovering Human

Since Pushkin shaped the first successful complex character Yevgeny Onegin, Russian literature has shown a special focus on human nature. Dostoyevsky has been thinking about the duality of man in his whole life. On the one hand, he believes that duality is a universal characteristic of man. At the same time, he "fully feels the temptation to indulge his will and the rejection of pain by himself and in reality." [2] Therefore in *the Brothers Karamazov*, we can see that although Dmitry has a full understanding of his indulgence and evil, he still chooses to immerse himself in it and has not changed it, which is fully reflected in his passionate confession to Alyosha: "whenever I've had occasion to wallow in the very deepest ignominy of lust (and that's all I've had occasion to do), I've always read that poem about Ceres and man. Has it set me on the right road again? Never! Because I'm a Karamazov. Because if I throw myself into the abyss I do it straight, head first and heels last, and am even glad that I've fallen in such a degrading posture..." But at the same time, we can't forget the other side of Dostoyevsky's duality that it is the universal character of man. It is in such a brazen and unrepentant person that we see his conscience, his nobility, and his repentance. It is the most profound and contradictory multidimensional space in human nature that embodies Dostoyevsky's important concept: discover humanity in human.

Towards the end of Dostoyevsky's life, he summed up his creative characteristics: "The Russian people are all in the Orthodox and Orthodox thoughts. In addition, they have nothing in their hearts and hands - Of course, nothing else is needed, because Orthodox is everything...Those who do not understand Orthodox cannot understand Russian people at any time and in any way...Finding people in people under the conditions of full realism, which is mainly Russian characteristic. And in this sense, I of course belong to the affinity to people (for my inclinations derive from the inherent Christian spirit of people). People call me a psychologist: No, I'm just a realist in the ultimate sense, that is, I depict the depths of the human soul." [2] In this passage, Dostoyevsky put his understanding of man in the same context as his understanding of the inner Christian spirit of people, that is, the "human in human" is the human with "divinity" in Orthodox vision. As a branch of Christianity, Orthodox understanding of divinity and humanity is fundamentally derived from the basic doctrines of Christianity. In the Bible, although man is created, he is created in the image of God, and God derives the divinity from himself and shares it with man, thus man becomes a divine life. But while Christianity recognizes the inner connection between God and man, divinity is, by its essence, much higher than humanity. Different from Catholic Church, Orthodox Church explicitly puts forward the theological view that human nature and divinity are equal. The Nicene Creed is the authoritative outline of the faith of Orthodox Church, adopted by the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD and later revised and supplemented several times. In 451 AD, the Council of Chalcedon revised the Nicene Creed in light of the changing circumstances, stating clearly that "the deity of Christ is as complete as human

nature; according to his deity, he is the same as his father, and according to his personality, he is the same as the world, but without original sin”.[3] Although the main expression here is that the human nature of Christ is equal to his divine nature, it also reflects the thought of valuing the value of human nature. Thus it can be seen that Orthodox Church plays a role in bringing closer the relationship between God and man in the religious field. “It makes the Russians realize their own divinity while believing in God, and the human spirit becomes supreme in their eyes, which is especially reflected in the Russian intellectuals”.[4]

In Dostoyevsky, the character that man possesses is the goodness of divinity. He once described his scene of attending a birthday ball in his diary, he faced in the ballroom rotating crowd sighed: “if each of them suddenly understand, upon them contains how much truth, dignity, most sincere and heartfelt happiness, purity, noble emotion, kind desire, wisdom, the most subtle and infectious agility, these exist in each of them, no doubt, in everyone!” [2] What Dostoyevsky reveals here is the real quality that the man hidden in the “man” may reveal. That is why the “change of heart” that takes place in the moment Dmitry raises a bronze hammer and smashes it into his father’s head is not gratuitous, and the light of humanity deep in his heart is not without foundation. Dostoyevsky believes that the inner divinity of man will never disappear, even if he became the opposite, his divinity would only be hidden. His friend Strakhov recalled that Dostoyevsky was more daring than anyone to paint the dark pictures of life and to depict the depravity of the human soul, but he did not become an evildoer because he believed in himself and in people.

2.3. Repentance and Resurrection

Dostoyevsky affirmed the divine “man”, but this “man” is latent and is in the stage of perfection. This process requires introspection and effort, and this is what he worries about because it is hard to realize under cover. Therefore, he wants people to be aware of their own sins, to take up their divinity in the mire of sin, and to have a true resurrection in pain.

The segment, titled “The Passage of a Soul Through the Torments”, depicts three tribulations the soul, symbolizing that the dead soul in the Orthodox tradition will be judged by many evil spirits as it rises from earth to heaven. In the pretrial, Dmitry exposed his soul to the relentless questioning. “The torture led him to a self-examination that was more severe than anything he had ever known. The drama comes to a head when he feels not only an overwhelming pity for the suffering of the whole of mankind, but also a longing to make himself suffer for past wrongs.”[5]

After the pretrial, Dmitry has a dream that materializes his moral transformation, a dream that had come to him because of all the “hardships” he had suffered. He dreams of a bleak picture of poverty made up of burnt farmhouses and thin hungry helpless babies. Facing the spectacle of such a terrible conversation, Dmitry asks a same vicious question that has actually led Ivan to attack God: “why are those homeless mothers standing there, why is everyone poor, why is the bairn wretched, why is the steppe barren, why do they not embrace one another, kiss one another, why do they not sing songs of joy, why are they blackened so by black misfortune, why is the bairn not fed?”[1] No one has answered Dmitry’s questions, but his sudden emotional eruption marks a change in his morals and soul: “he also felt rising within his heart a tender piety he had never experienced before, felt that he wanted to weep that he wanted to do something for them all...and to do this immediately, without delay and without regard to any obstacle, with all the impetuosity of the Karamazovs.”[1] As he is about to be escorted back to the city, he describes his new understanding of himself now. Under the weight of fate, he experiences a decisive change: “I accept the torment of the charge and of my disgrace before the nation, I wish to suffer and to purify myself through suffering!”[1] The dream symbolizing human suffering makes him aware of human cruelty and his own baseness, and from

then on he begins his spiritual “resurrection”.

The concept of sin and punishment in Christianity is derived from the Bible Genesis, but the sense of sin in the spirit of the Russian Orthodox Spirit is different from the original sin consciousness in Western Europe, which stems from external cognition and moral constraints. Orthodox Church has a strong sense of sin, but the emphasis is not innate, derived from human ancestors’ original sin, but a revelation from Jesus Christ. They see suffering as sacred from the depths of heart, consider that a soul who has not undergone hardening is sinful. Only poverty and hardship can redeem the sin in human, make sinful souls pure, and truly approach God, restore the original deity of human. So Dmitry, while not killing his father, is willing to take the punishment. At this point, the sin he bears is not in the sense of social crimes, but a sense of sin in the human heart, pointing to the evil he has done. And it will not be the courts but God who judges the sinners. Dmitry will cleanse himself in suffering, purify his soul, and repent of his sins, thus obtaining God’s forgiveness. At the same time, compared with the Western world, mysticism color of the Russian Orthodox Church is denser. “Pious believers have an inner experience or feeling, this kind of inner feeling and experience allows the believer to contact God’s world from the heart, making believers internally, rather than externally, know the kingdom of God.”[6] Inner faith and mystical intuition become important channels for Russian Orthodox Christians to learn about the world and themselves, which also explains why Dmitry can discover the divine opportunity for soul redemption in a single dream.

By this point, Dmitry’s duality is on full display. The nobility of human nature has never been far away from the wicked man who tries to kill his father. In Dostoyevsky’s view, “human can realize his duality as a moral necessary, which is ultimately to redeem himself and to be holy.”[2] The only way to salvation is piety and confession. Through the confession of the mind, Dmitry gradually approaches to good.

3. Ivan: between Reason and Faith

Dmitry Karamazov is a mixture of good and evil, and if compared with other people in the book, his mental tension is not the most profound. Many researchers consider that Ivan Karamazov and the contradictions in his thoughts are the absolute protagonist of this book. Ivan is a modern youth, with a very dazzling education and quite outstanding wisdom, but he does not believe in God and in is full of intense conflicts between reason and faith in his heart. In Dostoyevsky’s view, the conflict between reason and faith “became more important in modern (1870s) Russian culture than in the 1860s. It is because of the centrality of this conflict in the culture that he was able to seize the opportunity he had long expected, to put the conflict between reason and faith at the highest level of moral philosophy and to make it the core of his major work.”[5] Perhaps we can consider that, how to face Ivan’s inquiry about faith is the problem the author wants to solve most.

3.1. Theodicy and “Freedom”

In the chapter “Mutiny”, through the dialogue with Alyosha, we see that Ivan feels great pain for the tortured human beings, so he cannot accept the faith in Christ. He makes a fierce attack on the world made by God, and he exposes the brutality that Dostoyevsky has collected from various place - court cases, brutal incidents reported during the Russian-Turkish war, the conversion of criminals described in pamphlets distributed by aristocratic Christian denominations. In words, Ivan makes no attempt to hide his helplessness towards the evil of humanity: “Actually, people sometimes talk about man’s ‘bestial’ cruelty, but that is being terribly unjust and offensive to the beasts: a beast can never be as cruel as a human being, so artificially, so picturesquely cruel.” So facing his patient interlocutor

Alyosha, Ivan flatly rejects God's creation: "So let me tell you that in the last analysis, this world of God's - I don't accept it, even though I know that it exists, and I don't admit its validity in any way. It isn't God I don't accept; you see; it's the world created by Him, the world of God I don't accept, accept and cannot agree to accept." Generally speaking, he cannot accept the world in which God and evil can coexist emotionally and rationally; he negates God and the created world in order to express his protest against the existing dark social order.

This question also troubled Dostoyevsky, or here he used Ivan's voice to express the same anger. Dostoyevsky lived in the period when the Russian serfdom was on the decline and the capitalist system was gradually established. The whole society presented a scene of chaos and contradiction. Every person with conscience would be aware of the existence of evil and would put forward his own questions on the basis of different thoughts. After Dostoyevsky, as a member of Petrashevsky's group, experienced the death sentence and hard labor, he directed his thoughts at the inner world of man, in which he raised a very complex and important question: evil. From the perspective of the Epicurus, the focus on the problem of evil will ultimately lead to two outcomes, one is atheism, the other is theodicy. That is to say, when Dostoyevsky faced reality and the evils of human nature, he had to make a choice, either to deny God or to defend Him. Dostoyevsky must establish a positive theodicy for himself to relieve his spiritual and faith crisis. So we can see, as many theologians throughout history have argued, he blames evil on the abuse of liberty.

On the issue of "freedom", Russian Orthodox theology has developed Schelling's point of view. The basic framework of this "freedom" theory is that the world theoretically has two forms, an inevitable form and an accidental form. God establishes the inevitable form of the world with rationality, but the actual existence of the world is accidental, because God has given freedom to man, and whether man can achieve God's necessity is unknown. But between necessity and chance there exists a moral or legal necessity. The completion of the whole world would be good if man could follow this moral necessity. In other words, freedom of will is the fundamental expression of God's love, but how to use freedom and how to make one's own choices will become a fundamental problem. In his essay in memory of George Sand, Dostoyevsky said: "One of the chief ideas of Christianity is the recognition of the individual and his individual freedom, and of course the responsibility of the individual. There is also an acknowledgement of duty, and a severe inquiry into it, and a full acknowledgement of human responsibility." [2](28) Dostoyevsky values human freedom, but this freedom must follow the law between the necessity and the contingency of the world. Freedom within a certain limit is good, and beyond this limit, freedom produces evil. As Bergayev said, "In Dostoyevsky, the issue of freedom is closely related to the issue of evil and sin. Without freedom, evil cannot be explained. Evil appears on the road to freedom...The road to freedom turns to free will, which leads to evil, and evil leads to sin. The problem of sin occupies a central place in Dostoyevsky's creation." [2] In this way, Dostoyevsky established the theodicy theory of "God - Freedom - Evil - Sin".

In Dostoyevsky's case, however, the theodicy derived by "freedom" was thoroughly attacked on one issue: the suffering of children. According to Dostoyevsky's theory, sins derived from excessive freedom will lead to punishments, which will restrain people's excessive freedom and lead them back to the road of goodness. Generally speaking, evil will at least lead to the appearance of good factors, while suffering is the inevitable road to happiness; If we were aware of this, we would not have to ask endless questions about the existence of evil. But we must note that Dostoyevsky's theodicy is derived from the concept of freedom, which inevitably involves choices. Children have been granted freedom, but they have become innocent victims of evil before they have time to choose between good and evil before. If the evil and suffering of the adults also mean the subsequent repentance and salvation, the suffering of the children only means sacrifice, because their suffering cannot transform

into good. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Ivan cannot understand the suffering of children, which pushed him completely into questioning God: “I refrain from talking about grown-ups because, in addition to the fact that they are loathsome and do not deserve love, they also have requital for that: they have eaten of the apple and have grown aware of good and evil and become ‘as Gods’...But young children have not eaten of it at all and are as yet guilty of nothing...”, “If everyone must suffer in order with their suffering to purchase eternal harmony, what do young children have to do with it...Some wag will perhaps say that, like it or not, the child will grow up and in time commit ins - but here is one who has not grown up and yet at eight years old was hunted down by dogs.” It is not because of adult suffering that Ivan completely rejects God. He also believes that the evil of adults stems from their choices and that the suffering of adults is the way to eternity. But he firmly believes that the suffering of children is absolutely innocent, that children are innocent victims of violence, and that their suffering is meaningless to them.

3.2. “Everything is Allowed”

Dostoyevsky does not push his theodicy to the end, he leaves an unresolved paradox. Nor does his work directly answer the question of guilt and suffering. “*The Brothers Karamazov*, or even Dostoyevsky’s main works, tends not so much to a positive answer as to a rhetorical question: ‘If there is no God, what will happen to the world?’”[7] If there is no God, could everything be done, could everything be allowed? This question occupies a major place in *The Brothers Karamazov*, and we can see Ivan’s choice through Miusov’s paraphrase of his views in the second volume.

According to Miusov, Ivan solemnly declared in a debate at a party that there was no force in the world that could compel people to love humans, and if that was the case, it was not because of the laws of nature, but because people believed they could live forever. Ivan added that this was the whole law of nature, and if people stopped believing they could live forever, nothing would be immoral and they would do anything, even eat human flesh. Finally, he asserted that for every individual who believed neither in God nor in eternal life, human egotism, even a sinful act, should not only be permitted, but even become the most rational and noble solution. Interestingly, Dmitry, who has been silent in the room, suddenly interrupts because he hears “Evil-doing must not only be lawful, but even recognized as being the most necessary and most intelligent way out of the situation in which every atheist finds himself.”[1] And Ivan himself also acknowledges that “Without immorality there can be no virtue.” It is easy to see the consequences of Ivan’s choice. Starting from the principle that “if God does not exist, everything is permitted”, he gives the highest status to human reason; he leaves the contradictions between his father and brother, and even hopes that “one vile reptile may consume the other”; He knows Smerdyakov has an intention of murder and does not prevent it, leading to the death of old Karamazov. He does not believe in God; he is proud and vain; he loves to live a comfortable life, and he is most like old Kalamazov in temperament.

Ivan’s high admiration for reason lets him to choose a rebellious thought, but we also see that his thought is not in a state of completion. Ivan is shocked to learn of Smerdyakov’s behavior. Although he has not killed his father, a strong sense of guilt convinces him that he is guilty, because his thought has caused Smerdyakov to kill his father. It can be seen that although Ivan has a famous saying “God does not exist, everything is allowed”, but this is not the life principle he practices. He has been deeply trapped. To some extent, the pedantry, rigidity and lack of humanity of some atheists are reflected in Smerdyakov’s image, but Ivan’s mind is far from simple.

3.3. “If there is no God”

In order to understand the fragmentation of Ivan’s mind, we must first respond to Ivan’s answer to the question of God, that is, if God does not exist, should everything be permitted? According to the English literary critic Charlize, human morality, value and life do not need to be supported by faith in God. The existence of value and life does not depend on the existence of God, but these two issues have been intertwined in history. He believes that our values are rooted in the needs of our communities, and while we can draw strong support from our faith in God, that support is not essential.[8] This view represents the humanistic enlightenment view since modern times in the west, but Dostoyevsky’s works show a strong doubt or even denial. He believes that there is no eternal life and there can be no stable order without God.

In the second volume of *The Brothers Karamazov*, starting with an essay by Ivan on the need for the church to include the whole state within itself, Elder Zosima, Ivan, and Father Percy discuss the significance of the transformation of the state into the church, especially its moral significance. If there were no Christian church now, they argue, there would be no constraint on criminals doing wrong, and even no penalty afterwards - the real but not mechanical punishments of the kind that the secular state machinery could provide. Punishments, including exile and hard labor, cannot reform any man. And above all, few criminals are afraid of such punishments, so the number of crimes increases instead of decreasing. The true punishment is the only effective and the only way to deter and tame, and it is contained in man’s own conscience, in the law of Christ in conscience. Only by recognizing his sin as the social son of Christ can he truly confess his sin. Therefore, modern criminals are only likely to confess their sins and repent sincerely in the presence of the church rather than the state.

Dostoyevsky wrote in *The Diary of a Writer*: “it is impossible for a man or a nation to live without a higher idea, and there is only one such idea in the world, that is the immortality of the human soul; All the other ‘higher ideas’ of man’s life flow out of this one...The idea that the soul is immortal is life itself, the first source of the integrity and truth of conscience, and its positive formula.”[9] In Dostoyevsky, believing in God means believing in eternity, in the immortality of the soul; And the absence of God means that there is no immortality without a soul; Without God and immortality, there could be no real sense of sin and punishment, and all moral judgments would lose their basis, for all punishments depend on the supreme existence of God. It is only in the sight of God that the sins and punishments of men are inescapable, as we have seen in Raskolnikov.

Returning to *The Brothers Karamazov*, we are surprised to find that Ivan’s argument full of this strong Christianity is proposed as early as the second volume. After this discussion of regime change, Miusov exposes another, stronger and more determined view of Ivan, as discussed above. At the same time, Ivan puts forward two opposing opinions. How should we understand the views presented by Ivan in the article? Is it just a joke or a lie made by him? In the face of Ivan, Father Zosima makes it clear that Ivan does not believe in souls, nor does he believe what he has written about the church and the church courts. “You may well be correct...Though actually, I spoke not entirely in jest, either...‘ Ivan Fyodorovich suddenly confessed in a strange manner, at the time rapidly blushing.” Then the Elder said, “Truly said - you spoke not entirely in jest. That idea has not yet been resolved within your heart and is tormenting it...yourself not believing in your own dialects and with pain in your heart smiling skeptically at them to yourself...”[1] The Elders hints at the contradiction of Ivan’s thought. Ivan’s discourse on the church is not a momentary joke. He has long realized that the moral significance of religion is profound and powerful. It is this realization that lets him to say, far from lightly, “all things are permitted without God”. It is not a triumphant word, not a word intended for his own gain, but a word that makes him tortured. On the one hand, Ivan realized the departure of

God from reason and reality; on the other hand, he is fully aware of the extremely serious consequences of this sentence, so he finally breaks down under the great pressure. As the author himself has pointed out: "Ivan Fyodorovich is profound, and he is not contemporary atheism, whose lack of faith only speaks to the narrowness of the world view and the mediocrity of the intellect." On the issue of faith, Ivan's heart is split. From his humanitarian standpoint of sympathy for human suffering, he goes down the road of extreme individualism regardless of any moral code. Through Smerdyakov's murder, he realizes the absurdity of his own ideas, but he could not find a solution. As Alyosha said, Ivan faced only two possibilities, either he will rise up in the light of truth, or perish in hatred, taking vengeance on himself and on everyone else for his having served that in which he does not believe.

Ivan goes too far on the path of reason, and he expels the metaphysical God in a rational and speculative way, which is obviously unacceptable to the writer. Dostoyevsky believes that the religion of the Orthodox Church is the distinctive spiritual gene of the Russian nation, and all the modern civilization elements that damage the religious belief will hinder the development of the Russian nation, making it lose its mystery and lofty essence. Therefore, Dostoyevsky puts forward: "No nation is based on science and reason, there is no such precedent in history...It is another power that should guide and govern the formation and development of nations." [10] This power comes from the power of God, as opposed to the rational and scientific thinking in western civilization. Rationalism establishes that "man is the measure of all things", but ignores the multiple aspects of the image of "God". Although Dostoyevsky himself is uneasy about whether people could get the truth from the level of faith, troubled by the problem of God all his life, but his faith is never shaken. With Ivan's tragedy, Dostoyevsky is to show that when the rational is no longer just within the scope of a specific means of cognition, but is regarded as the only correct authority rule and scale of omnipotence, or even as the purpose of existence itself, the blind worship will make admirers lose their normal reason and move towards paranoia and vanity.

Whether it is Dmitry or Ivan, we have seen the complex duality of their thoughts in them. At the same time, we can't help but notice that the duality of two persons points to human suffering, and they both consider the problems of the world. But Dostoyevsky gives them a very different ending. The former is spiritually revived, while the latter is spiritually degraded. The thought behind this tension points to the Christian faith. Dmitry's belief in God awakens a sense of sin in him, and he is willing to redeem his sin for the redemption of his soul; Ivan's doubts about God set him on the path of "everything is allowed," while Smerdyakov's actions lead to the bankruptcy of his mind and his final descent into spiritual confusions.

4. Conclusion

Dostoyevsky is a devout Christian whose ten years of hard labor in Siberia let him to abandon his early utopian socialist ideas and turn to the worship of God and suffering. In his letter to a friend in late February 1854, he said, "If anyone proves to me that Christ is separated from the truth, and indeed the truth is separated from Christ, I would rather be with Christ than with the truth." [2] But under the influence of the era of atheism thoughts and beliefs of inconsistencies in his nature, he also reflects the rational side. In the same letter to his friend, he said: "Until now, even until the conclusion of my life, I was a child of an era, a child of no belief and skepticism." [2] This shows that when we say Dostoyevsky's firm belief, it doesn't mean that he has not thought about society and human nature, or about the evil of God and reality. On the contrary, he has thought deeply. *The Brothers Karamazov* is a collection of the author's life efforts, but also a reflection of the author's contradictory thinking, through the tension between faith and reason, between noble and despicable. He reveals the most real

human survival situation between the two poles of human nature. Facing the evil in the world, Dostoyevsky still stands on the standpoint of faith. He opposes excessive worship of reason and believes that only religion can save humans, which is the root of the difference between the fate of Dmitry and Ivan.

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