

Dostoevsky's view of the Enlightenment

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Abstract: Dostoevsky's novel "The Brothers Karamazov" contains profound philosophical thoughts in which Ivan Karamazov upholding the Western European progressive philosophy performed with Enlightened intellectuals. Standing as Ivan's viewpoint, it shows the position of Dostoevsky's anti - Enlightenment movement through philosophical analysis and reflection in regard of the Euclidean geometry thinking mode.

Keywords: Dostoevsky; the Brothers Karamazov; Ivan Karamazov; the Enlightenment

1. Introduction

Fyodor Dostoevsky's thinking belongs to the world philosophy. In regards of the relationship between Dostoevsky's philosophy and the Enlightenment, there are several paths available for analysis among academia. One of the analysis approach is the relation [1](P34) between Dostoevsky and Rousseau referred by French writer Gide in (1) "Dostoevsky"; other way is to think of that tracing along Dostoevsky's "Foundation" literary genre. Besides, another way is to find the answer through text in Dostoevsky's novels. In the matter of the last approach, (2) "Notes from Underground" and "Demons" are regarded as the lens to reveal Dostoevsky's position of the Enlightenment, while the reference value of (3) "The Brothers Karamazov" has been ignored. In fact, in the subject of "The Brothers Karamazov", the author injected more reflection into the Enlightenment and indicated his position of the Enlightenment more clearly.

The Enlightenment beginning in Western Europe in the 18th century, American scholar Thomas Hankins pointed the movement emphasizes rationality as a perfect way to acquire knowledge. In the movement Descartes and Leibniz are not only philosophers but also scientists, and their core of thought is exactly the rational thinking of mathematics. [2](P2-6) Ivan Karamazov, who has been well educated in the novel,

carried the color of enlightened intellectuals. To a certain extent, Ivan can be a key to unlocking the position of the Enlightenment.

2. Return the ticket to the harmonious world

In "The Brothers Karamazov", the father old Karamazov as always a symbol to be disintegrated who was greedy and lusty, quarreled from jealousy for a prostitute with the eldest son Mitya. The second-born son Ivan grew up in that fragmented family in which the third-born son Alyosha is a devout Orthodox monk. We can find him with a new life in the pure image of Alyosha, while on the contrast with Alyosha, the illegitimate child Smerdyakov, just as a servant behaved as a rotten shell. Rozanov pointed out an obviously antagonistic relationship between the four brothers in "The Grand Inquisitor", Mitya was for Alyosha, and there is a connection between Ivan and Smerdyakov, from Alyosha perspective we can see a pure form of emergent affirmation and life power, and Ivan shows a pure form of emergent negation as well as a power of death. [3](P54-55)

There are two chapters in the novel depicting the conversation between Ivan and Alyosha in tavern. In the Rebellion chapter Ivan told his brother Alyosha his brain can only understand Euclidean rational three-dimensional concept instead of accepting the God's fourth dimension. Then he told Alyosha all kinds of ugly acts in the world. For example, if the woman tolerated the murderer who cruelly killed her son it is on behalf of a kind of harmony, then Ivan would rather returned to the ticket leading the harmonious world to God respectfully.

Here, we notice the only recognized reference system by Ivan is the rational coordinate, his purpose is to avoid the pain for a harmonious world but causing

damage for human beings, so he thought this kind of harmony is meaningless, after all the pain is irrevocable.[4] (P171) In order to make Alyosha better understand him, Ivan asked Alyosha : "if you want to build a human destiny building to form the final harmony as the final target, but the cost of inevitably hurt the little creature can't be avoided. Whether you are willing to conduct the house architecture?" Facing brother's questions, Alyosha replied "no, I can't promise." Regarding rationalism supreme, Iva needed a precise answer, but Alyosha cannot provide one, he is clearly incapable of accommodating the issue. In the novel setting Ivan does not believe in God, nevertheless he could not understand why God watches people suffering from hardships but is indifferent with the world. Confronting God's "absence", Ivan chose to return back tickets to the harmonious world.

In the next chapter of the "The Grand Inquisitor", Ivan told Alyosha a story about the Seville religious judge and Jesus Christ in the 15th century. Christ brought the truth to earth, but the religious judge said that human life was dominated by the law of pain and eternal evasion of pain. There is an insurmountable abyss between the truth (absolute God determined) and the law of this pain (men who obey the law because of the relativity of his own nature). [3] (P104). The religious judge told Jesus that, not everyone would get enough food due to freedom, so everyone's food could not come to a fair share, and no one would "give up the bread from for bread the heaven bread". If society is harmonious, there is only one solution: one-tenth of human beings are given absolute freedom and unrestricted power to rule the remaining nine-tenths. [5] (P120) Here, Ivan carried out a more vivid expression of the attitude against God by referring what the religious judge said. His rational thinking told himself that most people choose the real happiness rather than the indefinite freedom.

3. Rational swamp

By here it occurs to us that whether Dostoevsky's writing intention is only to point Ivan an Enlightenment upholder or not. It is obviously not the case. In the face of Ivan's shocking remarks in the

"Rebellion" and "The Grand Inquisitor" in the, Dostoevsky response to Ivan in the rest of the novel. In Dostoevsky's novels, the characters are stereoscopic and vivid, and Ivan also agrees with absolute rational thinking. But it also contains profound complexity and multiplicity.

When it comes to the plot of premeditated murder of the old Karamazov by Smerdyakov the highlight comes. Ivan were definitely aware of Smerdyakov will become the fuse for family falling apart. Nevertheless he chose to escape from a murder. After that his elder brother Mitya was accused of patricide in the court, and the murderer Smerdyakov believed Ivan's remarks influenced himself all the time, which pushed Ivan into a desperate "swamp ". In this swamp there is no absolute sense of the right and wrong and the rational light of the Enlightenment is faint on a sudden which made him sink into it. On the other hand, this is precisely the result brought by the swamp. The second half of the novel is filled with the atmosphere of remorse.

The murderer of this murder, Smerdyakov, has the meaning of "split" (разделение) in Russian, on the contrast Ivan Karamazov is the embodiment of the progress of the Russian people who have been well educated by the Enlightenment and is the backward in Russian society at that time (6)(P213). The author intends to let Smerdyakov to split the old tsarist Russia's "Karamazovism" represented by the old Karamazov, so that Ivan and the Ivan people (progressing people who have been educated by the Enlightenment) have been inspired to have a reflection of the Enlightenment. "All are allowed being together" which is learned by Smerdyakov from Ivan for life creed, and later on the creed became the driving force for the destruction of "Karamazovism". [6] (P194) In order to rescue Mitya from the court at the time, Ivan implored Smerdyakov that Ivan wanted majesty can be testified in court, but Ivan got a very self-blames answer. Smerdyakov accused Ivan of the real "murderer", Smerdyakov himself is a conductor of the knife.

In "Dostoïevsky", Gide argues that Dostoevsky

divided human beings into three categories, from top to bottom, which are the intellectual region, the passion region and the deep area. According to Dostoevsky's idea, hell is the upper zone, the intellectual area. [1] (P109) In "The Brothers Karamazov", Ivan's delicate Euclidean style of the brain let him to stay in the intellectual area, while Dostoevsky thinks that devils live the intellectual area, because the intelligence is the product made by human, against the kingdom of God, eternal life and the truth beyond time. [1] (P110) As mentioned above in this article, Dostoevsky intends to strengthen the connection between Ivan Karamazov and Smerdyakov as if the latter were the line puppet of the former one. Even if the former did not carry out the actual operation, but in the intellectual area, the thinker, Ivan dealing with devils whose rational thinking buried seed in the heart of the perpetrator, Smerdyakov.

4. The Enlightenment intellectuals standing in the defendant seat

By analyzing the Ivan characters above, it is not difficult to find Dostoevsky stands the position against the Enlightenment. In a novel "Notes from Underground" Dostoevsky shows a profound criticism of the rational utopian ideas, and what he wanted to criticize is Ivan Karamazov in "The Brothers Karamazov". Based on the exact knowledge of human nature, Dostoevsky obtained the thoughts from the loneliness and long-term observation about himself along with history: human is irrational existence for his own integrity; so that the complete explanation of man cannot be attained by rationalism; It's not able to achieve the satisfaction of human needs.

Let's go back to the chapter "The Grand Inquisitor", for the position of the Enlightenment, Rozanov stands by Dostoevsky's side. In terms of the attitude towards our historical life, "The Grand Inquisitor" is the most

toxic drops, it finally has flowed out, separated out from the development stage of spirit for two centuries. [3] (P169) "The fundamental evil of history lies in the inaccurate relationship between the ends and the means" which is the core idea in all Dostoevsky's works. Liu Xiaofeng believes that basic questions of Dostoevsky's works lie on that how the traditional "Grand Inquisitor" has legal powers to trial "criminals" after the Enlightenment. [3] (Preface P7) Indeed, the contemporary "Grand Inquisitor" are the enlightened intellectuals, who are no longer standing in the defendant seat like Socrates instead being legislators and "guardians" for human beings. What Kant wanted to express in "What is Enlightenment?" is what is criticized by Nietzsche in "The Birth of Tragedy".

If Ivan in "The Brothers Karamazov" is said to be "dirty mud", then the novel another character in the novel Alyosha is the embodiment of "pure snow." Dostoevsky had intended to write the second edition of "The Brothers Karamazov" with leading role of Alyosha. Unfortunately, in the process of writing he died of brain congestion. We would never know how Dostoevsky will shape Alyosha in the second edition, while at least we ascertain that Dostoevsky must be full of hope confronting vast land in Russia.

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