

Received: 05 April, 2026

Accepted: 29 June, 2026

Published: 30 July, 2026

The Character Ivan in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and the Contradiction of the Russian Character

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Cite this article:

Nguyen, D. T., & Nguyen, Q. T. (2026). The Character Ivan in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and the Contradiction of the Russian Character. *Cultura Científica*, (24), pp. 982–995.

Abstract

The term "Russian character" denotes the distinct traits and identity of the Russian people, reflecting the Russian soul in their thoughts, actions, and interpersonal relationships. In the novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, the Russian character is portrayed by Fyodor Mikhaylovich Dostoevsky as a vivid and polychromatic tableau of Russian society. Through the language of realism, the hidden depths of the Russian character are revealed by the novel's figures, most notably Ivan, who embodies the inherent contradictions of the Russian character. The novel contribution of this article lies in its analysis of Ivan Karamazov

as the most prominent philosophical focal point—a calculating intellectual archetype perpetually seeking his true identity amidst a chaotic and uncertain world. This paper affirms Dostoevsky's innovative contributions to perceiving the contradictions of the Russian character, which are manifested across various members of the Karamazov family and associated figures; however, it is only through Ivan that these elements are pushed to their absolute limits, culminating in the agonizing torment of fate.

Keywords: Ivan Karamazov, Russian character, contradiction/paradox, existentialism, psychoanalysis

1. INTRODUCTION

Nineteenth-century Russia produced numerous eminent figures who demonstrated their talents across various domains. Great names in politics and literature such as Chernyshevsky, Belinsky, Herzen, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, and Chekhov forged the Russian identity in ideological and spiritual creation. For Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1878–1880) is considered the most exceptional masterpiece within his “great pentateuch,” which encompasses: *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *Demons*, *Notes from Underground*, and *The Brothers Karamazov* [1–3]. The Karamazov family, through the portrayal of the father and his three sons, serves as a typical microcosm of the fragmentation within Russian society during the 1860s to 1880s, thereby composing a unified “symphony” of antitheses [1, 4, 5].

Among the characters of *The Brothers Karamazov*, the most noticeable is Ivan Karamazov, who, since his childhood, “revealed an extraordinary and brilliant aptitude” [1]. As a representative of high-level intelligence and an outstanding intellectual, well-aware of the matters of philosophy, theology and ideological processes, Ivan tries to find his own way, but his ego is very skeptical, eccentric and contrary [2, 5, 6]. The inner conflict of Ivan unveils the contradictions of the Russian character, when the same person adores the idea of truth and justice on the one hand, but at the same time justifies the crime committed by himself [1, 5, 7, 8].

Ivan’s tragedy is rooted in the gap between ideal and reality. Wanting to live in the ideal society of good people, he falls victim to the moral nihilism expressed in the phrase, “if there is no God, everything is allowed,” pushing egoism “to the limit of cruelty” [1, 6–9]. Being an intellectually gifted person, Ivan foresees the tragedy in the family, but the outcome is the merciless torture of his conscience and the consequent descent into delirium, in which he has to fight against God and the Devil [1, 5–8]. “It was not you who killed him,” said Alyosha, and it is the tragedy of humanity that occurs in the context of unpredictable events [1]. The contradictory nature of Ivan is revealed in the denial of the existence of soul and mockery of morality, but the incredible tenderness towards children [1, 5, 10].

Ivan is tormented by the injustice brought to innocent people and wants to “give back the entrance ticket” to heaven and break harmony created by the Creator [1, 5, 9]. Researching the metaphysical questions concerning heaven and hell, it became obvious what abyss the Russian soul hid inside itself, which contains all contradictions [2–4, 6]. Therein, compassion intertwines with resignation, and humanity descends into a state of despair due to being “condemned to be free” while remaining powerless to reconcile free will with moral imperatives [9, 11, 12].

Ultimately, Ivan is a sharp philosophical metaphor for the polarities of the “Russian soul” [4, 13]. Through this character, who is laden with pride and frailty, aspiration and despair, Dostoyevsky conveys a profound message regarding humanism, while simultaneously posing immortal reflections on human responsibility and the choice of ideals [1–3, 5].

The character of Ivan Karamazov not only reflects the spiritual crises and the quest for identity among the intelligentsia in the latter half of the nineteenth century—driven by the multidimensional impacts of historical and ideological transformations—but also evokes diverse sentiments concerning Russia’s path, human destiny, and the foreshadowing of Russia’s stream of consciousness in the subsequent century [4, 13, 14]. Examining Ivan through a philosophical worldview and life view, which encapsulates premonitions of existentialism, psychoanalysis, and modern anthropology, contributes to conveying Dostoyevsky’s philosophy on the contradictions, agonies, and hidden depths of the Russian soul, the intersection of Russian and European cultures, and the oscillation between religious sentiment and skepticism toward “religious miracles” [2, 3, 6–8, 15, 16]. The dialogue between the Grand Inquisitor and God articulates not only an ideological conflict but also the tribulations awaiting Dostoyevsky’s Russia [1, 9, 10]. The two character arcs—Ivan and the Elder, along with his younger brother Alyosha—create a tragedy in the selection of a developmental path, as conveyed in *The Brothers Karamazov* [1, 3, 5].

The article highlights three primary issues: First, the character of Ivan is the tragic embodiment of the conflict between reason and faith, between humanistic emotion—or altruism—and skepticism-nihilism in Russian culture during the second half of the 19th century; the endless debates concerning God and morality are intertwined with fraternity, love for humanity, and agonizing reflections on the human condition [1, 5, 6, 10, 14]. Second, against the general backdrop of historical transformations in Russia during the latter half of the nineteenth century, where light and dark facets “collide,” Ivan is the personification of the struggle between alienation, self-alienation, and free choice, as well as between resignation, indifference, and rebellion [9, 12, 13, 15, 17]. Third, Ivan is the epicenter of the schism within the Karamazov family, reflecting the hidden corners of the soul and the perpetual conflicts within the family itself—a paradigm of post-1861 reform Russia and the process of social polarization in diametrically opposed directions [1, 4, 5]. Within this context, God, the devil, and man converse with one another—a metaphor for the agony, anxiety, and even the panic and impasse of the soul [2, 6, 15]. Dostoyevsky infuses the character of Ivan with profound philosophies on the human condition, the impulses of the heart, the sense of isolation, and the complex psychological progression of the individual; these ideas left an indelible mark on contemporary Western philosophical theories—namely, psychoanalysis and existentialism [7–9, 11, 12, 15, 16]. S. Freud, J. P. Sartre, and numerous other philosophers discovered an ideological resonance through the character of Ivan [7, 8, 11, 16].

With such ideas posited, this article aims for a multidimensional philosophical approach, meaning the integration of Slavophilia with Orthodoxy, alongside existential, psychoanalytic, and anthropological elements, in order to elucidate the character of Ivan as the profoundly tragic embodiment of the Russian character at a historical transitional period [2–4, 7–9, 13, 16]. The article unfolds across three main contents: first, an overview of exemplary studies on Ivan Karamazov, encompassing research outcomes and gaps; second, an analysis of the psychological evolution and fundamental highlights in Ivan's character, thereby revealing a portion of the contradictions within the Russian character; third, based on this analysis, the article initiates an exploration of the "Dostoyevsky mark"—derived from the portrayal of the figure of Ivan—in modern Western philosophy, ranging from psychoanalysis to existentialism [7–9, 11, 16].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The novel "The Brothers Karamazov" and especially the character Ivan Karamazov have been studied by scholars from a great variety of perspectives [2–9, 12, 15, 17]. Interdisciplinary research of one of the novel's key characters gives rise to extremely complicated but nevertheless extremely interesting and meaningful metaphysical field of discussion.

According to N. Berdyaev in his work "The Russian Idea" [4] Dostoyevsky is much superior to any other writer-philosopher of his times in his incredibly profound description of contradictions of the Russian character, in particular in "The Brothers Karamazov" which can serve as a concise portrait of the Russia after 1861 reform. As noted by Berdyaev the "troika" of three Karamazov brothers demonstrates fragmentation of the human soul; contradiction in perception and ideals constitutes contradiction of the man, revealing the inner conflict of everyone of them at once. Here is Dmitri, the romantic and passionate person, hating his father but never having a real intention of bringing his crime to its logical conclusion despite his promises. Here is Alyosha, an angelic and idealistic man who maintains balance between faith and rational thinking but suffers from problems of human belief. Of the three brothers Ivan Karamazov is portrayed by Dostoyevsky as a nihilist and atheist philosopher, highly compassionate but highly skeptical about anything, often being extremely radical and even detached from reality [1, 4]. Ivan rebels against the formal moral norms and the order established in mankind by God, which only irritates humans [4, 9, 10]. Man is forced to fight helplessly for his freedom, which means "condemnation to choose freedom" [11, 12]. From the standpoint of religious philosopher however Berdyaev criticizes Ivan seeing in him embodiment of immorality and defiance against social order but insufficiently exposing the contradictions of the Russian character and their reasons in his image [4].

In addition, Berdyaev has written two books devoted to the impasse and rebellion of the Russian intelligentsia, the very popular theme in Dostoyevsky's novels. In the book "The Destiny of Russia" [13], speaking about the psychology of the Russian nation he speaks about the authenticity, sanctity and profundity of the Russian soul—the soul that unites Europe and Asia. He talks about such subjects as war and crisis of the social consciousness, "dark wine" metaphor, nationality versus humanity, empire versus the mission of salvation. This is the Russia described by Dostoyevsky, though in some dark colors, full of interlacing tragedies and hopes: from Prince Myshkin to Alyosha, from Raskolnikov to Smerdyakov, from "Demons" to Ivan. And in the second work, "The Spiritual Crisis of the Intelligentsia" [14], in particular in Part 2 ("Religion, the Church: Nihilism on Religious Grounds"), the author refers to Ivan from "The Brothers Karamazov" as a symbol of nihilism, rebellion and moderate atheism in Church-State relations.

Sigmund Freud in his essay "Dostoyevsky and Parricide" [7, 8] uses psychoanalytical method of analysis to prove that the major theme of the novel is incest and parricide, which takes place under the influence of instinctual unconscious urge to satisfy the Oedipus complex [7, 8, 16]. According to Freud all four Karamazov brothers (including Smerdyakov) represent different sides of Dostoyevsky's personality, all of them are guilty psychologically of their father's death. Ivan in particular is used by the author as a center of the conflict between the reason and emotions, experiencing crisis or madness caused by a guilt complex. Though Ivan does not kill his father himself, he constantly feels hatred to him (originating from the death of his mother); greediness and debauchery of his father turn the relation between his death and the Ivan's psychological involvement into subconscious complex—complex of guilt, perfectly corresponding to Ivan's philosophy that "everything is permitted". Moreover, according to Freud consideration of Dostoyevsky as sinner or criminal causes very strong opposition, which does not necessarily arise from stereotypical evaluation of a criminal. One can easily notice the motive—two basic features of a criminal are absolute egoism and strong destructive inclinations; common ground and the condition of appearance of these features is absence of the feelings of love, or in other words the absence of emotional estimation of objects (people). At once one thinks of the amazing paradox of Dostoyevsky: his incredible need for love combined with the incredible ability to love. It cannot be called coincidence that three of the greatest literary masterpieces ever created explore the identical theme of parricide: Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex", Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and Dostoyevsky's "The Brothers Karamazov". In all three stories the motive of the action—sexual rivalry for a woman—is revealed [7, 8]. Developing the ideas of psychoanalytical approach, the purpose of the current paper is the analysis of the concrete manifestations of the guilt complex and subconscious conflicts in Ivan's psychological development and their philosophical and cultural interpretation [7, 8, 16].

Ya. E. Golosovker, in his work *Kant and Dostoevsky* (Ya. E. Golosovker: Kant and Dostoevsky, USSR Academy

of Sciences Publishing House, Moscow, 1963) [6], analyzes the themes of parricide, the devil, God, and the “thing-in-itself”—the enigmatic dialogue between Ivan and Smerdyakov, portraying death as a silent descent that carries the “thing-in-itself” into hell. According to Berdyaev, the dichotomy between “god” and “devil” within Dostoyevsky is not synonymous with the conventional distinction between “righteous” and “wicked” [4]. This constitutes a unique facet of the mystique in Dostoyevskian anthropology, wherein the distinction between “righteous” and “wicked” exists merely on the periphery, acting as a mere convention [3, 6]. Russian edition: Ya. E. Golosovker, *Dostoyevsky and Kant*, USSR Academy of Sciences Publishing House, Moscow, 1963 [6]. II. The Doppelgänger Assassin. Smerdyakov—the murderer and Smerdyakov—the philosopher: “Smerdyakov’s philosophy is essentially Ivan’s own philosophy: initially, it was merely a theory—that everything is permitted—and subsequently, that tangle was actualized into the act of murder” [6, 17].

Researcher Frank Seeley (1983), in his essay “Ivan Karamazov” featured in *New Essays on Dostoyevsky* (Cambridge University Press) [5], highlights the connection between Ivan and the theme of “parricide” in *The Brothers Karamazov*. As the author notes, although it is Dmitri who is charged with parricide, it is Ivan’s whole life, his whole experience, his mental hatred towards his father, and his consequent complex of guilt that form a much deeper obsession for a reader. The essay also explores the main contradictions in Ivan’s personality through the prism of two major dilemmas: faith and skepticism, and moral ideals and an impasse of lifestyle. According to Frank Seeley, the character of Ivan is analyzed from different angles: Seeley sees Ivan not as a “lunatic,” but as a man of intellect torn apart by the tension between intellect and faith. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Seeley’s essay has not yet found connections with the psychoanalytical theories of the modern epoch (for example, of Freud) in order to interpret some peculiarities of Ivan (for instance, his hallucinations of the devil). Our paper is aimed at filling in this gap.

Albert Camus (1951), one of the most notable representatives of existentialism, in his book *The Rebel (L’Homme révolté)* [9], cites the most important figures of philosophy and literature dealing with the archetype of the constant affirmation of Ego, from Epicurus and Rousseau to Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky. In particular, talking about Dostoyevsky, Camus saw in Ivan Karamazov the image of both the rights and the limits of rebellion. Rebellion arises from impatience, from the idea of an “all or nothing” freedom connected with the idea that “if there is no God, everything is permitted”. On the one hand, this is the concept of absolute freedom; on the other, it is the warning concerning the results of this freedom. The contradiction in Ivan’s personality lies in the fact that he wants to rebel against the order “ordained by God,” but is also tortured by the state of being “condemned to be free” [9, 11, 12]. However, it is Ivan who recognizes the absurdity of existence as the human destiny in an uncertain world. As Camus claims, Ivan’s maxim “everything is permitted” is not entirely immoral; it just shows the depth of bitterness and impotence, warning indirectly that when there is no God, moral norms are excessively fragile. Looking at Ivan from the perspective of Camus, we can see the existential aspect of the character, who is the prototype of “the absurd man,” recognizing the meaninglessness of life and the fact that God does nothing to save the destiny of the individual, but cannot find any practical way out of it. Ivan cannot return to faith, but his conscience will not allow him to commit sin. From the point of view of existentialism and absurdity of existence, Camus underlined the symbolic meaning of Ivan — a profoundly contradictory rebel, resembling his very own character [9].

Recent researches have also explored the character of Ivan and related Dostoyevskian characters in the terms of metaphysical loneliness, rebellion, freedom, and existential responsibility [12, 15, 17]. Nguyen and Do explore loneliness and rebellion of Smerdyakov, who plays the major role in the realization of the idea that “everything is permitted” in relation to Ivan [17]. At the same time, their research on the metaphysics of loneliness gives a wider framework of interpretation of alienation, spiritual loneliness, and existential conflict of Dostoyevsky’s worldview [15]. Their discussion of Dostoyevsky’s existential philosophy highlights freedom as one of the main problems emerging from the individual’s moral choice and responsibility [12]. These modern interpretations of the character supplement the previous research on the philosophical intertext and the conception of the human in Dostoyevsky’s works [2, 3].

It can be seen from the review of several scholarly papers that the character of Ivan Karamazov has been researched from several perspectives [2–9, 12, 14, 15, 17]. Philosophically, Dostoyevsky described the forms of contradictions in the personality of Ivan with the help of religious anthropology, existential philosophy, and psychoanalysis, which initiated a new stage of Russian philosophy of the 19th century [2–4, 7–9, 16]. Being perceived from the points of view of absurdity of existence (existentialism), guilt complex (psychoanalysis), or some features of atheism and skeptical nihilism (religious philosophy), this contradiction gave additional chances to understand the ideological picture of the post-reform Russia, making an evident impact on the further epochs and the development of the Western philosophy in the 20th century [4, 7–9, 11, 13, 14, 16]. Based on an exploration of Ivan and a review of research concerning this character in *The Brothers Karamazov*, this paper proceeds to analyze three main themes: first, the character of Ivan as a symbol of crisis and rebellion among the Russian intelligentsia; second, the integration of multiple perspectives to better comprehend the contradictory nature of the Russian soul through Ivan—the conflict between faith and skepticism, love and hatred, angel and demon; and third, the relationship between Ivan and twentieth-century Western philosophy, ranging from psychoanalysis to existentialism.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. THE KARAMAZOV FAMILY AND THE CHARACTER OF IVAN – A SYMBOL OF PARADOXES, IMPASSES, AND REBELLION IN RUSSIAN SOCIETY

Ivan Karamazov was conceived by Dostoevsky as a type of "philosophical man," distinct from the other characters, ranging from his father to his brothers. Born into a family with a mildly mentally ill mother and a father who readily proclaimed himself "a genuine liar," "a born buffoon," "depraved and debauched," and one possessing "a lust only for the crude beauty of women" [1, pp. 17, 23, 53, 57], Ivan exhibited contradictions in his way of life from an early age. Very early on, Ivan demonstrated an "extraordinary, brilliant aptitude for learning," yet remained "sullen and reserved" [1, p. 25]. His choice to pursue teaching and journalism, embarking on an independent life after graduation, left a distinct mark on his writings. His most attention-grabbing subject centered on religious perspectives – a theme that created a rift between Ivan and his younger brother, Alyosha. Exhibiting a literary flair (despite having graduated in the natural sciences) with an engaging and sensational writing style that "quickly gained popularity," Ivan brought into the world a spirit of rationalism and atheism as his ideological core.

The two character arcs within the Karamazov family and their associates illustrate the fragmentation of Russian society and the contradictions inherent in human nature. Ivan distances himself from his family and community not out of misanthropy, but due to ideological choice. Ivan is a thinker, even an "amateur" philosopher, but he does not represent the ideology of the Karamazov family – a family that Rakitin described as "stinking of depravity" [1, p. 95]. Ivan acts as the spokesperson for the young Russian intelligentsia: disoriented, rebellious, nihilistic, and "fond of paradoxes" [1, p. 85].

Ivan's moral nihilism is addressed by the character Pyotr Alexandrovich Miusov during a dispute at the monastery. For Ivan, there is absolutely nothing on earth "that compels men to love their fellow men, no natural law that dictates one must love humanity," and "if love has existed on earth thus far, it is not because of natural law, but solely because men have believed in their own immortality" [1, p. 85]. When the Elder Zosima asked: "Are you truly convinced that such would be the consequences if humanity lost its faith in the immortality of the soul?" [1, p. 85], Ivan replied: "Yes, I assert that. There is no virtue if there is no immortality of the soul". Through this "if... then" philosophy, Ivan articulates the dissolution of the concepts of "moral" and "immoral," leading to the loss of faith in the soul's immortality, and consequently, the cessation of condemnation and criticism of immoral behavior. At that point, clinging to the same "if... then" logic, Ivan reaches a fatalistic conclusion: everything is permitted, even murder. When faith in God and the immortality of the soul is extinguished, everything within the behavioral framework – even at its most elementary level – every moral law, sacred belief, and the redemptive power of religion will invert into its opposite. This implies that not only would humanity be permitted to be egoistic, but such egoism would be acknowledged as the most necessary, rational, and almost noblest recourse for mankind.

Ivan's ideology is vividly articulated in two consecutive chapters in Book 5: Chapter 4 – *Rebellion* [1, p. 265], and Chapter 5 – *The Grand Inquisitor* [1, p. 276], and particularly in Book 8, culminating in the act of parricide – the climax of the narrative. The "enigmatic riddle" [1, p. 257] that Alyosha uses to evaluate the "unpredictability" of Ivan's character is manifested in the dichotomy of his persona – his compassion for humanity juxtaposed against his "everything is permitted" philosophy. Ivan expresses profound indignation toward those who lose their humanity, those who torment, torture, and abuse innocent children – children who have not yet eaten the forbidden fruit and thus cannot distinguish between good and evil, "and have not yet sinned" [1, p. 267]. The compassion Ivan harbors for children can be viewed as an expression of Dostoevsky's humanistic ideology, a recurring theme in almost all of Dostoevsky's works from the 1840s, such as *Poor Folk* (1845), *The Double* (1846), and *A Weak Heart* (1848). Ivan describes those who abuse children as demons, a breed of devil created by man "in his own image and likeness" [1, p. 268]. His outrage reaches its zenith for a simple reason: "Children are defenseless, and this very fact tempts the tormentor; the child's angelic trustfulness, having nowhere to hide and no one to turn to for protection, is precisely what makes the vile blood of the brute boil" [1, p. 271]. From these horrifying depictions of the abuse and humiliation of children, Ivan raises his voice regarding the impotence of God. Ivan's attitude toward religion partially reflects Dostoevsky's own agonizing quest for faith. In his conversation with Alyosha concerning the themes of God and the devil, Ivan declares: "I cannot, I simply cannot accept that this world was created by a just God, if building human happiness requires the suffering of even a single child as its price" [1, pp. 156–157]. Ivan's formula, "If there is no immortality of the soul, there is no virtue, which means everything is permitted" [1, pp. 14, 93], reconstructs a logical deduction stemming from Feuerbach's anthropology, yet it is not necessarily intended to affirm an immoral standpoint, but rather to express a soulful agony over the current state of society. Ivan rebels against the very faith of the Russian people, yet he fails to find a path to real-world salvation, ultimately resigning himself to fate with declarations steeped in nihilism. In such an impasse, loneliness becomes an obsession. From the perspective of religious philosophy, Berdyaev posited that heroes of thought and reality are inclined toward rebellion, critique, and the negation of the old in the name of new values, and on a universal scale, whether consciously or unconsciously, in the name of God.

However, for a rebel mired in deadlock and despair, it is a matter of "rebellion for rebellion's sake, critique for critique's sake, negation for negation's sake," lacking any ideal and serving no ultimate purpose [14, pp. 74–75].

Ivan manages to travel only halfway along this path – namely, the reactive opposition against the unfeeling "order ordained by God" and against the forces that despise and cruelly treat their fellow men. Ultimately, however, Ivan cannot overcome the irony of fate, perpetually haunted by the polar opposites of the devil and the divine within the profound depths of his own soul. Does this not vividly expose the absurdity of existence? Absurdity becomes an intrinsic constituent of life.

As a microcosm of Russia, the Karamazov family is depicted by Dostoyevsky with discord, paradoxes, and a polarization of characters, from the father Fyodor, the sons Dmitri, Ivan, and Alyosha, to the illegitimate child Smerdyakov. Among them, Ivan Karamazov is a character full of paradoxes: a moderate atheist, who loves humanity yet despairs of it, and even descends into moral nihilism. In Ivan crystallize seemingly insurmountable contradictions, namely the contradiction between the reason of an educated man and intense, at times uncontrollable emotions; the contradiction between fervent aspirations and the denial or rejection of contemporary values.

The author Golosovker divides the characters in "The Brothers Karamazov" into two main trajectories – thesis and antithesis – following Kant's method. The thesis comprises the Prisoner or the Great Idealist, the Elder Zosima, and Alyosha – the angel, the repentant murderer; the antithesis consists of the Dreadful and Haunting Spirit, or the devil, the Grand Inquisitor, Ivan, Smerdyakov, and Rakitin [6, pp. 85–86]. Kant's antinomies are subtly integrated into "The Brothers Karamazov", thereby reflecting the contradictions and tragedies of a family acting as a miniature Russia post-1861. Dostoyevsky approached the antinomies of pure reason in Kant's critical philosophy and utilized Kant as a foundation to expose the absurd nature of existence. However, this is merely a methodological arrangement of antinomies within Kant's structure of pure reason, and it does not yet fully manifest the dialectic of good and evil, light and darkness within each character.

In fact, each of the characters contains the elements of paradoxes and contradictions, and this is the fundamental metaphor of Dostoevsky in relation to a Russia which is at the point of decision-making. "Dostoevsky is a bright symbol of Russian history with its strong contradictions and mysterious depth of the Russian soul at a transitional epoch, or border between progress and crisis, between consolidation of values and loss of confidence in the future" [17]. Despite all the depravity of the father who is a "wicked buffoon, nothing more or less" [1, p. 18], the man himself is not an animal and there are times when he feels paternal love, he understands the essence of his sons – obedient and loving Alyosha and arrogant, tricky and extreme Ivan. There is a reason why Fyodor tells Alyosha about Ivan: "I fear Ivan, I fear Ivan more than the other one (Dmitri)" [1, p. 165].

The eldest son, Dmitri, leaves high school, goes to the military academy, serves in the Caucasus as a lieutenant, participates in a duel and gets demoted; he lives an extravagant life, spending a lot of money and acquiring huge debts, but when talking to Alyosha he declares: "Though I have baseness of desires and I love baseness, I am not a scoundrel" [1, p. 130]. Dmitri hates his father and this phrase reflects his innermost hatred: "Why such a scoundrel is there in this world?" [1, p. 90]. Miusov – the relative of the Karamazov family cuts off all the relations with Fyodor Pavlovich once and for all: "I have never been your relative. You are a base man!" [1, p. 92].

Dmitri briefly outlines the essence of the Karamazov family in a conversation with Alyosha: "Our entire Karamazov family is like that (insects); even you, though you are an angel, that insect still lives within you and stirs up storms in your blood... Here all contradictions coexist... Here the devil and God are at war, and the battlefield is the human heart" [1, pp. 128–129].

The final member of the Karamazov family is Pavel Fyodorovich Smerdyakov, the symbol of isolation and rebellion, the natural ally of Ivan. Smerdyakov's isolation begins the very moment his mentally ill mother, Lizaveta, dies after giving birth to him. His isolation, his difference from others, even his eccentricity and detachment from his surroundings, can be understood as an extreme resistance against what he perceives as absurd. Through his absurd behavior, he answers the absurdity of his life. Existential idea of man being "abandoned" ("thrown") (Geworfenheit) means the highest level of isolation. Since there is no God and absolute value, the man is alone in carrying the burden of his freedom and responsibility in "silent world". The psychologist-philosopher Dostoevsky creates the stage of life for Smerdyakov, who writes the script and performs it brilliantly. His complex of inferiority concerning his social position and misanthropy, his "hatred for all of Russia" [1, p. 252] make of him a person who cultivates his enmity to the people surrounding him. The world is filled with absurdity, but absurdity itself is a piece of life.

The conspiracy against his father is not unique in Smerdyakov's case. All his calculations are perfect and even Ivan says, "it was the devil himself who helped you" [1, p. 678]. Together with Ivan, Dostoevsky presents the character of the devil, mentioned throughout the dialogue as "it", i.e. devil. And next to the devil stands the character of supreme judgement – God.

The conspiracy of murdering one's father as an act of revenge for the repressed life and desire for complete freedom – a dehumanized and absurd revolt against destiny – is realized due to the clever combination and "the secret pact" of

Smerdyakov and Ivan. The philosophy of Smerdyakov is actually identical to Ivan's: at first, it was only the idea that "everything is permitted", and then it became murder.

In summary, the contradictions in Ivan's character, which mirror the Russian character, are laid bare quite distinctly. As we can observe, this nuance is not exclusive to Ivan but is present in almost all the family members, serving as a mirror reflecting the polarities within the Russian soul and the era that Dostoyevsky witnessed. In the subsequent section, this paper will further elucidate this issue.

3.2. CONTRADICTIONS IN IVAN KARAMAZOV'S CHARACTER – A VIVID MANIFESTATION OF THE CONTRADICTIONS OF THE RUSSIAN CHARACTER AT A HISTORICAL CROSSROADS

The contrasting traits and the contradictions within Ivan's soul are, in fact, a partial recreation of the emotional tornness and the ideological fragmentation of the author of "The Brothers Karamazov" himself. According to S. A. Kibalnik, "Ivan succeeds Dostoevsky's more or less tragic characters" [2, p. 255]. Regarding the connection between Fyodor Dostoevsky and Max Stirner (1806–1856) – a representative of the Young Hegelians and a pioneering figure of existentialism and nihilism – one can perceive Stirner's concept of "The Unique" (der Einzige) in the way each character is portrayed with unrepeatable individuality, the glorification of the individual, and the choice of freedom; thus, Stirner's extreme individualism is reproduced in Dostoevsky's "The Brothers Karamazov". Alongside the "will to rebel" and the paradoxes in Ivan's character relative to the other members of the Karamazov family, this paper clarifies the following three issues:

First, the character of Ivan embodies the contradiction between rationalism and Russian Orthodox faith, emerging as Russia encountered Western culture in the 1830s and 40s, foreshadowing practical reforms. The ontological aspect in Dostoevsky's writings clarifies the picture of Russia with its multifaceted dimensions, the contradictions, the conflicts, and the dynamic trends of Russian society with the resonance of Eurasian elements, manifested in the Slavophile and Westernizer tendencies. Russia, through the representatives of the likes of Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, and Bakunin, adopted the Western concepts in order to form an intersection of many, often conflicting, strands of thought, which included socialisms, anarchism, romantics, and liberalism. Ivan takes in these intellectual influences in a piecemeal fashion. Ivan's understanding of the atheistic materialism of Diderot, for instance, is rather superficial than profound. However, Ivan tries to reconcile these doctrines, something that was common practice with Dostoevsky in the 1840s. During the dispute at the monastery, Ivan asserts: "In general, European liberalism, and even our Russian dilettantism, has long been fond of confounding the final results of Socialism with those of Christianity. This wild notion is, of course, a characteristic feature. Yet, it is not only liberals and dilettantes who mix Socialism with Christianity, but in many cases, the gendarmes do as well – foreign gendarmes, of course" [1, p. 84].

However, despite his inclination towards Western liberalism and atheism, Ivan still retains the image of a Russian adhering to Orthodoxy. In other words, Ivan's atheism possesses a moderate nature. Ivan repudiates the laws and rules ordained by God, along with the desire to transcend them, yet he does not discard the significance of faith and the desire to balance faith with humanity's aspiration for justice and freedom. This negation harbors both love and hatred, rather than indifference or apathy. Dostoevsky portrays Ivan like many other Russian youths, whose fundamental psychological trait is "blaspheming" God while continuing to search for faith, provided it does not oppose earthly justice and freedom. At the gathering between the father Fyodor, Ivan, and Alyosha, when asked "Is there a God or not?", Ivan decisively asserts that there is no God and no immortality, and simultaneously introduces the image of the "devil" as a mockery of man [1, pp. 156, 157].

Ivan is not an absolute atheist, but a moderate one, akin to L. Feuerbach (1804–1872). To Feuerbach, religious belief is a universal human need [10, pp. 7, 25], and he asserts: "Love itself is God; outside of love, there is no God. Love makes man into God and God into man" [10, p. 70]. Similarly, in his conversation with Alyosha, Ivan declares that he "accepts God directly and simply," adding: "Yet I must note one thing: if God exists and if He indeed created the earth, then we know perfectly well that He created it according to Euclidean geometry... I do not accept this world of God's, although I know God exists, I do not accept it... It is not God that I reject, but the world created by God" [1, pp. 263, 264]. The devil is mentioned as an advisory presence regarding existence, alongside God – an intentional juxtaposition by Dostoevsky through Ivan's debate with his younger brother, between the "moderate" atheist and the believer.

The church symbolism and mystical collectivism of the Eastern Orthodox faith have a twofold meaning within the philosophy of Dostoevsky. On one hand, these concepts refer to the belief in the Absolute and the striving towards absolute perfection, while on the other, they imply the idea of free will, freedom of conscience and the overcoming of the dogmatic rigidity without violating the "absolute moral law". In the mystical collectivism, the image of the "God-man" or "divine humanity" takes shape, in which every part of a person is directed towards the "whole man" in the holy existence. The phrase "return my ticket" [1, p. 275] reflects the rebellious nature of Ivan. This revolutionary intellectual does not question the existence of God, however, refuses His idealized philosophy of harmony that cannot bring the earthly happiness and

cannot replace the material needs necessary for the survival of the person in this world even temporary. Ivan does not just convey his ideas but understands very well the danger to which modern mankind is exposed due to the exhaustion of the naive faith, romantic song of redemption and unlimited scepticism towards paradise.

In the chapters "Rebellion" and "The Grand Inquisitor", Ivan Karamazov appears as a contradictory humanist philosopher. Ivan renounces God in the name of philanthropic love; he elevates the importance of morality and at the same time rejects its highest metaphysical source. Ivan always wins in dialectical debates both with his father, with his younger brother, with the elder Zosima. The humanist philosopher Ivan speaks about the three spiritual forces, God, and the Grand Inquisitor in his "low-grade poem" [1, p. 277], about the fifteen centuries of the anticipation of miracles from the Lord and about those miracles which do not come to people on earth. Finally, Ivan makes his conclusions in the image of the Grand Inquisitor, expressing his practical philosophy "Feed men, and then ask of them virtue" [1, p. 283]. These arguments and his statement about the "all is permitted" sound like moral nihilism, but, at the same time, contain the idea of human autonomy and of the human ability to establish their own norms. It can be said that Ivan "rebels" in the name of love to humanity.

Firstly, the character of Ivan represents the contradiction between humanistic ideals and violence in the way of life – a phenomenon often present in the Russian soul. There, on the one side, there is compassion, openness, benevolence, and altruism; on the other side, a disproportionate response which goes beyond the limits of tolerance – a paradox seen in the course of the entire history of Russia. "The chiaroscuro of the Russian character and the hidden depths of the soul are depicted through the lens of mystical realism, whereby the dialectical opposition between the sacredly sublime and the petty triviality within each individual is vividly reconstructed" [15]. The chapter on the Grand Inquisitor reveals that the more Ivan loves humanity, the more he despises the "inhuman" world. And because of his abhorrence for the reality created by God, Ivan does not hesitate to become complicit in its destruction: "I would burn You, for You have come to hinder us, and if anyone has ever deserved our fires, it is You" [1, p. 292]. Ivan's humanism is laid bare in his confession to Alyosha concerning his love for humanity, a romanticized love: "I want to live, and I do live, even if it be against logic. Though I may not believe in the order of the universe, yet I love the sticky little leaves as they open in spring; I love the blue sky; I love some people, whom sometimes, you know, one loves without knowing why; I love some great deeds done by men, though I've long ceased perhaps to have faith in them, yet from old habit one's heart prizes them... I love with my insides, with my guts, one loves before logic" [1, pp. 258–259].

There is a dual character of the "everything is allowed" idea: it frees people from ancient doctrines and, at the same time, gives rise to violence because a man "is free to act selfishly to the point of cruelty" [1, p. 85]. Smerdyakov brings this idea into life using his grotesque selfishness. Ivan, having gone mad, faced with his imaginary devil and the enormous psychological pressure, looks for self-destruction to escape the verdict of his conscience. The immoral idea may give rise to radical anti-human actions. When Alyosha "prays to God that it won't come true" (referring to the disaster of the family caused by the strife between Dmitri and their father), Ivan says: "What do you mean by praying to God? Vipers will eat vipers, and well done to both of them!" [1, p. 165]. The "viper eats viper" point of view is another expression of moral indifference concerning the father's problem. But at the same time, Ivan talks to Alyosha about saving the father from the madness of Dmitri.

In Ivan, moral nihilism is expressed through his astonishment at how human beings can love one another [1, pp. 85, 265]; however, Ivan himself deeply loves humanity, especially children. Ivan professes a profound love for children and expounds this philosophy: "...with children, one can love them even when they are close, even when they are dirty, even if they have ugly faces (though I believe children are never ugly)". Ivan argues that adults have "eaten the forbidden fruit and know good and evil, and have become 'like God,'" whereas children "have eaten nothing and have not yet sinned" [1, p. 267]. Consequently, Ivan is agonized by the sight of children being humiliated and abused, both physically and mentally, and he designates those who perpetrate atrocities against children as demons, "created by man in his own image and likeness" [1, p. 268].

Love and hatred, the sublime and the despicable, conscience and inhumanity, creation and destruction, repentance and sinning – all of this is the dialectical contradiction and psychological tearing apart within Ivan's personality. Dostoevsky reveals this archetype not only in *The Brothers Karamazov*, but in all of his anthropological writings. Dostoevsky recreates the Russian history filled with tragic dramas of philanthropic love that encounters vengeance and dehumanization, of benevolence opposed to extreme hostility towards the other, of compassion hiding behind the indifference to the misfortunes of the neighbor. In Ivan, a universal love to humanity turns out to be incompatible with his behavior in the family environment. This contradiction in Ivan's personality is primarily an embodiment of the contradiction within the Russian personality, especially during epochal transitions.

Ivan is a huge mystery of universal humanity. Moreover, Ivan is a personification of the metaphysical conception of the human being by Dostoevsky: Ivan Karamazov shares the guilt of the murder committed by Smerdyakov, so we can assume that Smerdyakov is the dark side of Ivan, his remorseful conscience, and his dialogue with the devilish. This is really a unique anthropological experiment and exploration of the powers and impotence of human nature, of the elusiveness and

intricacy of its empirical experience and every homicide.

Thirdly, the dialectical contradiction between the striving for freedom and the obsession with nihilism accompanies Ivan on his journey to self-knowledge. Dostoevsky creates the image of Ivan as an epistemological self-awareness that, however, remains imprisoned on the road to the ultimate purpose of human life. Sometimes, the desperate struggle for freedom drives humanity to the very denial of this freedom. Such torments are depicted by Dostoevsky in Ivan's thoughts and monologues expressed by the Grand Inquisitor. While Nietzsche renounces God, Ivan recognizes only the nuisance brought to humanity by God. The Grand Inquisitor says that, instead of establishing foundations that would give eternal tranquility to the human conscience, God chose all exceptional, mysterious, and indefinite, all that is beyond human capabilities; instead of taking away human freedom, God infinitely multiplies it, constantly burdening the spiritual world of humanity with the torments of freedom [1, p. 286]. The striving to freedom, bestowed on humanity as love for it and desire to change its destiny, becomes problematic due to the invisible supremacy of nihilism, which is a negation of values.

Anarchism of Bakunin, a contemporary of Dostoevsky, served as a response to the absurdities of the existing regime and influenced the anarchism and nihilism of Ivan's personality. Like many other young Russians of his time, Ivan detested the regime and sought to go beyond it, he demanded the abolition of the state-church alliance and juridical system, the disintegration of the court in which his older brother was wrongly convicted. Ivan defies God himself, but does not manage to overcome the constitutional laws, ultimately falling into the torpor of nihilism, which is primarily moral nihilism. Within the torn conscience, Ivan falls into delirium and confusion, ultimately becoming a slave of his internal chaos. When the "devil" appears, Ivan completely loses his rational independence, shaking under the power of his own psychological terror. This is at once the philosophical thesis on the dualism of the human soul and the prediction of his destiny: ultimately, the "devil" in his consciousness enslaves Ivan, driving him to delirium [1, pp. 700–704].

Ivan Karamazov is a kind of a prism reflecting all of the fragmentation and ruptures of the Russian soul. The tragedy of his descent into insanity in the finale reveals a profound epistemological truth about the limits of cognition: the excessive rationalism without love and faith necessarily drives humanity to self-destruction. Ultimately, the contemplation of Ivan's fall means facing the ontological anguish of humanity when torn between light and darkness, between the desire for the Divine and the abyss of nothingness.

3.3. THE CHARACTER OF IVAN FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF ANTHROPOLOGY, PSYCHOANALYSIS, AND EXISTENTIALISM

The metaphysics of human nature and human personality are revealed to the reader by the personage Ivan. As for anthropological research, the problem of the conflict between Ivan and God shows the similarity of Dostoevsky and Feuerbach. However, Feuerbach resolves the problematic of this conflict through the method of reason and faith. Feuerbach says: "In religion man denies his reason" [10, p. 27]. This embodies the characteristic rationalism of Western Europe, which, upon reaching Dostoevsky, becomes amalgamated with the Russian character – a synthesis of rationalism and Eurasian holism. The atheistic element in Ivan is relatively moderate, akin to Feuerbach, meaning it does not eradicate God outright but rather seeks to explore human capacities and aspirations, attempting to "reconstruct" the normative standards ordained by God into standards intended for, and oriented towards, humanity. Through the persona of Ivan, Dostoevsky articulates his unique religious philosophy. Author S.A. Kibalnik, in his work *Philosophical Decoding of Dostoevsky's Oeuvre* [2, p. 177], argues that the atheism of Ivan and the theism of Dostoevsky seemingly find their nexus in Feuerbach.

Politically, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and the Slavophiles (in opposition to the Westernizers) envisioned the establishment of "Christian Socialism" in Russia [2, pp. 177, 307, 308]. In the 1840s, alongside prevalent philosophical currents in Western Europe which Dostoevsky assimilated, there existed a philosopher who conceptualized religion both as a spiritual necessity of humanity and as the "reification" of consciousness – that which man alienates from himself and transfigures into the transcendental "other." That figure was Feuerbach, the final representative of German Classical Philosophy. In contrast to Dostoevsky, Feuerbach did not treat God as an object of inquiry; instead, he supplanted Christianity with the religion of love, elevating love to the status of God. In *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), Feuerbach wrote: "In religion, man is dichotomized within himself...". Feuerbach's conception of a religion bereft of God served as an antecedent to Nietzsche's doctrine that "God is dead," with Dostoevsky acting as the intermediary nexus through a series of works beginning with *The House of the Dead* [2, p. 308].

Therefore, through the character of Ivan, Dostoevsky delineates human torment in the process of asserting the Self amidst a world fraught with snares, absurdity, and a state of bifurcation. Adhering strictly to the methodology of internal dialectics, Dostoevsky discovered the sacred ego of humanity, or the symbol of the Divine immanent within man. Dostoevsky was profoundly preoccupied with, and frequently addressed, the teleological question of the extent to which the capacities and limits inherent in human nature might proceed. This thematic concern is architecturally constructed through Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov: one who schemes to act in accordance with "ideological programming," and another seething with rebellious, destructive thought, yet still overflowing with love for humanity. And precisely therein is

the tragedy of the human condition.

From the psychoanalytic point of view, the character Ivan is described with such an authenticity that it produces a huge psychological effect. Dostoevsky's work concentrates on psychological depth of the character applying the psychoanalytical approach to decipher the unconscious emotions and conflicts that make the protagonist go crazy. The obsessions with parricide or conspiracy theory are only superficial aspects of the problem, while the real cause of Ivan's madness hides in the depths of the soul – the complexes suppressed and the conflict between the conscious and the unconscious instincts.

In fact, the founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud interprets the parricide in *The Brothers Karamazov* as a classic example of the Oedipus complex in his essay *Dostoevsky and Parricide* (1928). He believes that the death of the old Karamazov was a fulfillment of the sons' unconscious desires [16, pp. 174–176] and [7, Vol. 21, pp. 173–194]. Oedipus complex which is originated from the Greek myth about the killing of the father and taking of the mother finally ends up with self-torment and punishment. This manifestation is clear enough in the character Ivan since after the mother's death he saw the depraved, selfish behavior of his father, which bred his hate towards him. Although on the surface Ivan appeared indifferent to anything, his inner feeling of aversion to Fyodor is visible. Dostoevsky depicts the father's traits through a chain of events: from "completely forgetting his firstborn son," abandonment of the two children with his second wife, disdain of Ivan and Alyosha's mother, to the most despicable and inhumane act of raping of a mad woman thinking that "she could be considered a woman" [1, p. 117]. The hatred towards the father keeps building up until reaching the extreme consequence – the desire for his father's death. In his essay *Dostoevsky and Parricide* Freud, when considering the real murderer of the father (Ivan-Smerdyakov conspiracy), argues that in the depths of personality conflict "the criminal is almost a savior, one who has taken upon himself the guilt that others should have borne" [8, pp. 399–414]. It is the rationality in the absurd existence, as Dostoevsky described [1, p. 273]. Ivan unconsciously had a primal guilt complex towards his father since childhood, but his father's death caused severe psychological crisis. When Smerdyakov confessed to murder of him "under Ivan's orders," all of Ivan's psychological mechanisms collapsed – he could no longer deny his part in it. "You know, you are the principal culprit, I am merely the henchman, your faithful servant Lisarda, executing what you instructed" [1, p. 671], said Smerdyakov. The guilt complex erupted so powerfully that Ivan's conscious ego could not handle it anymore. Ivan demonstrates classic signs of schizophrenia psychosis: delusions (conviction that he committed a murder despite knowing rationally that he did not) and hallucinations (seeing the demons). The "demon" that Ivan meets is in essence his alter ego – the very representation of his guilty instinct that makes him ready for self-destruction. The bizarre and mysterious conversation (part 11, chapter 8 – The third and final meeting with Smerdyakov, [1, p. 668]) has neurosis features analyzed psychoanalytically: the demon that Ivan calls "it" in his delirium mocks him parading his atheistic ideas in sarcastic way and calling Ivan a "coward" [1, p. 701].

Applying the theories of the post-Freudian psychoanalysis – archetypes, collective unconscious and individuation by Carl Jung, one could analyze the character of the Karamazov family which is "capable of containing all opposites" [1, p. 749], and reconcile the opposite aspects of the soul. The characterological conflict between Ivan and Alyosha is the collision of two different archetypes and symbols: the unconscious desires and extremism of Ivan are in contrast with the consciousness, moderation and holiness of Alyosha. But still, those two opposites – darkness and light – meet in the context of familial affection and blood relationships. They have different personalities but both of them love each other because they have a love for humanity. However, Ivan uses disbelief to undermine the divine laws, showing his readiness to replace everything utilitarian with the abstract "heavenly bread," saying that mankind will prefer to give up its freedom than to believe in any illusion of miracle. In contrast, with his pure faith in goodness Alyosha is trying to reconcile with Ivan. Even in the state of delirium Ivan has a certainty that his brother will soon return to the right path. Alyosha wants to pull Ivan out of the "archetype" that he created for himself. Dostoevsky through the character Ivan revealed the "darkness" of such atheism to the light, at the same time arguing that the absolute denial of God will result in the collapse of the spirit. The work ends with the philosophy of faith, as Alyosha says to the children: "How good life is, when one does something good and truthful!" [1, p. 825].

From the psychoanalytic prism Ivan Karamazov's tragedy is caused by the breaks in the unconscious: the deep internal split between love and hate towards the father, and between the striving for purity and guilt. Without redemptive faith, it pushed his mind to the verge of the destruction and madness. Ivan's collapse not only reveals the vulnerability of human psychological barriers but also turns into the metaphorical scale – Russia could escape the existential "turmoil" only after solving the contradictions between the Eastern and Western tendencies, between the rationalistic intellect and spiritual tradition.

It would be a limited perception to limit Ivan only to the European-style image of "cold-blooded" atheistic rationalist. Hidden behind the mask of proud philosophy there lie the surging emotions that were repressed to the degree of distortion. The explosive crisis before the court – when Ivan in pain says: "He murdered, and I taught him to murder... Who doesn't desire his father's death?" – is precisely the ultimate manifestation of primitive instincts. This shocking confession reveals the darkest side of the human unconscious according to the Freudian approach. Finally, behind the dazzling ideological rebellion, Ivan's being continues suffering from the bipolar conflicts of love-hate and resentment-guilt; it is an agonized

soul that is torn apart by the contradictory forces that his rational mind has never understood.

The character Ivan in *The Brothers Karamazov* steps out from the pages into reality with various nuances of internal torment, contradiction, anxiety, rebellion, and even a resignation to the flow of life; this profoundly impacts the ontological thought concerning human beings. From the standpoint of existentialism, the ontology of the human-individual is vividly embodied in the character of Ivan, as well as in the contradictions within the Karamazov family. In constructing these characters, from the debauched father Fyodor to the unacknowledged son Smerdyakov, Dostoevsky uncovered the intolerance within the free human ontology, exposing the contradictions and absurdities inherent to humanistic rationalism, evolutionary rationalism, a completely rationalized social order, and the utopia of the Crystal Palace. He regarded these constructs as representations of human disgrace and the degradation of dignity. In a conversation with his younger brother, Ivan declared: "...this world desperately needs absurdities. The world is built upon absurdities, and without them, nothing would happen in this world at all" [1, p. 273].

The absurdity that Ivan identifies is a highly prevalent category in twentieth-century existentialism. The absurdity of existence, alienation, and moral nihilism, which bear the significance of Ivan's individual rebellion in *The Brothers Karamazov*, formed a central theme in J.P. Sartre's existential philosophy. In *Existentialism is a Humanism*, under the title *Dostoevsky and Existentialism*, Sartre explicates this concept: "Indeed, everything is permitted if God does not exist. And, consequently, man becomes lonely" [11, p. 28]. As for the problem of freedom as a symbol in Ivan's character, one can see a historical parallel with existentialism in terms of his existential anxieties. Once Ivan thought, "man is condemned to be free. . . there is never anything harder to bear than freedom" [1, p. 283]. Freedom's contradiction and duality become clear in the dispute between the Grand Inquisitor and Christ. It was also the crucial question addressed to Russia in Dostoevsky's epoch, including the choice between dictatorship and democracy, chains and freedom during reforms. Thus, with the help of the Grand Inquisitor, Dostoevsky exposes the inconsistency and duality: Christ renounced the flag of earthly bread in the name of freedom and heavenly bread. "I say Thee that man is more tormented in nothingness than in finding someone quickly to whom he may hand over that gift of freedom with which the unhappy creature is born. But only one who can appease their conscience can take over their freedom. In bread there was offered Thee an invincible banner; give bread, and man will worship thee" [1, p. 285]. According to that interpretation, under the axiom "Man is Freedom," Sartre speaks of the condition of being "thrown into the world" to seek freedom, and being condemned in the sense that "you are free" [11, p. 29]. Human beings are condemned to be free because they refuse to be trampled like moss, representing the individual's choice of an existential mode amidst the collapse of traditional value systems. In his works, "Dostoevsky places his characters before two choices: either to reject reality, locking oneself in isolation and confronting oneself to seek freedom; or to live a debauched, deceitful life adhering to alienated norms. Though either choice is full of torment and pain, the characters all accept loneliness and suffering to achieve spiritual freedom, even if the price is personal tragedy" [12].

The existential philosopher Albert Camus designated Ivan as the "first metaphysical rebel," and the spirit of rebellion – in the sense of "I rebel, therefore we exist" – is present in nearly all writers and thinkers at transitional historical junctures. Ivan's inquiry regarding the cost of human happiness is the paramount question modern humanity must confront. Skepticism, "blasphemy" against God and rebellious consciousness are the crossing points between Ivan and existentialism. However, in this parallelism, in the experience of a "leap into nothingness", one can hardly draw a complete comparison between the epoch of Dostoevsky and Sartre, Camus. The rebellious spirit of Ivan is the reflection of the deepest crisis and deadlock of the Russian intelligentsia on the verge of epochs, while the two existentialists, having admitted the presence of crisis, also coincide with the affirmations of "man as a project", "the future-oriented subject", "responsibility" and "to dare in order to be successful".

4. CONCLUSION

The image of Ivan Karamazov in *The Brothers Karamazov* has been drawn by Dostoevsky as a thoroughly multilateral hero and the carrier of deep ideological and psychological conflicts of the individual, the epoch and the nation. Ivan is the personification of the "dialectic of faith and disbelief" [3, p. 506].

First of all, Ivan Karamazov personifies skepticism and protest against traditional religious and moral dogmas. Ivan's appeal "to return the ticket" on harmony of the Universe prescribed by the will of God represents a "transformation" of faith – the transition from miracles of God to the belief in self-creation of humanity in terrestrial life. Ivan is the convergence point of the contradictions of the Russian soul, combined with progressive ideas of the 19th century Russian intelligentsia under Western influence: rationalism, humanism, Enlightenment, atheism, combined with anarchism and in certain degree utopian socialism. His rebellious mind and desire for freedom form a deep philosophical link between Dostoevsky and existentialism represented by Sartre and Camus.

Secondly, from the psychoanalytical point of view, the contradictions and sufferings of Ivan Karamazov represent the bitter struggle of the subconscious, the complex of guilt and the human morality in the context of the spiritual life of man. Ivan becomes insane and deranged not only because he saw the death of his father, but primarily because of the internal

struggle between the desire for moral purity and his complex of guilt, as well as the contradiction of love and hatred dwelling in him. The philosophical conclusion made here consists in psychological balance – the ability to navigate in contradictions, clearly to understand one's existential situation and to assert the Ego in a positive and responsible way.

Thirdly, it is clear that Ivan Karamazov functions as the existential prism which perfectly reflects the polar nature of the Russian soul, the territory in which the most violently contradictory extremes are united. With the help of the profound metaphorical structure of the Karamazov family, Dostoevsky describes the fateful turning points of history: on the one hand – a morally degenerate reality embodied in the father, and on the other – Alyosha embodies the spiritual tradition of Orthodoxy, while Ivan represents the future, the atheistic rationalism with a certain European orientation.

The inner conflict of Ivan, being torn between an angel and a devil, between the omnipotence of God and the abyss of nothingness – is the perfect symbol of the tragedy of the nation which is desperately trying to find its center of gravity. The collapse and madness of this lone rationalist serves as a warning – excessive intellect in the absence of any moral background inevitably leads to self-destruction. However, Dostoevsky makes no judgments – instead he pours innumerable sympathy to Ivan since the character is the projection of the profound skepticism of the author himself – the intellectual torn between an "Orthodox heart and a European mind".

This ideological conflict reveals a way of redemption in the final part of the masterpiece. While Ivan falls victim to his own skeptical logic, the constant guidance of the children towards the future by Alyosha is the best refutation of all blasphemies. Thus, Dostoevsky asserts the eternal truth – in a world full of suffering and existential crisis only pure love and faith have the necessary strength to heal the structural wounds of the human being and to redeem the soul of the nation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research is funded by Van Lang University (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam).

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