

Study on the Changes in Dostoevsky's "Thoughts of Loving Others"

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Abstract. As one of the most important Russian writers in the 19th century, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky often praised pure and selfless love in his early works. In his later works, he focused on describing the complex relationship between human nature and religion, as well as advocating fraternity in religion. Such changes stem from his personal experience and the changing Russian society, which reflects Dostoevsky's spiritual growth and in-depth thoughts on social reality. This paper probes into the change of Dostoevsky's thoughts of "loving others" in his early and late periods and the corresponding reasons..

Keywords: Dostoevsky; "Thoughts of Loving Others"; *Poor Folk*; *The Dream of A Ridiculous Man*.

Dostoevsky, a master of Russian literature, has won wide acclaim from readers all over the world for his profound thoughts and unique writing style. In his works, the discussion on the theme of "love" is particularly thought-provoking.

His early works about "thoughts of loving others" are often idealistic, where the protagonists tend to have pure and selfless love. This is not only his praise of the beauty and nobility of human nature, but also his resistance to the ruthless social reality. However, with the twists and turns of his personal experience and the social turmoil, his "thoughts of loving others" have undergone profound changes.

Dostoevsky's understanding of "love" in his later works is more complex and profound. Since then, the protagonists in his works are often numb and contradictory, facing the dual dilemma of morality and emotion, but they can finally be awakened to love in their hearts and put into practice. The inclusive love of human nature stems from his thinking about the complicated relationship between human nature, morality, religion and others. This is the embodiment of his personal spiritual growth and his deep reflection on society after his profound insight into human nature.

This paper aims to probe into the change of Dostoevsky's "thoughts of loving others" in his early and late periods and the corresponding reasons through the deep analysis of his works, so as to provide a new perspective for understanding Dostoevsky.

1. "Thoughts of Loving Others" in Dostoevsky's Early Works

In *Petersburg Dream in Poetry and Essay*, Dostoevsky recalled his youth and life in the vicinity of poor officials. When talking about some of his creative plans, he mentioned his idea of writing *Poor Folk*. "At that time, another thing appeared before my eyes. In a dark corner was the heart of an ordinary civil servant, full of integrity and purity, moral and loyal to his superiors. With him was a humiliated and depressed little girl. Their affairs tugged at my heartstrings and broke my heart".

Dostoevsky showed the life of the poor folk at the lowest social status in Russia through literature. He saw himself as one of countless poor folk, because his life has always been inseparable from the people at the bottom. Since his youth, Dostoevsky has experienced destitution and hunger. Instead of standing in the perspective of a bystander, he put himself in the position of personal experience to write.

In his early works represented by the *Poor Folk*, he expressed the following "thoughts of loving others".

1.1 Love for the People at the Bottom

During this period, his “thoughts of loving others” are mainly reflected in his meticulous observation and sympathetic description of the life of people at the bottom, which contains their noble love and his sympathy for the poor at the bottom.

The hero in *Poor Folk*, Devushkin, is the embodiment of Dostoevsky’s “thoughts of loving others”. Devushkin’s life was very difficult, but he still did everything he could to support Varvara materially so that he sold his last uniform to ensure that Varvara could live. When Varvara fell ill, he sent her so-called grapes that could “cure the sick body”. To subsidize Varvara’s rental residence, he gave up his stable residence and moved into a bad rental house. Although he was also in debt, he stepped forward when Varvara was in financial trouble.

Meanwhile, he spiritually encouraged Varvara to live. Devushkin maintained frequent and in-depth communication with Varvara through letters, where Devushkin patiently listened to Varvara’s troubles and confusion, used his life experience and wisdom to give her guidance, as well as accompanied Varvara. When Varenka was facing necessity problems and illness, Devushkin tried his best to comfort her. “You are not sick, my sweetheart. There is no disease at all. You are like a blooming flower.” When she could not afford the rent, Devushkin promised that he would bear the burden of debt. “I will find extra work myself and copy various manuscripts of all kinds. I will go to begging for work from them and not let you wear yourself out.” To fight for the drunken officer who was frivolous about Varvara, Devushkin was pushed down the stairs, ridiculed and insulted by the crowd.

Even Varvara finally chose to leave Devushkin and marry a landlord so that the two could not drag each other down and fall into the abyss, Devushkin did not have the slightest hatred, but sincerely blessed Varvara. Devushkin was always aware of her plight and helplessness, so he chose to help her with his meager strength so that she could live a better life. Such selfless love and dedication embody Dostoevsky’s “thoughts of loving others”.

Varvara’s gratitude and love for Devushkin further confirmed Dostoevsky’s “thoughts of loving others”. Similar to Devushkin, Varvara is highly compassionate with the ability to love, although she is a lonely girl living at the bottom. At a time when she needed help most, Devushkin reached out, even though his life was not rich. Deeply moved by this selfless help, Varvara cherished this hard-won friendship and love as a vital sustenance in her life. In the novel, Varvara repeatedly expressed her gratitude to Devushkin for his help and concern in her most difficult time.

While being grateful to Devushkin, Varvara felt guilty and pressured. Accepting the support of Devushkin, who was also in poverty, she was uneasy and refused his gifts many times. “Didn’t I see you are going bankrupt for me, and even the last kopeck is spent on me? This is not in line with your financial conditions, my friend!” With a kind heart, she was also concerned about Devushkin’s living conditions, unwilling to accept too many handouts from him.

When she foresaw that they might drag each other down and find it hard to maintain their lives, she resolutely chose to embrace the sad fate and accepted a marriage arranged by the landlady. In order not to trouble Devushkin, Varvara married an old landlord. Such a decision is full of benevolent and kind humanitarianism. This love from Varvara further confirms Dostoevsky’s “thoughts of loving others”.

Dostoevsky focused on the two characters at the bottom. Whether it is their selfless and noble love or the sympathy and praise shown by Dostoevsky, they all reflect Dostoevsky’s love for vulnerable groups and lower-class people at that time.

1.2 Ode to “Love By Deeds”

In *Poor Folk*, Dostoevsky used considerable texts to praise the hero and heroine who expressed love by good deeds.

As an inferior civil servant, Devushkin who knew the dark society well witnessed the exploitation and oppression of the poor by the rich, and understood the hardships and helplessness experienced by the people at the bottom. The tragic story of the bereaved Gorshko family saddened Devushkin

with the suffering of the father and children. Devushkin often paid attention to vulnerable groups such as orphans, the disabled, and the elderly in society. In addition, he participated in various charitable activities to provide them with help and support. Devushkin knew that these people were marginalized in society and needed more care and help.

In the notes presented to Devushkin, Varvara described her life experience in childhood and youth, which were intertwined with pain and joy. In the last part, she made no mention of the sorrow she was about to encounter, nor did she show any dissatisfaction with the humble life. Instead, Varvara described the misfortunes of others she had felt. For example, the tragic death of Pokrovsky, the poor governess, with Varvara waiting all night at the bedside, serving him before his death. Others' misfortunes and hidden pains so strongly occupied her heart that she was indifferent to her own pain and sorrow of being insulted and damaged. When the impoverished Pokrovsky's old father pleaded with the two to buy a set of books for Pokrovsky's birthday, she decided to pay for it herself for the old man.

These odes to the "love by deeds" not only highlight the good character of the hero and heroine, but also make their characters more fleshed out, which expresses Dostoevsky's praise for the noble people at the bottom. However, Dostoevsky only utilized the praise of "love" and did not write towards appealing to love and awakening the love in people's hearts.

The "love" between the protagonists and their "love" for the people at the bottom constitutes the core theme of *Poor Folk*. Dostoevsky emphasized the mutual aid, sympathy and love between human beings, where "thoughts of loving others" are reflected. These thoughts are manifested in the emotional connection between individuals and extend to Dostoevsky's care and support for disadvantaged groups in the whole society, which is his love and responsibility for the people at the bottom.

2. "Thoughts of Loving Others" in Dostoevsky's Late Works

The late works represented by *A Dream of A Ridiculous Man* are the carrier of Dostoevsky's "thoughts of loving others as loving yourself". It expresses the love for the concept of "human beings", which is a "fraternity" that breaks away from specific groups and is shown to all human beings. It also calls on people to build an ideal beautiful world by practicing "love others as loving yourself".

2.1 Love for All Humanity

Compared with Dostoevsky's praise and deep sympathy for the love limited to the benevolent people in *Poor Folk*, *A Dream of A Ridiculous Man* shows a broader love through the awakening of love for "ridiculous man" with more blurred identity boundaries and more numb inner world. This is the concern for the overall destiny of mankind and the good hope for the future that Dostoevsky still has after understanding the limitations of mankind in his later years.

The image of a "ridiculous man" belonging to a kind of "underground man" described by Dostoevsky had the ability to love but lose love in the end. They had deep contempt for all people and things. The opening chapters of the two works are also very similar. According to *Notes from Underground* at the beginning, "I am a sick person.", while the opening section of *A Dream of A Ridiculous Man* describes "I am a ridiculous man." In the background of the novel, the ridiculous man quite indifferent to others had no illusion or hope for the world. He thought everything in the world was indifferent and often had the idea of self-ending in his heart.

On the night "ridiculous man" made up his mind to commit suicide, he met a ragged little girl on his way home, who cried "Mom" sadly. The "ridiculous man" understood that her mother might be dying or something happened to their family. However, the "ridiculous man" did not want to pay attention to it at all and pushed her away coldly. When he went home and prepared to commit suicide, a new feeling haunted him, making him uneasy and restless. In the past, he would not be ashamed of rejecting a person who asked for help. At this moment, his reason and sensibility had a subtle conflict. "I remember I felt terrible pity for her, even felt a strange heartache. It is a heartache not

commensurate with my situation.” How could the sorrow and joy of a little girl whom he had never met mean anything to him? When everything in this world should be more “meaningless” than ever to a dying “ridiculous man”?

“Ridiculous man” felt angry and ashamed of their actions, but at the same time did not understand why this emotion arose. Half awake, he felt that he had finally fired a shot into his heart. “It was the heart, not the head. In the past, I was determined to shoot at the head”. Why did the “ridiculous man” change the position of shooting? The reason he shot the heart was that his sensibility had been impacted. It can be said that this little girl was the bullet that shot into his heart, knocking open the shell made of negative world-weary emotion in his heart and exposing the soft part of “love”. The emotional swings of this encounter made him unconsciously enter the “dream of the golden age” full of “love”. After waking up, he faced up to the “love” awakened in his heart and found a way that made him free from the world. The path of eternal liberation from disgust is “love others as loving yourself”. Men are to live and preach. Because he saw and believed that “man can become beautiful and happy and will never lose the ability to survive in the world. I refuse and cannot believe that evil is the normal state of human beings.” “I have discovered and seen the truth, which is mainly that I must love others as I love myself. This is the key.”

The “ridiculous man” is a classic image of cynicism, deep malice, and extreme individualism in Russian literature. He was used to satisfying his evil interests by disintegrating the precious feelings in himself and others. Dostoevsky, by portraying this image and the experience of such a morbid person’s “love” being awakened, embodies his belief in human beings’ ability to find “love” after realizing their complexity. In Dostoevsky’s work, humans are not black and white, but full of sophistication and contradiction. He knew well that everyone had his kindness and evilness. The “ridiculous man” once abandoned the ability to “love oneself”, allowing his heart to be blinded by contempt and hatred. The people of the “golden age” also became as arrogant, disruptive and ashamed as the worldly ones because “ridiculous men” brought them the ability to deceive and hate. However, Dostoevsky was not in a hurry to judge or condemn them. Instead, he wrote a script that made the “ridiculous man” repent because of his dream and made him determined to spread the truth of “loving others as love yourself”, which changed them in the real world who seemed to fall into the “golden age”. Dostoevsky believed that human nature is not evil but only depraved, so it can be saved. If a “ridiculous man” can be awakened, then endless “ridiculous men” worldwide will have the possibility of being awakened.

Undoubtedly, Dostoevsky had a deep insight and understanding of human complexity. Despite this complexity, Dostoevsky did not lose faith in humans. Instead, he saw the universal love and kindness hidden behind the complexity. He believed that everyone could transcend their limitations, achieve self-salvation and sublimation, and find the ability to love. This is exactly Dostoevsky’s love for the entire human groups in his later years.

2.2 Call for “Love By Deeds”

In *Poor Folk*, Dostoevsky described and praised the selfless love among the people at the bottom. Although they all took action for this love, Dostoevsky did not appeal to “love by deeds” in the text but stayed in the stage of praising love. However, in *The Dream of A Ridiculous Man*, he wrote “love by deeds” and its necessity.

The “ridiculous man” was awakened after waking up from a dream and could not wait to bring the behavior of love to human society. This is the best manifestation of Dostoevsky’s appeal to “love by deeds”. The “dream of the golden age” originated from Dostoevsky’s cherished *Gospel*, which almost reflects his best fantasy about human society. The world in the dream is full of magnificent, sacred, and finally triumphant brilliance. The sea is rippling. The trees are tall and straight. Flocks of birds are flying on the beach, and beautiful, innocent and happy children are running. The people here are rational and intelligent, who get along well with everything in nature. They never show lust, jealousy and fury, but praise each other all their lives. “This is a pure land that has never been tarnished by human sins. Innocent and sinless people lived here, as if they lived in our sinful ancestors Adam and

Eve as mentioned in various legends of the entire human race like the paradise where Eve lived.” The ridiculous man saw in his dream that “man can become beautiful and happy, and he will never lose the ability to survive in the world. I refuse and cannot believe that evil is the normal state of human beings.” The ridiculous man who was originally in a state of nothingness realized the truth in his dream: “Loving others as loving yourself.” He understood that love exists in everyone’s heart and can be awakened. So the ridiculous man decided to live and go to preach. The former cold and capricious underground man’s homage has disappeared, replaced by the image of a savior with firm beliefs and the practice of “loving others as loving yourself”. At the end of the novel, the ridiculous man woke up from a dream and decided to find the little girl. “I will fight. As long as everyone is willing to do it, everything will be successful immediately. I have already inquired about the little girl... I will go forward.” “Ridiculous man” enthusiastically practiced love for others, which was the embodiment of Dostoevsky’s admiration for “love by deeds”.

Dostoevsky chose to destroy the “dream of the golden age”, which is also an advocacy for human beings to “love by deeds”. Dostoevsky inherited the ideas of the French Utopian Socialist School. They believe that the golden age exists in the future of mankind, not in the past, with which Dostoevsky agreed. So he personally created the “golden age” in this dream, and then smashed it himself, guiding the “ridiculous man” to “love by deeds” in reality. He took a small step to create a golden age with actions and alerted readers that the golden age does not exist in imagination but actions. He called on people to practice “loving others as loving yourself”. He proved that utopia is based on “love by deeds”. Even if the old utopia is destroyed, a new utopia can be established through “love”.

Dostoevsky’s “thoughts of loving others” in his late works reflect his deep concern and good hope for the fate of mankind as a whole. In *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*, he expressed his call for human “fraternity”, emphasizing the construction of an ideal world through “loving others as loving oneself”. Although the image of a “ridiculous man” once lost the ability to love, he was finally awakened and determined to spread the truth of “loving others as loving oneself”, which reflects Dostoevsky’s confidence after his deep insight into human complexity. Compared with the early works, Dostoevsky in the late period called for “love by deeds” more explicitly, which stressed the necessity of “love by deeds” for human society and showed his extensive love for humans in his later years.

3. Reasons for the Change of Dostoevsky’s “Thoughts of Loving Others”

Dostoevsky’s “thoughts of loving others” changed in two aspects. One is from his love for people at the bottom in early periods to his fraternity for the whole human being in later periods. The other is from the early praise of love to the appeal of “love by deeds” in his later periods. The main reasons for these two changes are their own experience, the social changes in Russia and their Eastern Orthodox faith.

3.1 Personal Experience

Dostoevsky was born in a family of doctors who were not rich. Such a growth environment gave him more opportunities to get in touch with people at the bottom and understand their hardships. This direct experience became a vital source of the “thoughts of loving others” in his early works. His debut novel *Poor Folk*, published in 1845, profoundly reflected his sympathy and concern for the people at the bottom. By describing the fate of these characters, he expressed his criticism of social injustice and indifference to human nature, reflecting his initial “thoughts of loving others”.

In 1849, Dostoevsky was arrested for his involvement in revolutionary activities against the Tsar and threatened with the death penalty. However, a moment before his execution, he was commuted to exile in Siberia. In fact, Dostoevsky was exiled to Omsk Penal Fort in Siberia, where infrastructure and administrative institutions were struggling due to lack of funds and neglect of management. In his letter, he described the housing conditions as extremely harsh, with sweltering summers and cold

winters, rotten floors covered in thick dirt, and windows that were narrow and frost-covered, making it almost impossible to read indoors. This harsh environment caused great torture to his body and mind. He was forced to perform heavy physical labor, while also enduring mental loneliness and depression. In *The House of the Dead*, Dostoevsky recorded in detail what he saw, heard, thought and felt during his exile. He described the suffering of prisoners, the brutality of the prison system, and the complex and multifaceted nature of human nature.

It was also during this period that Dostoevsky profoundly analyzed human nature and social issues, which finally set his sights on the overall fate of human beings.

The period of Siberian exile is a major turning point in the development of Dostoevsky's thought, which is of far-reaching significance to him, no matter from both positive and negative aspects. He thought it was Siberia that gave him a "new life". This is often reflected not only in his memoirs, but also in almost all of his critical works. Siberian life was firstly a thorough self-reflection and repentance for him, which made him abandon all revolutions and attempt to seek a personal and social way out from religious doctrine. He had few books to read other than the *Bible*, which made him more focused on the teachings and revelations of the Orthodox Church. In the low valley of life and spiritual predicament, religious belief has become his spiritual comfort and guidance. Dostoevsky's religious belief emphasizes the importance of love, and believes that love is a bridge connecting people and gods. This also laid the foundation for his later thought of human fraternity. Such a doctrine is in line with his fraternity thought, which makes him more convinced that humans should care for and support each other. Through religious beliefs, Dostoevsky has a deeper understanding of human beings and human nature. He has insight into the common suffering and needs of all mankind. This awareness prompted him to pay more attention to the fate and well-being of all mankind.

Dostoevsky's growth in his early years and life experience in his middle and later periods shaped his "thoughts of loving others" in his early and late periods respectively. In particular, his unremitting thinking and perception during his ascetic prison experience led to the formation of his late fraternity thought.

3.2 Social Transformation

Dostoevsky's "thoughts of loving others" not only stem from his personal thought evolution, but also has something to do with the historical background of Russian society at that time.

In 1821, when Dostoevsky was born, Russian society was still in the period of serfdom. Serfs were completely attached to the landlord in terms of land, person, and justice, which became the private property of the landlord. Serfs did not have the right to choose their place of work and residence, nor did they have the right to leave the land. Their children were destined to be serfs at birth and could not change their fate. They are forced to engage in heavy physical labor, working for as long as ten hours a day, or even working non-stop. Almost all their income from labor was occupied by the landlords, and they could only obtain a meager wage or ration to maintain their basic life necessities. Due to the backward medical conditions and poor sanitary conditions then, the life expectancy of serfs was short.

At this time, Dostoevsky cared about the fate of the people at the bottom, especially the peasants. He longed to achieve social progress and happiness by overthrowing the old social system and establishing a new social order. This pursuit is reflected in some of his early works. He tried to awaken people's consciousness and promote social change through the power of literature. In *Poor Folk*, the writer indirectly reflects his sympathy for the people at the bottom and his resentment against social injustice through his profound description of the tragic fate of the nobody. Dostoevsky is undoubtedly calling for a force that can change the social status quo. This power may not be a direct social revolution, but a pursuit of social justice and a deep excavation of human nature.

In the 1860s, Russia experienced the serfdom reform, which marked the beginning of the transition from a feudal system to a capitalist system. The rise of capitalism has brought about great changes in the social structure. People have begun to pursue freedom, equality and independence. These changes have had a profound impact on Dostoevsky's thought. With the development of capitalism, social

problems and contradictions have intensified. The widening gap between the rich and the poor, the suffering of the working class, and the decline of social morality have been increasingly prominent. These phenomena made Dostoevsky painful and confused. The “liberation” of the people at the bottom did not make their lives better, and the change of the social system did not change the darkness in human nature. He realized that improving the lives of some people and a one-sided reform cannot solve human contradictions. Dostoevsky put forward the principle of individuality quite different from that of the bourgeoisie. He believed that in this world full of violence and evil, lonely individuals cannot be happy, and the universal happiness of human beings is the premise of personal happiness. Dostoevsky began to pay attention to the inner world of human beings or something common to all mankind. He always believed that there are good thoughts in people and that human nature can be good. He realized that only through the ideological transformation and moral improvement of the collective of all mankind can the harmony and progress of society be truly achieved. Dostoevsky began to explore how to influence people’s inner world through the power of literature, helping them realize their sins and mistakes, so as to achieve self-redemption and spiritual sublimation. This exploration of ideological transformation is not only reflected in his novels, but also runs through his later creative career. By creating a series of complex and profound characters, he has shown the multifaceted and complex human nature, guided every reader to explore their own inner world, and found the most sincere feelings in humans.

Dostoevsky’s *The Dream of A Ridiculous Man* in his later years reveals his struggle and pursuit in the spiritual world from the perspective of a “ridiculous man”, and then exposes the complexity and profundity of ideological transformation. Although the “ridiculous man” originally felt that the world was not clear about the truth and was indifferent to everything in the world, he realized his absurdity in the process, began to re-examine his values and world outlook, and regained the ability to love. Dostoevsky affirmed the feasibility and inevitability of this ideological transformation, expressed his expectation for human groups to find the “ability to love”, and returned to his deep emotion of “fraternity” for all mankind.

In his early years, Dostoevsky paid attention to the sufferings of peasants and other people at the bottom, eager to fight for more rights and interests for them. However, the changes in social structure and class did not improve the lives of the people at the bottom, so he devoted himself to enlightening the inner world of all mankind. After an insight into human nature, he chose to believe in the beautiful qualities that still exist in people’s hearts, so as to guide human beings as a whole to an ideal society of “loving others as loving yourself”.

3.3 Religious Beliefs

Dostoevsky only revealed the praise of “love” itself in his early works. However, after converting to religion in middle age, he realized the importance of “love by deeds” for building an ideal society.

Dostoevsky was born into a typical civilian family, and his native family instilled a lot of gospel education in him since he was a child, cultivating his pious religious feelings. In addition, this class position enabled him to go deep into the people and understand their sufferings from an early age. Thus, he was easily affected by utopian socialism and believed that Russia had historical particularities different from Europe. When he was young, Dostoevsky did not rely on religion, but followed the Russian Naturalists, and joined Russia Petersburg Peterasevsky group, a civilian intellectual association headed by Peterasevsky. This group fought against the Tsarist system based on democratic principles and utopian socialism ideology. At first, theoretical issues were discussed mainly through self-study and gatherings. Politically oriented rallies began in 1848-1849, among which liberals were represented by Danilevsky, Beklemishev, Dostoevsky, etc. They advocated peaceful propaganda, demanded reforms from the top, and longed to establish a rational and happy country peacefully. Dostoevsky’s works in this period are full of demands for reforming the social system and praising the great and selfless character of the common people.

In the 19th century, Russia was at a historical turning point. The decay of the Tsarist autocratic system, the aggravation of social injustice and the impact of Western ideas made Russian society full

of conflicts. Besides, the society faced a serious moral crisis. People began to seek more spiritual sustenance and comfort. The Orthodox Church, as the state religion of Russia, became a crucial source for Russians to seek spiritual comfort at that time. Especially after the failure of Petrashevsky's group, Dostoevsky was unable to explain various intractable diseases of the society then, so he further turned to religion. In *Impression of Summer in Winter Records*, Dostoevsky expressed disappointment that "no social system can avoid evil, the human mind will not change, and unreasonableness and evil come from the human mind itself." Dostoevsky's thought at this moment has denied his previous actions and turned to the transformation of the human subject spirit, hoping to realize the ideal of transforming society through non-violent means. The transformation of the spirit of the human subject is mainly based on the propaganda and promotion of religious thought. He began to think more deeply about the significance and value of religion to human nature, and believed that religion could provide people with strength and guidance beyond suffering.

Dostoevsky formed his religious ideas after being imprisoned in Siberia. His religious view can be summarized as a humanitarian religious view, which is the product of combining humanitarianism and Christianity, stemming from humanitarianism and ending with religion. His religious belief was formed to solve human survival in real society. Hence, after converting to religion, his works often emphasized the practice of noble qualities and love by deeds. He believed that it is not enough to just praise love and what is more important is to transform love into concrete actions. Moreover, reflecting the power and value of love through deeds is vital. Dostoevsky held that the harmony and progress of human society can be realized through individual inner transformation and moral improvement. This idea is reflected in his works as an appeal to love by deeds. His works began to heed the complexity and contradictions of human nature. Through the in-depth excavation of the characters' inner world, he showed the power and greatness of love. Only through the love by deeds can he truly change the lives of himself and others, as well as realize the sublimation and transcendence of human nature. In *The Dream of A Ridiculous Man*, Dostoevsky portrayed the ideal future of mankind, the "dream of the golden age" like the Garden of Eden. The "ridiculous man" who woke up from the dream conveyed love like a missionary. At this time, Dostoevsky believed that establishing and practicing belief was the key to solving all human problems. It required people to face their sins and seek redemption, and learn to love others as themselves. Through the hero's experience and dreams, Dostoevsky conveyed his firm belief in religion, his desire for human self-salvation and his pursuit of returning to human nature.

To sum up, Dostoevsky's works from eulogizing love to calling for "love by deeds" are inseparable from his religious beliefs. This change is his adherence to and practice of faith, reflecting his infinite pursuit of the spiritual world of mankind and his desire for social progress.

The change in his "thoughts of loving others" reflects his mental process. When he finds that it is infeasible to change the structure and system of society, he tries to awaken people's thoughts and turn to religion. These attempts and ideological innovations in writing reflect that Dostoevsky actively sought change and longed to better transform the material world by enriching the spiritual world of human beings, which is the magnanimous "love" as he expressed.

4. Conclusion

After an in-depth discussion of Dostoevsky's two works *Poor Folk* and *The Dream of A Ridiculous Man*, it is not difficult to find the transformation of Dostoevsky's "thoughts of loving others" in the early and late period with a profound insight into human nature. From the praise of the love among the benevolent people in *Poor Folk* to the concern for the overall destiny of mankind as well as the call for a better hope for the future in *The Dream of A Ridiculous Man*, Dostoevsky's "thoughts of loving others" has experienced a sublimation from concreteness and limitation to universality and broadness.

Dostoevsky's life experience, Russian social environment and religious beliefs at that time are the crucial reasons for transforming his "thoughts of loving others". In his early years, his family was

mediocre, and he spoke out for them out of sympathy for the poor people in Russia, laying more emphasis on reforming the social system and improving the lives of specific groups. His later works pay more attention to the description and analysis of the universal human nature and the inner world of the characters, so as to find a way out of the human spirit. After the failure of Petrashevsky's group, he realized that even if the social system is changed, it is difficult to make the society ideal. Awakening people's consciousness and making more people awaken is the foundation of human progress. This improves his "thoughts of loving others" to the human universal value, which has a more profound significance. Dostoevsky believed that love is the essence of human existence and the only way to salvation and sublimation. Therefore, in his works, he constantly appealed to people to practice "loving others as loving yourself", overcome the weaknesses and defects of human nature through loving actions, and realize the harmony and progress of human society.

His works and thoughts provide valuable enlightenment that in this world full of contradictions and complexity, we should stick to the belief of love and reach the "golden age" of mankind in the future by "loving others as loving yourself".

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