

***The Brothers Karamazov's* chapter 5, "The Grand Inquisitor" written by Fyodor Dostoevsky: Commentary of my Summary**

When the Grand Inquisitor visits Jesus in his cell, he makes the point, "The very people who today kissed your feet, tomorrow, at a nod from me, will rush to heap the coals up around your stake, do you know that?" (250). I believe his statement to be true and a great example of human nature. Humans are easily persuaded when looking for support, for a leader. I believe what caused such a shift of praise from Jesus to the Grand Inquisitor was the lack of delivery Jesus gave the people. Jesus gave people hope through his miracles and ideas of freedom. Once given that freedom though, or the idea of seeking it, he did not provide, he only guided. The Grand Inquisitor and his people picked off where he left off and provided, but in exchange the people lost that freedom they sought- in a sense have freedom though through being provided for.

The Inquisitor and his colleagues believed to, "have finally overcome freedom...in order to make people happy". Later he even states, "In the end they will lay their freedom at our feet and say to us: 'Better that you enslave us, but feed us'". This very much reminded me of Singapore and soft despotism. The government provides and stabilizes the peoples' lives, but in return the people are an uninformed public, a public without the right to be informed or to waver in their trust for the government. The Inquisitor acted as a Sheppard in gathering the sheep after they were left lost with ideas of freedom. Such control over the government is caused due to their beliefs of human nature. From after Jesus' last visit they saw people to be hopeless, to have no clue as to do with their freedom. The life they live is given a sense of hell with keywords such as "scorching desert". With their lack of hope and faith in God, it is if they are already sentenced to some sort of hell. The statements earlier quoted seem to me to be lacking the other essence of human nature. Yes, it is a part of human nature to want to be led, but what about the other part that has the need to rebel? Also, The Inquisitor acts as if he and his colleague are beyond human nature. He claimed, "When all gods have disappeared from the earth: they will still fall down before idols". The people now follow people, as in the Inquisitor. Even as leaders, the Inquisitor and his people chose to follow Caesar. They are not above human nature; they are actually great examples of human nature's fall to greed and power.

The Inquisitor claims that to "blindly obey" is to be a part of the "mystery". That mystery is another way of being unaware, ignorant. I was reminded of how Dr. Mester said there are two ways to lead: with control or trust. Jesus has faith in human nature therefore gave people freedom. The Inquisitor has no faith in human nature as he doesn't believe they can handle freedom, therefore leads with complete control. When the Inquisitor recalls how he joined, "the intelligent people", he is categorizing his government and colleagues for those who use "their brain" and those who follow Jesus, as people who use their heart and emotions instead.

I'm not sure if I missed it in the reading or not, but how would "freedom" be defined as? And is Jesus' response of only a kiss to the Inquisitor saying that a leader should be one of forgiveness? As a Catholic I believe in forgiveness, but when defining a leader, I

believe Jesus and the Inquisitor to be extremists. There has to be a balance between being guarded and being open, as we have learned from our past readings and from our guest speaker. Again, to find such a balance and informed republic involves the schools and the young. Democratic skills, awareness of power and knowledge of rights have to be instilled at a young age and practiced through out life.