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*LITERATURE AND EXISTENTIALISM:
THE CASE OF DOSTOYEVSKY*

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A Thesis
in
the Department
of
Philosophy

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Abstract

Nicolas van Velzen

Literature and Existentialism: The Case of Dostoyevsky

This is an examination of the relationship between Literature and Existentialism, focussing on the major works of Dostoyevsky. It shows how these works are best suited for demonstrating the movements found in Existentialism. The concepts that are explored include: Contingency and its discovery, the collapse of Rationality and the ensuing emergence of Passion. The justification of Passion by such philosophers as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, Passion in the Existential *Roman à Thèse*, and the increase of Passion by Suspense, is also discussed.

This study shows how Dostoyevsky provides us with a grounding of experience which is necessary for a true account of existence, which other Existential authors cannot present. This study concentrates itself on Dostoyevsky's Notes From the Underground, The Idiot, and The Brothers Karamazov. The introduction considers the topic "Why the Case of Dostoyevsky", the first chapter focusses on "The Discovery of Contingency in Notes From the Underground", chapter two studies "The Collapse of Rationality and the Emergence of Passion", the last chapter examines "The Increase of Passion by the Suspense", followed by the conclusion which addresses "The End of Suspense".

For my parents, and my sister,
for providing the foundation upon which this was built,

and for Mr. Haskins,
who wanted to know how I handled my first dedication.

These men and women
would not lie
about the shapes mud has taken

-- S.O.

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Introduction:

WHY THE CASE OF DOSTOYEVSKY

Essence or Existence

Existentialism is a philosophy which concentrates its attention on the individual. Other philosophies have addressed the individual, most commonly as part of a bigger system. This change in attention results from the denial that man has any essence, for this would allow him to be thought of as a mere 'instance' of a concept. What counts in Existentialism then is the existence of an individual.

This may seem to be an obvious statement to make, but it reveals a completely different approach to philosophy. In saying as Sartre does that 'existence precedes essence', we as individuals are free to choose how we exist. There is no essence determining what we will be, what we are. That determination is now up to each individual, since only individuals can define themselves. This definition of oneself can only arise through choice -- how one decides to live and exist in the world. Existentialism seeks out 'how' one chooses to exist, not 'what' one is, since one is not

anything outside of one's own existence. Thus, Existentialism will lay its emphasis on subjectivity. This is a fundamental change from the first question of philosophy, which is 'what is it?'. The implications of this stand are the following: freedom of choice; we choose the way we exist but, then, we have to be ready to bear the consequences. This brings us to another characteristic, namely responsibility.

By focussing on the 'how' rather than on the 'what', truth is no longer seen as something objective, but rather subjective and existing in each individual. If truth is to be found in a subjective reflection, then truth can be seen in the process of the individual appropriating it.

The subjective nature of truth results from the lack of finality of Existentialism, which is the main characteristic of "essentialism". The philosophy of essences construes systems; in Existentialism the systems break down, hence the notion of the Absurd and the Irrational.

When individuals define themselves by their actions and choices, they cannot be said to have completed their several acts of self-definition if they have not finished acting in the world; that is, choosing the things that are valued. When the act of appropriating the truth is not yet complete, we cannot say that we have arrived at a final resolution in our search for truth. This allows us to say that truth for us lies in the search for it. Since truth is revealed to us subjectively, then truth leads to our self-definition, through our becoming. Thus, the notion of *becoming* sums up the main features of Existentialism.

To conclude, Existentialism is a philosophy which focuses on the

individual and one's task of becoming. Becoming a 'self' implies freedom, choice, and responsibility, then risk, passion and fear and trembling. On the philosophical level, we encounter the Absurd and the Irrational. These possibilities constitute a bundle which is tied together with Contingency. If we want to bring this philosophy to literature, we have to look for those events which demonstrate, and without 'artifice', our human condition.

Literature or Philosophy

It is difficult to formulate a precise definition of what literature is. Literature is an expression of ideas and sentiments in an artistic form, which means that the writing in its final form exists independently of the author -- it has an existence of its own. It is because of this independent existence that we have trouble describing what that existence is on its own terms. We have to approach literature the same way as we approach existence, asking not what it is, but how it exists in the world.

Obviously, we cannot ask the traditional Existential questions of Literature, since we are not dealing with an individual, but a thing. Furthermore, we must realize that we are not dealing with a thing which exists in and of itself, such as a rock or a car, where we can simply point to it and identify it. Literature is a thing, but it exists independently of its physical form in a curious way: we cannot see a copy of Ulysses as being *the* Ulysses, so much as it is a single embodiment of it, as are all copies of the book including the original. Unable to use the more traditional approach of seeing what something is by asking 'what is it', we must ask the Existentialist question of 'how' it exists.

The answer to this question varies according to the periods of Classicism, Romanticism, or Realism. Thus, there is something which can be identified in the history of literature as Existential literature. For

brevity's sake, we shall divide these writings into two categories. The best known form of Existentialist writings is the one which betrays its tendency at the outset: the *roman à thèse*, which means to illustrate the Existentialist themes, such as freedom, responsibility, and paradox. Here the first names which come to mind are those of Sartre, Camus, Gabriel Marcel, or Kafka. There are some others which do not display the 'irrational' element of life so openly, but they are admittedly not existentialist, but rather humanist.

Then there are authors who are naturally, perhaps by birth, existentialist due to the life they had to live, and therefore demonstrate their 'lived experiences' (*expérience vécue, Erlebnis*), in the form of a literary work, and such is the case of Dostoyevsky.

If we attempt to formulate a value-judgement, we will say that the latter category is far more important than the first, because it recreates real life with its brutal episodes. It is these episodes which illustrate, by accident, the philosophical trend which followed the collapse of systems, our systems of values and ethics, with its punishment and rewards, as well as our rational beliefs concerning sanctity and the existence of God.

With this creation of real experience for both the characters of Dostoyevsky's novels and for the readers of them, Dostoyevsky is capable of describing Existentialism in a way that traditional philosophical discourse cannot. Because the events of the works are drawn from the author's own life, they are true to experience itself: we cannot discount his writings as fictional and so of no use to us for our philosophical

discourse.

The epilepsy he shared with his Prince Myshkin, the addiction he had in common with Alexey Ivanovitch of The Gambler, the radical past shared with the agitators in The Devils, the account of his Siberian incarceration he presented in The House of the Dead, the profligacy he shared with Dmitry Karamazov, the psychological portrayals of The Double and Notes From the Underground, the murder of his father by serfs as written of in the Brothers Karamazov, the constant portrayals of Polina Suslova in various guises, the struggles with faith of Karamazov and The Possessed; all these are accounts of his own experience, and as such are valued by us for an investigation of literature and Existentialism. The connection between these two are never stronger than in the case of Dostoyevsky, for as he says in the opening pages of The Idiot with reference to himself:

Perhaps there is a man to whom the death sentence was read and who was allowed to suffer and was then told, "Go. You are pardoned." Perhaps such a man could tell us something. This was the agony and the horror of which Christ was told, too. [D.I., p.44]

Chapter One:
THE DISCOVERY OF CONTINGENCY
IN NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Existentialism is a philosophy which concentrates itself on the individual, not as a member or component of a larger system, but as an entity in its own realm. The attention which is given to the individual arises from Existentialism's denial that man has any essence or preestablished definition to which this entity must adhere. With this lack of a definition of one's nature, we are left to define ourselves through choice. We choose, at least in principle, in complete freedom, complete for the reason that there is nothing *necessary* to our subjective existence. Without necessary components, we must have freedom, which allows us and even compels us to choose how we will live and act in this world. Then, necessarily, we find ourselves trapped in the web of the Contingent. Nonetheless, our choices of self-definition are partly dependent upon our interrelations with the world in which we find ourselves and on our own ability to choose. Dostoyevsky has given Contingency its strongest voice in his work Notes From the Underground.

We shall investigate in this chapter why this novel comprises the discovery of Contingency, and why because of this discovery it somehow contains the forthcoming problems in Dostoyevsky's work.

To define Contingency is a difficult task -- it cannot be defined, save through its opposite: Necessity. Contingency is the lack of a necessary or definite structure which compels the individual to live a life conforming to this structure. In everyday life this could be called the moral structure, or system of values with its rewards and punishments.

Existentialism holds that there is no system or predetermined order to which we belong. It is, therefore, obvious why Contingency is important to Existentialism. If man has no essence, as Existentialists claim, then we have to define ourselves as individual beings. Therefore, Contingency is the 'natural state' of Existentialism.

The protagonist from The Notes From the Underground lives in a world of disorder, of chance events where he must define himself through his own actions. We find in this world Contingency in action. The unnamed narrator chooses between the options presented him, but there is no choice which is necessary, none which must be taken instead of another.

It is important to note that not only is the environment in which he lives constantly changing and evolving, but so is the protagonist himself. He differs wildly within the space of a few pages; he contradicts himself for no apparent reason other than spiteful pleasure. The narrator cannot accept these changes as being those of a normal person,

as on many occasions he states that he is a sick man, and as such, he may be excused for these fluctuations which he sees as decidedly abnormal. He takes a sort of pleasure in his sickness and contradictory nature, particularly when he asks:

But, gentlemen, whoever can pride himself on his diseases and even swagger over them? Though, after all, everyone does do that; people do pride themselves on their diseases, and I do, maybe, more than anyone. We will not dispute it; my contention was absurd. But yet I am firmly persuaded that a great deal of consciousness, every sort of consciousness, in fact, is a disease. [D.N., p.4]

In the space of a few lines, we have the narrator asserting that his condition is diseased, his retraction of that statement, his implementing it once more and asserting his abnormality, and then his saying that his condition is typical of one who is conscious -- which both asserts and denies his abnormality with respect to the rest of the world. The protagonist is far from a constant character since he changes and evolves constantly, in perpetual reaction to his world and himself. Often he states that an assertion he made previously was simply a lie, or something devised for his own amusement, but at a later point in the novel, he reveals that he did not abandon what he had previously discounted. But the protagonist is eager to explain his seemingly random changes of behaviour and identity:

To begin to act, you know, you must first have your mind completely at ease and no trace of doubt left in it. Why, how am I, for example to set my mind at rest? Where are the primary causes on which I am to build? Where are my foundations? Where am I to get them from? I exercise myself in reflection, and consequently with me every primary cause at once draws after itself another still more primary, and so on to infinity. That is just the essence of every sort of consciousness and reflection. It must be a case of the laws of nature again. [D.N., p.12]

[Earlier, the narrator already stated "...it still turns out that I was always the most to blame in everything. And what is most humiliating of all, to blame for no fault of my own but, so to say, through the laws of nature." [D.N. p.5]

As we see, the protagonist can not make up his mind on the emotional features of his world: on the one hand, he lays the blame on himself, then on the laws of nature. This is the reason for the fluctuations in his decisions. These actions are based upon the actions of his past, which in turn were dependent upon actions previous to them, and so on, all of which contribute an uncertain 'foundation' for his current activities. Although he seeks a foundation for the choices he must make, yet cannot find them outside of his own past, from which he must make an inference for the present and the future. Finally, the foundation he uses is that which he has built, as through his activity, he defines himself according to his past.

It is obvious that not only is the protagonist's world Contingent, but his decisions are also Contingent. Referring to 'the laws of nature' seems to be an escapism from his own world. The 'laws' make him choose in the way he must, however they offer no indication as to how those choices must be made. Even though the protagonist is dealing with 'laws', they in no way make his choices Necessary to any degree. Rather, these 'laws' guarantee that he must act in full consciousness of his own Contingency, upon his past in relation to his present tasks. Since there is no other foundation on which the protagonist must choose

than himself, the protagonist is all alone -- and this is another theme of Existentialism. Nothing else can be done, as he must live in this way since it is the only way to live at all:

I invented adventures for myself and made up a life, so as at least to live in some way. [D.N., p.11]

He could have added: to live as a lonely man in a strange world. The protagonist admits to having 'made' up his life, his existence. Better than based simply on rote pattern:

...if there really is some day discovered a formula for all our caprices and desires -- that is, an explanation of what they depend upon, by what laws they arise, how they develop, what they are aiming at in one case and in another and so on, that is a real mathematical formula -- then, most likely, man will at once cease to feel desire, indeed, he will be certain to. For who would want to choose by rule? Besides, he will be at once transformed from a human being into an organ-stop or something of the sort; for what is a man without desires, without free will and without choice, if not a stop in an organ? [D.N., p.18]

The discovery of a 'formula' does not change the Contingent nature of choice. The choices at hand must still be made -- the fact that they appear to have been made Necessary does not actually make it so, for the simple reason that we would have to choose to accept these formulae or not, choose their respective worth and value. We must still choose. That we have something which seems to dictate how we are to live does not mean that it is a dictate -- we must choose such an 'authority', and choose to follow it -- and do so each time we choose at all. This is the burden of existence, or that of Contingency.

Although at times he seems to believe that there are outside indicators to his existence, it soon becomes clear that these signs contain

their significance only through his assigning this significance to them. Then Necessity returns through a new form, as may be seen in one of his exchanges with Liza:

“Why did you leave them?”

“Oh, for no reason.”

That answer meant “Let me alone; I feel sick, sad.”

We were silent. [D.N., p.62]

He gives her answer a meaning which is imparted by him, and acts responding to what he has determined she meant. Her reply contains nothing Necessary at all for him to act on. Nonetheless, he has chosen what she meant by her response. Even when the narrator seems to act in accordance with something Necessary, it becomes clear that he was responsible for identifying those signs as dictates, which means that they could not have been dictates of any sort, if he himself has given them their meanings and authority.

The Revised Form of Necessity: You Must Choose!

We have seen that the protagonist chooses from among the options presented to him, or rather, identified by himself as an option. He chooses because he must -- nothing is decided for him. Even when he views something as Necessary, it is soon revealed to be of an authority given by him alone, which implies that it is of no outside authority at all. He lives his life in a state of flux. Everything is to be chosen by him, in relation to how he chooses to create and define himself, how he has done so in the past, and how he will do so in the future.

So far, we have concentrated on 'Contingent' and 'Contingency' as meaning the lack of something definite or Necessary, but we may look at the term in another way. When something is 'contingent', it partly rests on something extraneous to it, hence it depends on something. This aspect is also given voice in Notes From The Underground, as the narrator chooses in relation to himself and others. He depends upon things which are largely unidentifiable, such as what he termed the 'laws of nature', suggesting that after all there is a process which governs his own actions.

The narrator's choices are contingent on his surroundings. It is important to state that outside changes do not present a Necessary option for the narrator, rather, they are seen as opportunities, not dictates. The narrator has to rely on the changing nature of his world as

a guide for his choices -- not so much as an influence, but as a opportunity for him to choose -- the unexpected. An example of this occurs in an exchange with Zverkov, an old schoolmate of the protagonist who evidently shows all the signs of personal success:

Zverkov walked in at the head of them; evidently he was the leading spirit. He and all of them were laughing; but, seeing me, Zverkov drew himself up a little, walked up to me deliberately with a slight, rather jaunty bend from the waist. He shook hands with me in a friendly, but not over-friendly, fashion, with a sort of circumspect courtesy like that of a German, as though in giving me his hand he were warding off something. I had imagined, on the contrary, that on coming in he would at once break into his habitual thin, shrill laugh and fall to making insipid jokes and witticisms. I had been preparing for them ever since the previous day, but I had not expected such condescension, such high-official courtesy. So then, he felt himself ineffably superior to me in every respect! If he only meant to insult me by that high-official tone, it would not matter, I thought -- I could pay him back for it one way or another. But what if, in reality, without the least desire to be offensive, that sheephead had a notion in earnest that he was superior to me and could only look at me in a patronizing way? The very supposition made me gasp. [D.N. p. 49]

The narrator has planned his actions 'since the previous day', and his changing circumstance has made him alter his choice on how to act. He reveals himself to be at least partly dependent upon the world around him in finding a course of action and self-definition. In doing so, the narrator has also shown us that his choice-in-the-past is also Contingent upon these changes of circumstance -- what he has already decided is not looked upon as a Necessary course of action.

This passage also illustrates how the meaning he finds is also completely Contingent upon the narrator's interpretation. The narrator chooses to believe that Zverkov is using a 'high-official tone', or that a

patronizing look is being used. These could be examples of genuine affection, or even of simple politeness, but it is the narrator who chooses to give these the meanings they possess -- their meaning is dependent upon the narrator himself. Therefore, the meaning becomes Contingent, based on no definite rules. The protagonist chooses the meaning of the world which affects him, which implies that he himself is choosing how he will be affected. The world in which he exists is largely dependent upon himself.

It is now clear what we mean by Contingency and Necessity. It means that the narrator is dependent upon himself, on his past choices, and his future decisions. Therefore, his world is, in turn, dependent upon him for its meaning. The relations upon which the narrator is dependent lead back to himself. He chooses how he will choose, based upon what he has chosen in the past and what he wills to see in the world around him.

What though, is the protagonist's motivation in choosing? We know that he does choose, but it is not so clear why he chooses in the way he does. We know that he must choose -- that has been decided by his being trapped in his existence. In the novel, the protagonist is in either one of two frames of mind; that of being self-amusing or self-deprecating, even sick. This allows us to arrive at an idea of what motivates the narrator in his existence: "...either to be a hero or to grovel in the mud -- there was nothing between." [D.N., p.39]

This is almost like an existence without principles. If we take the

first instance, that of being self-amused, we find that the narrator is fond of playing minor jokes, or of finding enjoyable implications in the world around him. At times, the narrator simply lies for his own enjoyment, and later retracts his earlier statement, glad that he has been able to take the reader along his little journey. But each time the protagonist amuses himself in such a way, he recognizes his failures, and it is that recognition which serves as the basis for his pleasure – the celebration of his baseness:

Yes, into enjoyment, into enjoyment! I insist upon that. I have spoken of this because I keep wanting to know for a fact whether other people feel such enjoyment? I will explain; the enjoyment was just from the too intense consciousness of one's own degradation; it was from feeling oneself that one had reached the last barrier, that it was horrible, but that it could not be otherwise; that there was no escape for you; that you never could become a different man; that even if time and faith were still left you to change into something different, you would most likely not wish to change, or if you did wish to, even then you could do nothing; because perhaps in reality there was nothing for you to change into. [D.N., p.5]

The narrator recognizes that he plays such pranks largely for self-amusement, as a means to relieve his ennui, which is the “direct, legitimate fruit of consciousness [...] that is, sitting-with-the-hands-folded.” [D.N., p.11] The enjoyment the narrator feels comes from a heightened sense of his own degradation, which brings with it the realization that this point is a limit to his character. As such, he has found in the celebration something which resembles a certainty in his world. The protagonist has realized that he himself is largely responsible for the Contingent nature of his world. Through his self-amusement, he recognizes a limit of what he and his world is dependent upon. It seems

as though he has found a certainty, although it is not, recognized by none except by himself.

His self-amusement extends from the fact that he is taking control of Contingency. He recognizes the possibilities laid out before him, and he refuses to shirk away from his duty to act freely. He takes charge of his situation by exercising his choice fully -- not through a retreat into something compelling, seemingly Necessary. He grasps the choice at hand, and exercises it fully, even though it may be the wrong choice, which he sees soon enough:

Of course, a minute or so later I would realize wrathfully that it was all a lie, a revolting lie, an affected lie, that is, all this penitence, this emotion, these vows of reform. You will ask why I did worry myself with such antics: answer, because it was very dull to sit with one's hands folded, and so one began cutting capers. That is really it. Observe yourselves more carefully, gentlemen, then you will understand that it is so. I invented adventures for myself and made up a life, so as at least to live in some way. [D.N., p.11]

By taking control of the choice at hand, he makes it possible to 'live in some way', which is the source of his self-amusement. This self-amusement, however, is dependent on the recognition of his own base nature. In order to be amused (in celebrating the limits of his character), he must first recognize his own depravity. This could be called by a term borrowed from Jean-Paul Sartre, 'authenticity vs. false-consciousness'.

The other motivation of the narrator's choice-making is more directly linked to self-depreciation. These acts of self-depreciation largely extend from the protagonist's evaluation of his self-worth; since

he is aware of his condition, he cannot possibly view himself in a positive light. His consciousness disallows any positive self-evaluation:

My jests, gentlemen, are of course in bad taste, jerky, involved, lacking self-confidence. But of course that is because I do not respect myself. Can a man of perception respect himself at all? [D.N., p.10]

The answer to such a question, of course, is no. The narrator is a 'man of perception', and as such can recognize the condition in which he exists -- the state of Contingency -- and also see the difficulties that such an existence presents. Contingency is a cause for despair, and the narrator is able to see this. Nonetheless, the narrator uses this despair as a cause of his enjoyment, as he states on several occasions:

...if I had happened to be slapped in the face I should, perhaps, have been positively glad of it. I say, in earnest, that I should probably have been able to discover even in that a peculiar sort of enjoyment -- the enjoyment of course, of despair; but in despair there are the most intense enjoyments, especially when one is very acutely conscious of the hopelessness of one's position. [D.N., p.5]

Yet in these moments of despair, he finds not the enjoyment of the recognition of his own limitations, but another kind -- the joy of resignation to Contingency, which is another common term of existentialism. He would find pleasure in being slapped in the face, for at such a time, he is not an agent of choice, but an object of it. He is on the receiving end of another's choice. The pleasure is brought about by giving up the duty to choose -- he enjoys the fact that the world he is dependent upon, the world he defines, is taking action upon him rather than the other way around. However, in so doing, he fails to realize that these outside forces are still dependent upon him -- he is the one who

chooses to feel the insult in being slapped on the face.

This kind of pleasure differs slightly from the moments of his self-amusement. There we saw that he took pleasure in recognizing his baseness, finding amusement in his minor abuses. To do so was to recognize the limits of his character, whereupon he found more pleasure on facing the strange world head on, and choosing boldly. Here we have the pleasure occurring in the narrator's receptivity to being dependent. He finds his pleasure in the seeming fact that he is being forced into action, that he is having the choosing done for him. Of course, this is not true, since he inhabits his existence, but he finds a temporary denial of that in self-abasement:

But it is just in that cold, abominable half-despair, half belief, in that conscious burying oneself alive for grief in the underworld for forty years, in that acutely recognized and yet partly doubtful hopelessness of one's position, in that hell of unsatisfied desires turned inward, in that fever of oscillations, of resolutions determined forever and repented of again a minute later -- that the savour of that strange enjoyment of which I have spoken lies.
[D.N., p.7-8]

He lives through the same patterns over and over, and finds enjoyment in that because it is then that he has a basis for his choicemaking -- he can find a case-history in his past by which he may guide his future actions. In making the same mistakes, he creates a 'certitude' that he really exists. He believes his choices to have been made easier, since he has placed himself in a situation identical to the one he has already been in a number of times, and thus, he knows how to choose. He will choose to act as he has done in the past -- effectively eliminating the need for any choice to be made at all, which is the source of his pleasure.

The Road to Self-Consciousness

We are able to see two motivations for his choosing. First there is the positive motivation, wherein he finds pleasure in controlling his existence; and the second motivation, where he finds pleasure in being controlled by his existence, although we know this control is illusory. In order for either source of pleasure to present itself, the narrator must undergo a process of self-evaluation, finding that his existence is largely worthless and ignoble; for it is only then that he can choose to abandon himself to his baseness (as he has defined it) or to the embracing of the possibilities presented before him. The difference is slight -- he acts either in accordance to his present possibilities, or those of his past, which he may find easier. In either case, his possibilities-in-choice are dependent upon the circumstances as he defines them. His possibilities change in relation to his own state and the state of his world. Not only is the narrator now conscious of living his own existence and not a borrowed one, but his world is also dependent upon him for its interpretation. The possibilities as they are presented are dependent as well, on his constantly changing and evolving relation to his interpretation of circumstances.

Now, Contingency has become the dominant world-view for the protagonist. The state of Contingency is complete, as the participants in it and the bond between them change in relation to one another at all

times. There is nothing permanent or established in their relationship, as even the promise of certitude offered by the past is only illusory. The Notes From the Underground presents this revised view of existence offered by the voice of one trapped inside of it. Dostoyevsky gives us a description of Contingency through that voice but not a definition; we have already established that it is impossible due to the nature of existence itself. Instead of a definition, we can only offer a description.

What does Contingency signify, though? In and of itself, Contingency can signify nothing, since it is the very nature of the indefinite -- what is our existence. Therefore, we shall continue our analysis of what we called Contingency by following The Notes From the Underground.

Existence or Self-Consciousness

The narrator realizes that he exists confronting Necessity. Necessity can be examined solely in rational terms, yet such an approach is inadequate for the existence the narrator leads:

You see, gentlemen, reason is an excellent thing, there's no disputing that, but reason is nothing but reason and satisfies only the rational side of man's nature, while will is a manifestation of the whole life, that is, of the whole human life including reason and the impulses. [D.N., p.19]

To look at the protagonist's existence on a solely rational level is inappropriate, since it does not take the whole of his existence into account. As well, to examine his existence rationally, is to discount the role of the irrational, which is a considerable role when the motivation of his existence is Will. When we look at the case of the protagonist, we cannot look for the concrete results of his choice, but we must examine the act of the choice itself -- for it is here that we see Will in full force. It is true that Will has a rational element, but incorporates much more beyond that -- will is simply not reducible to rational terms, despite the beliefs of some:

You will scream at me (that is, if you condescend to do so) that no one is touching my free will, that all they are concerned with is that my will should of itself, of its own free will, coincide with my own normal interests, with the laws of nature and arithmetic.

Good heavens, gentlemen, what sort of free will is left when we come to tabulation and arithmetic, when it will all be a case of twice two make four? Twice two makes four without my will. As if free will meant that! [D.N., pg.21]

The full meaning of existence lies in the Will -- which is beyond

rationality, supersedes rationality alone in its scope. The choices the narrator faces are beyond the reach of rationality. The narrator chooses on the basis of what is rational, what is derived from his passions (in this case, the passions of self-amusement and self-depreciation). But what does he end up choosing? What are the results of his choices?

The narrator chooses only more choices. There is no real 'product' of his decisions, and it is for this reason that his will cannot be examined on arithmetical terms -- the equation is open-ended. If there is no tangible end to his labours, it becomes impossible to analyze his choice-making on a rational level. There is nothing produced but new choices. This makes the process of his choice-making unforeseeable, since there is nothing which is to be predicted, aside from another choice. The fact that a choice must be made does not imply any *specific* choice will be made. Then existence implies a *process* of existence, where the protagonist must consider continuous choice-making. This makes existence in the Notes completely unforeseeable, since there is nothing to foresee, beyond the scope of the mere rational, outside the Essential.

The narrator tells us:

[...] the only goal on earth to which mankind is striving lies in this incessant process of attaining, in other words, in life itself, and not in the thing to be attained, which must always be expressed as a formula, as positive as twice two makes four, and such positiveness is not life, gentlemen, but is the beginning of death. [D.N., pg. 23]

Such an approach has to depend on the 'certitude' offered by death to provide an end to the mathematical formula. The approach of certitude can only define life if it knows the end result (death or the

afterlife), which it cannot. Thus, such a project becomes impossible.

The description of Contingency, synonymous with authentic existence as given in the Notes comprises a discovery of it, for it represents an entirely new approach to how we consider our lives. Since the rational approach to existence was discounted by Dostoyevsky, so too was any approach which depended on any certainty at all. The rational approach itself becomes irrational.

Conclusion

Notes From the Underground comprises a discovery of Contingency for the simple reason that it was the only vehicle capable of considering existence on these terms when it first arrived in 1864. Dostoyevsky discovered Contingency by giving it a voice, so as to impart a description, since by its very nature, a definition is impossible. The voice of the narrator in the Notes serves to show that any Systemic approach to existence fails -- on the level of the individual himself. If the rationalist projects were tenable, then the problems faced by the protagonist would be reconcilable, if they ever existed. It is clear that these problems do exist, which means that a new approach must be considered when we consider existence as the existence of an individual. The discovery is that the approach we must take is dependent upon the difficulties we face -- the difficulty of continual choice. Dostoyevsky's discovery was triggered by that the question of 'how' individuals exist, if the world presents the uncertainty it does.

Chapter Two:
THE COLLAPSE OF RATIONALITY
AND THE EMERGENCE OF PASSION

In the first chapter, we discussed Contingency, as it was discovered by Dostoyevsky in Notes From the Underground. Contingency, being in opposition to Necessity, leads to the collapse of Rationality and philosophical systems, which cannot survive in the Contingent world, simply because of their contrasting natures. The Contingent world, having been established, leads to the emergence of Passion, for the reason that it is the only 'tool' left to us with the collapse of the Rational to face our destiny. The role of Passion has always been an element of Existentialism, but the approaches of the *Romans à thèse* (by Sartre or Camus, among others) are inappropriate in their description of Passion. Dostoyevsky's works exemplify the role of Passion in individual existence, as well as providing case studies for Kierkegaard's notion of 'really existing' and Nietzsche's 'living dangerously'.

The discovery of Contingency has several implications. First among these is the collapse of Rationality. With the demonstration that

we live in a Contingent world, we must conclude through our definition of Contingency that the world and the way we exist cannot be a Necessary one. When we speak of the 'world', we mean here the existential realm. The physical world is ruled by laws, hence by Necessity, and this is the way of science. Therefore, when we say 'the world is Contingent', it does not deny scientific laws.

A Contingent world, the existential realm, leads to the collapse of Rationality. We mean the kind of Rationality we are concerned with is necessarily that of deductive logic. It does not mean that there is no place for reason in a Contingent world, but rather Contingency provides for the exceptions to Rationality. The Notes displays the use of reason, as the narrator does not base his choices on passion alone, nor does Dmitry in Brothers Karamazov, even though his choices are guided chiefly by emotion. Therefore, we are not saying that the human faculty of reason simply disappears in Contingency.

To say that Rationality has collapsed means that reason is not the only indicator of man's existence; it means that we cannot construct a purely Rational model for man's existence. We cannot consider the existence of an individual on Rational terms only, since one's existence is dependent upon other factors that fall outside the realm of calculation. Any model or philosophical system built to interpret the existence of man which does not take the role of Contingency into account must fail, for the simple reason that it does not comprise a whole or accurate account of that which it is attempting to describe; we mean, it does not

take the exceptions into account.

Therefore, a Contingent world must lead to the collapse of Rationality for the very reason that our existence cannot be described only in Rational terms. Existence is beyond the limits of what a Rationalist account is capable of providing. A Rationalist account, as countless philosophical systems testify to, is based upon on the rigorously logical sequence of events. This collapse of Rationality can only occur then, once we recognize the role of Passion in individual existence.

The Philosophical Justification of Passion

A) Passion and Becoming in Kierkegaard: The Need for the 'Leap'

Kierkegaard's writings provide for a reaction against the progress of Rationalism, namely those of Hegel or Descartes. He writes that he is 'no philosopher' [K.F.T., p.43], meaning that he has devised no system of Rationality which can account for everything. Kierkegaard's concern will be addressed to the individual, as his writings concern themselves with a regress into interiority and subjectivity, which is where truth is to be found. Once the truth has been found through a subjective search, one is in a position to make the Kierkegaardian leap, which is the use of Passion in serving the purpose of becoming. Kierkegaard states his reaction against Rational systems at the beginning of Fear and Trembling:

Even if one were able to render the whole of the content of faith into conceptual form, it would not follow that one had grasped faith, grasped how one came to it, or how it came to one. The present author is no philosopher, he is poetice et eleganter [to put it in poetic and well-chosen terms], a freelancer who neither writes the System nor makes any promises about it, who pledges neither anything about the System, nor himself to it. [K.F.T.,p.43]

To adhere to a System is to deny Passion for the sake of science. Passion is necessary for an individual to become, or to find truth; if we deny Passion's role, attempting to find ourselves or truth through science instead, we will fail since these are to be found through an inward,

subjective search.

Kierkegaardian Passion forces an individual to become; that is, to choose and act in the world so as to self-define one's identity. One cannot stay at a single point in existence, as it is a process, and it is Passion which so agitates the mind and emotions to choose how one is to exist. Passion forces one to become subjective, and so to find self-identity and truth:

Does he exist? And if he exists, is he not then in a process of becoming? And if he is in a process of becoming, is he not related to the future? Does he never relate himself to the future in such a way that he acts? And if he never acts, will he not then forgive an ethical individuality for saying with passion and with dramatic truth that he is an idiot? But if he acts *sensu eminenti* [in the eminent sense], does he not relate himself to the future with infinite passion? [K.P., p.306]

Existing, if this is not to be understood as just any kind of existing, cannot be done without passion. [K.P., p.311]

Kierkegaard shows that Passion is the motivator for the process of subjectivity, since it agitates the the individual to enter the 'approximation process' [K.T.S., p.115] by which self-identity and truth are to be revealed in the process of existence. Without the agitation of Passion, one may be able to exist, but not 'really exist' since one would not go deeper into subjectivity to find self-definition and truth. One must 'go further' [K.F.T., p.42] in experience, and it is Passion which makes this possible. Passion makes hidden inwardness and the risk of faith possible, which in turn provides for the ability to garner truth. When one is taken over by Passion, one will be left alone in one's subjectivity, where truth may be discovered. However, in an age when

truth is believed to be objective and subject to the laws of science, the truth-garnering process of Passion is easily dismissed, as Kierkegaard notes in writing on his task as an author:

In an age where passion has been done away with for the sake of science, he [*one who puts aside objective systems* - N.] easily foresees his fate [...] He foresees his fate will be to be completely ignored. [K.F.T., p.43]

The man of Passion continues with his task, despite the outside influences which deny the importance of passion. An individual who lives in Passion does so despite the outside influences which pressure against such an existence, that prefer the cooler heads of reason to the rule of emotive and mental agitation. We may see this in the rivalry between Mitya and Ivan, as their skirmishes embody the war between those who act in Passion and those who deny its role in existence.

We may also see this in the case of Kierkegaard, who wrote his works despite opposition from his community and critics (if indeed they paid any attention to his works). Kierkegaard's Passion forced him to choose the more difficult path of existence, where he presented his Existential account even though every reasoned approach would have advised against it. Admittedly his writing under the nom de plume of Johannes de Silentio does not seem to testify to Kierkegaard's steadfast personal Passion, as it would suggest that he was not willing to counter the arguments laid against his works by the believers of the philosophical systems he weakened. Passion must have been present, though, in order for the highly individual work to be created and offered,

as it was Passion that forced the author to delve into the subjectivity required to produce it. Kierkegaard's works are results of Passion as well as testimonials to it. The agitation of the mind and emotions must have been severe for such an undertaking to occur, and it is in light of this severity that we may be inclined to forgive his wanting anonymity, if indeed that was the reason for the use of the nom de plume. Kierkegaard's works testify to the becoming of an individual, a becoming made possible through the tool of Passion. The Passion which produced these works shows Kierkegaard to be a real thinker, as he existed as a real human being, linking his works to experience rather than leaving them in the perfection of the abstract (Kierkegaard discusses this in the 'Subjective Thinker' chapter of the Postscript).

In Kierkegaard, Passion is required to exist more fully, since it leads to faith, and to the *leap* into faith. This movement may also be seen in the Brothers Karamazov, where Aloysha's Passion imbued him with faith, and the Passion of Mitya led to faith as well, albeit of a different kind. Alyosha followed the leadings of his Passion towards an unwavering faith in God, even when following his Passion seemed to lead away from it (as in the case of his leaving the monastery under the direction of the Elder Zosima). Mitya's faith is of a slightly different kind, as it is not faith in God so much as it is in fate or providence. This does not mean that his faith was in predestination, but rather, that the final resolutions to the predicaments he and others found themselves in would be just and appropriate to how they conducted themselves; this faith is a sort of

Humanistic one, which Alyosha possessed as a component of his faith in God.

In the Brothers Karamazov, we see many such examples of Passion leading to faith, particularly in the cases outside of the Karamazov family. The conversion of the Elder Zosima from his life as a young, degenerate rake to a calling in the church, the boy-leader Koyla's Passion leading to his faith in the word of Alyosha, and the child Ilyushechka's Passion for his family leading to a final faith in God for his family, all typify the route of Kierkegaardian Passion-to-faith. Passion excites the emotions and the mind to the point of risk, which is the beginning of faith itself. Those characters in the book who are willing to use Passion as a tool for handling their experience are those whose self-definition is most complete; that is, less dependent upon outside sources for indications as to how they must proceed in the task of self-definition. The characters who live in Passion are those who grasp their choices and confront them, as opposed to those who attempt to shirk away from their freedom to choose. Kierkegaard calls those who live in Passion individuals who 'really exist', as Nietzsche describes them as those who 'live dangerously.'

The Philosophical Justification of Passion:

B) Nietzsche: Living Dangerously

For Nietzsche, Passion is a needed element if one is to make one's existence worthwhile. Here too, we find that Passion leads to the self-definition in one's experience, since Passion contributes to the development of the individual. By grasping the possibilities of living dangerously, individuals can more fully develop their possibilities, can 'really exist' in a truly individual manner:

The human being who does not wish to belong to the mass must merely cease being comfortable with himself; let him follow his conscience which shouts at him: "Be yourself! What you are at present doing, opining and desiring, that is not really you..." [N.S., p.123]

Nietzsche tells us that the detesting of Passion leads to the acceptance of it as a virtue, as something that makes existence possible and worthwhile for those of us who dare to embrace it and make it ours (dare since there exists in many of us "the fear of everything individual" [N.S., p.125]).

Nietzsche advises us to live dangerously, to accept Passion and to use it to guide ourselves through existence. In living dangerously, we are to overcome the mundane existence of those who live according to the pressures of their world in order to grasp knowledge. It is only once we have recognized the Contingency of our experience that we can manipulate Passion for the ends of self-definition and then to knowledge. Nietzsche writes in "The Gay Science" that:

For, believe me, the secret of the greatest fruitfulness and the

greatest enjoyment of existence is: to live dangerously! Build your cities under Vesuvius! Send your ships into uncharted seas! Live at war with your peers and yourselves! Be robbers and conquerors, as long as you cannot be rulers and owners, you lovers of knowledge! Soon the age will be past when you could be satisfied to live like shy deer, hidden in the woods! At long last the pursuit of knowledge will reach out for its due: it will want to rule and own, and you with it! [N.G.S., p.127]

Passion agitates the mind and the emotions. To live dangerously is only possible with this kind of agitation present in an individual, since otherwise there would be no temptation to lead any kind of existence aside from that of the 'shy deer'. Passion is needed for an individual to live dangerously, for only when one lives dangerously can one "attain his satisfaction with himself -- whether by this or by that poetry and art; only then is a human being at all tolerable to behold" [N.G.S., p.128].

When we live dangerously, that is, when we allow ourselves to use our Passion, we gain a larger understanding of our existence and our task of self-definition. It is once we have this larger knowledge that we are able to understand the particulars of our existence without falling prey to them. It is not that we gain a sense of objectivity which keeps us grounded, but rather, our self-manipulation of existence with the tool of Passion allows us to define ourselves and our existence so well that the 'outside influences' of the experience of others is recognized as belonging to another, and so, not incorporated into our subjective existence without question. Nietzsche writes of the case of Schopenhauer that:

His greatness was that he confronted the image of life as a whole in order to interpret it as a whole, while the subtlest of minds cannot be freed from the error that one can come closer to such an interpretation if one examines painstakingly the colours with which this image has been painted and the material underneath... The whole future of all the sciences is staked on an attempt to

understand this canvas and these colours, but not the image. It could be said that only a man who has a firm grasp of the over-all picture of life and existence can use the individual sciences without harming himself [...] [N.S., p.124]

One cannot lose oneself in the details of existence, but must rather concentrate on the larger issues at hand, being those of choice and action in a Contingent world. It is only then that we can deal with the complexities of existence without losing ourselves in them, since our multiple acts of self-definition have strengthened our individuality and distinctiveness from each other and our world. Passion is needed to provide this strength of identity, as it leads to the growth of virtue. If Passion were not present, or simply ignored, then our choices and actions would depend not on our own characters as we have defined them, but on outside influences which are not necessarily suited to our needs-in-existence.

For Nietzsche, Passion is needed in order to lead to better self-definition as well as for the growth of virtue. Passion is the basis for being able to 'live dangerously', since it provides the necessary agitation and impetus required in order for an individual to rise up from the regular herd of 'shy deer'. These 'shy deer' wait for their choices to be made for them, and their actions to be dictated to them, rather than take the difficult path of taking the Contingency of experience in control. The Passion which Nietzsche describes is exactly that which Dostoyevsky has given us, in the case of Alyosha Fyodorovich Karamazov.

Alyosha was described by Dostoyevsky as the 'hero' of the Brothers Karamazov, and the title of 'hero' is only applicable to Alyosha in a Nietzschean sense. In traditional terms, 'hero' implies admirable courage or nobility, but these are not quite apt to the tones of the novel. Brothers is a tragedy, composed of numerous tragic elements, and an epic not concerned with one triumph as it is with multiple, more minor instances. This is a novel which gives the reader the grandeur of the literary in its distinguished presentation of quite ordinary people and events. Dostoyevsky has achieved in Karamazov what Nietzsche said of Schopenhauer; Dostoyevsky has given us a portrait of the small town of Skotoprigonyevsk without losing himself in the details of his work, having the skill to present those details as necessary to the depiction of the whole. To apply the term 'hero' in a strictly literary sense is inappropriate to the nature of the book, since the hero is made of the experience of Alyosha throughout the course of the novel, rather than any specific qualities he may have had or presented to our view. We know that Alyosha is the hero, but we are hard-pressed to say exactly why. He is the hero because we have been taken by Dostoyevsky along the process of Alyosha's self-definition. We have seen Alyosha use his Passion to develop his virtues and faith in the course of his experience in a Contingent world. With his development, we set Alyosha apart from the other characters in the book, because he distinguishes himself from their mediocrity. Alyosha is the only one who dares to live dangerously, with a heightened self-development which few others possess (although

possible exceptions would be the elder Zosima and the boy Ilyushecka, both of whom share similar skills in their use of their Passion). Alyosha is the hero of Brothers Karamazov in a Nietzschean sense since he has the Passion to be himself as he has chosen to be. Only a Nietzschean hero could have such an ease-in-conducting himself through the complexities of his existence; since he is the master of his own Contingent existence, he is capable of handling the Contingency of the world which surrounds him and relies upon him for its own composition.

Illustrations of Passion in the Roman à Thèse

A) Camus

When we act out of Passion, we act in our own name, and not in the name of universal Rationality. Hence, we face individual responsibility. It is through Passion that we are able to deal with the irrationality of our experience, since it motivates us to make an individual choice and action. When we examine the role of Passion, we are able to see how Dostoyevsky differs from the Existential *Roman à thèse*, as offered by Camus or Sartre. (A *Roman à thèse* is literally a novel with a thesis, or a didactic novel which puts forward either a problem in politics, morality, or philosophy, or the solution to such a problem. Novels of this kind in English is Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe, written to promote abolition of slavery, or Upton Sinclair's The Jungle.) The Existentialist *Roman à thèse* treats Passion in a very different way than does Dostoyevsky, if it concerns itself with Passion at all.

In the literary works of Albert Camus, we see two different treatments of Passion. In his dramatic works such as The Just, Camus uses Passion to heighten the tensions between the play's characters. However, the Passion Camus uses is a tool of rationality, and as such, it differs from Dostoyevsky's Passion. The characters of The Just are filled with Passion, but only so that they may carry out the revolution they

have planned. Passion is not a tool for living our lives as an individual experience. Revolution is creating another order which is fashioned out of Rationality. The Passion Dostoyevsky described is capable of being seen as a tool of rationality, but it incorporates much more since it deals with the whole of human experience rather than only one aspect of it. In his plays, Camus verges on using Passion as Dostoyevsky did, but does not nearly have the same effect in demonstrating the nature of Passion. This is so because Camus was confined to the genre of drama, and so a certain amount of Passion was required to conform to that tradition. However, that Passion was forced in order to fit those requirements; which means that it did not arise incidentally, as it must if Camus' Passion was to be true to how Passion exists in individual experience, and how it deepens this individual experience.

Camus wrote to promote the Existentialist idea of the Absurd. We will take this term to be roughly synonymous with Contingency, although for Camus it centres on human purposelessness. The idea of the Absurd is the thesis in the *Roman à thèse*. The Just is directed so as to bring the idea of the Absurd to its audience, and the Passion contained within is only a vehicle for the advancement of the plot, filling the confines of the genre of drama. The Passion described therein is not Existential Passion, as it is there to suit the needs of Rationality in literature. It is not a tool of the individual for existence, because it is a tool of the author himself. Camus presents Passion, but it is too artificial to be an Existential Passion.

In the novels of Camus we see that Passion is utterly absent. The Plague or The Outsider contain no Passion at all. Camus included Passion in his plays because drama demands it as a necessary element. Not having to do so in his novels, Passion is absent, as the focus of his works lies in the Absurd. He wanted to bring forth the meaninglessness of human experience, and to include Passion may seem to detract from that purpose, as emotion of any kind would cloud the clarity of his argument. Undoubtedly, Camus learned this during his training as a journalist, and carried this practice into his novels. To include Passion might imply a purpose to our existence, however unseen that purpose may be, since Passion allows us to deal with Contingency so that we may continue to live and act. In providing for the continuation of individual existence, Passion is definitely purposeful, because it is part of an individual decision.

In composing a didactic work, one is not at liberty to write anything one may wish, for the simple reason that the lesson must come forth clearly in order for the purpose of the work to succeed. Camus wrote didactic novels to promote the idea the Absurd. In excluding Passion for the sake of clarity, he created characters that were removed from the terms of human existence, since they had no emotion or Passion to speak of. With the exclusion of Passion, Camus presented novels which concentrated on characters which cannot be said to be true to those of human experience, and so, untrue to Existentialism. Sartre was right in saying that Camus was no Existentialist. Camus may be a

Naturalist or Realist writer, and so rather Humanist, but neither he nor his writings could be considered Existential, since they deny the role of a key means of dealing with our own existence.

Illustrations of Passion in the Roman à Thèse

B) Sartre

Jean-Paul Sartre also used didacticism in his novels and plays, bringing forth the idea of the Absurd or another such thesis in each. The *Roman à thèse* in action may be seen in his story "The Wall", where Sartre shows the Absurdity of human existence, or in his play No Exit, where he puts forward the idea that Hell is other people. In his plays, we see that Sartre uses Passion in approximately the same way as does Camus, to promote the philosophical idea of the existence of the absurd. In his stories and novels, Sartre uses Passion as a means of highlighting the kind of absurdity he wishes to demonstrate. Passion is largely absent from Sartre's work, since he uses the *Roman à thèse* to show the meaninglessness of man's universe and that man is condemned to be free; and a portrayal of emotion or Passion would detract from the clarity of such messages, as well as imply a purpose to an individual's existence. However, Passion is not missing altogether as it is in the works of Camus. We may see this in the final lines of "The Wall":

[...] He lowered his voice. "They got Gris."

I began to tremble. "When?"

"This morning, He messed it up. He left his cousin's on Tuesday because they had an argument. There were plenty of people to hide him but he didn't want to owe anything to anybody. He said, 'I'd go and hide in Ibbieta's place, but they got him, so I'll go and hide in the cemetery.'"

"In the cemetery?"

"Yes. What a fool. Of course they went by there this morning, that was sure to happen. They found him in the gravedigger's shack. He shot at them and they got him."

"In the cemetery!"

Everything began to spin and I found myself sitting on the ground: I laughed so hard I cried. [S.W., p.299]

The reader knows that the final events are produced through mere coincidence. Ibbieta told the fascists that Gris was in the cemetery, and it turned out that he was in fact there, and not with his cousins as Ibbieta had supposed. Thus his 'confession', which was not meant as one, turned out to be true quite accidentally. Ibbieta had meant to lie and had unknowingly told the truth; and recognizing this, can we say that he did in fact lie, since he told the truth in presenting his falsehood? The situation is indeed Absurd, since we cannot comprehend it according to any rational scheme.

Sartre uses Passion to serve the cause of promoting the Absurd. We are told that Ibbieta's reaction to the news of Gris' death was to sit on the ground and laugh to the point of crying. It is uncertain if we can call this a 'normal' reaction to being told that one is responsible for the death of another, as there can hardly be any standard by which we may gauge such a reaction. However, Sartre's juxtaposition of laughing with crying allows the reader to view the reaction as an irrational one, an Absurd one. The two emotions have little in common with one another, and it is possible that they were both expressed at that moment in a sort of emotive overload; Ibbieta could not separate his sadness at being to blame for Gris' death (if we may in fact be able to hold Ibbieta as being 'responsible') with the laughter at the incomprehensibility of the situation. The response itself becomes irrational and Absurd, since we

cannot understand it any more than the situation itself. Ibbieta's response serves the didactic purpose of the story, which is to point to the Absurd in human experience. Sartre uses the Passion of the response didactically; the response becomes as constructed as the demonstration of the Absurd Sartre wished to produce. Passion in "The Wall" is artificial, and not incidental as it is in Dostoyevsky; and since that Passion exists to serve the purposes of the author rather than the individuals which are directly concerned with it, such Passion is not true to the Passion found in the course of human experience.

We may assume, however, that Sartre's use of Passion was an 'honest' one, that Passion came about incidentally through the experience of the protagonist, which is how Dostoyevsky presented his Passion. If this is the case, then Ibbieta's final response constitutes an expression of Passion. He may have used Passion to help him deal with the irrationality of his experience, but this seems unlikely for several reasons. Firstly, it is a final response, and as such, cannot be entirely viewed as the use of a tool which allowed him to further progress in his individual experience. It comes at the very end of the story, which makes us incapable of seeing Sartre's Passion as allowing the continuation of experience; we may be much more inclined to see it as a simple reaction. Passion must be much more than a reaction since it provides for the means of *creating* our experience, rather than simply receiving it from an outside source. As well, this use of Passion is the only such one in the story, which implies that Passion was not needed

for the creation and maintenance of experience. Sartre employed Passion to bring attention to his didactic purpose; Passion did not come of its own willing.

It is imperative that Passion be present for existence to be made possible for the individual. Since the authors of the *Roman à thèse* expunged Passion from the works in order not to lose the clarity of their messages, they cannot be said to be truly Existential. Rather, we may hold them to be Humanist, or perhaps Existential sympathizers, but these authors (so far as their creative endeavours go) are not Existential, since they are not true to experience itself. Passion must be present in order for a work to be Existential, or for an individual to survive in Contingent experience.

Passion in Literature: Dostoyevsky

Dostoyevsky presents the collapse of Rationality in different ways. First, in Notes From the Underground, he demonstrates that a Rational model cannot exist, for the simple reason that it would be in opposition to the Contingent world he demonstrates to be in effect. The narrator attempts to construct a Rational model for his own existence, but it fails miserably, because it cannot deal with the forces of emotion and passions. He makes plans and predictions, but they either remain inefficient or unrealized, for the reason that the situation he finds himself in has changed drastically because of the emergence of unpredictable elements. For instance, the protagonist plans certain actions. We can see such an instance in his final encounter with Liza, where he acts according to the plan he has committed himself to, only to see the collapse of his plan of action:

I did mean a moment since to tell a lie -- to write that I did this accidentally, not knowing what I was doing through foolishness, through losing my head. But I don't want to lie, and so I will say straight out that I opened her hand and put the money into it... from spite. It came into my head to do this while I was running up and down the room and she was sitting behind the screen. But this I can say for certain: though I did that cruel thing purposely, it was not an impulse from the heart, but came from my evil brain. This cruelty was so affected, so purposely made up, so completely a product of the brain, of books, that I could not even keep it up for a minute -- first I dashed away to avoid seeing her, and then in shame and despair rushed after Liza. I opened the passage and began listening.

"Liza! Liza!" I cried on the stairs, but in a low voice, not boldly. [D.N., p.88/9]

The narrator follows his Rational construct, even though his following of that plan cannot be rationally explained. He knew and understood the implications of his actions, and followed them through despite his distaste for them; but he did not do so for a Rationally justifiable reason. The protagonist fell prey not to the emotions of the heart, but rather to the brain instead. This may seem to be a contradiction but actually is not, as he followed his plan for a reason he did not know; then was it not based on emotion. The implications of this further serve to demonstrate the collapse of Rationality: the observed reason falls prey to hidden reason; but in a Rationalist system, there is no such distinction, as there is only reason, demonstrable, deducible, and plain for all to see. There cannot be such a thing as a hidden logic.

On a more literal level, the narrator's system has collapsed in a very obvious way. It simply failed. It could not deal with the situation at hand, it could not survive in the world for which it was designed. This is demonstrated through his not being able to 'keep it up for a minute'. In not being able to carry on with his Rationalist construct of the situation, he admits that his construct was no longer compatible with the situation. The construct he prepared was never truly compatible with the world he intended to face; he had reached a limit as to how far he could use his plan of action before it became completely inadequate. The Rationalist system the protagonist had built was never fully functional. It was rather a test of Rationality.

We are able to view another evident collapse of Rationality in the Brothers Karamazov. Brother Ivan, the most intellectual of his clan, knew of the changes in circumstances just before Mitya's trial. He had learned, through the servant Smerdyakov, who the real killer of Fyodor Pavlovich was. Through this information, he also learned that Dmitry was innocent of the crime, and that he himself was partly responsible for it. In coming into the courtroom, Ivan could have presented the information he possessed, in a completely Rational manner, and the reader knows this to be true. However, the seemingly Rational basis for his testimony remains a secret; therefore it appears to be raving lunacy:

'Calm yourselves, I am not mad, I am just a murderer!' Ivan began again. 'After all, one cannot ask eloquence of a murderer...' he added suddenly for some reason, with a distorted laugh.

The public procurator, in evident disarray, bent down to the chairman. The members of the tribunal exchanged bustling whispers with one another. Fetyukovich well and truly picked up his ears, straining to hear. The chamber froze in expectation. The chairman suddenly seemed to recover his wits.

'Witness, your words are incomprehensible and impossible here. Calm yourself, if you are able, and tell us... if you really do have something to say. With what you can confirm such a confession... That is, if you are not raving?'

'That is just it, for I have no witnesses. The dog Smerdyakov will not send you his evidence from the other world... in an envelope. You keep wanting envelopes, one will have to suffice. I have no witnesses... Except possibly one,' he said with a thin, reflective smile.

'Who is your witness?'

'One with a tail, your honour, it would not do at all! *Le diable n'existe pas!* Pay no attention, he is a rotten, petty devil,' he added, suddenly ceasing to laugh and almost, as it were, confidentially. 'He is no doubt here somewhere, over there, under that table of material evidence -- for after all, where would he sit if not there? Look, harken to me; I told him I did not wish to sit in silence, and he began to talk about a geological revolution... stupid nonsense! [D.B.K., p.792]

The reader knows that everything Ivan says is true. We know what

Smerdyakov has told him, we also know about his visitation by Satan the night before, but for him to simply relay those facts in the manner he does seems to label Ivan as insane, yet he is simply following his Rationalist construct: namely, to use his seeming insanity as the negation of his guilt. He planned his testimony to the court, and executed it.

The collapse of Rationality could be seen in Ivan's collapse. His Rationalist construct could be faulted, since it could not accommodate the intrusion of Satan the night before, the fact that it could not be reconciled with the larger system Ivan had constructed. Contingency had forced the collapse of Rationality, since the fact of Satan's appearance could only be understood in light of the circumstances it involved, and not on simple Rational terms. We see the confirmation of the confusion of Ivan's 'Reasons' when he revealed these facts to the court.

The court itself provided another collapse of Rationality by refusing to admit the facts of Ivan's experience as facts, and therefore subject to inclusion in a Rationalist system. By laughing, or falling silent, the people present denied Ivan's truths, for the reason that it was incompatible with the Rational so far as they knew it to exist. By refusing admittance to their Rationalist systems, they forced the collapse of Ivan's Rationalist beliefs, because the facts of his existence were being denied through a snicker. Of course, that this occurred is perfectly understandable, for when one begins to look for the devil beneath a

table, it is much easier to believe in his insanity than to come up with a new system of Rationality. In so doing, however, Ivan's system was made to collapse, since it could not cope with these new pressures just as it could not cope with those of the previous night. It is no surprise that he was led away howling and screaming, for at such a point he may have well been insane, since he had no Rationality of his own on which he could rely. There was nothing in his reason which could prepare him for such an unexpected experience.

Another example from the Brothers Karamazov demonstrates the collapse of Rationality before there was a Rationalist system in place. The incident with Alyosha and the biting child provides another collapse, since Alyosha seeks out a Rational explanation for an emotional event. The child felt obligated to seek retribution from any Karamazov for an insult the child's father had taken from Dmitry, namely that he had pulled the father's beard in public. This explanation is not found at the time of the biting, and so, for the moment, the event remains a mystery. Alyosha feels that there must be a reason for the event, and so begins a long search for it, to be able to construct a system which would allow for this experience to be incorporated within it. Eventually, he does find the answer he is looking for, but it comes so much later, so much further along in his experience, that it becomes worthless to him. The revelation of reason is shown to be merely incidental to the process of experience. However, when the event first occurs, Alyosha displays a reasoned approach to the emotion of the moment:

[...] he tore from the spot and hurled himself at Alyosha. Before the latter has succeeded in moving a muscle, the enraged boy, his

head down, and grabbing Alyosha's left hand in both of his own, painfully bit Alyosha's middle finger. He sank his teeth into it and kept it between them for some ten seconds. Alyosha shouted with pain, tugging at his finger with all of his might. The boy at last released it and leapt away to his previous distance. The finger has been severely bitten, right by the nail, deeply, to the bone; the blood was pouring out. Alyosha fetched out his handkerchief and wrapped it tightly around his wounded hand. This took him almost a whole minute. All the while the boy stood waiting. At last Alyosha lifted his quiet gaze to the boy.

'Very well,' he said. 'Do you see how badly you've bitten me? I think that's enough, isn't it? Now tell me -- in what way have I harmed you?'

The boy stared in surprise.

'Even though I don't know you at all and have met you for the first time,' Alyosha continued just as calmly, 'it must certainly be that I have harmed you in some way -- you could not have caused me such pain without reason. So tell me what I have done and in what way I am guilty before you? Tell me.'

In lieu of a reply the boy suddenly began to cry loudly at the top of his voice, and fled from Alyosha at a run. Alyosha slowly followed him up to Mikhailovsky street, and still for a long time, far away, he saw the boy running, still crying at the top of his voice. He determined that as soon as he could find a spare moment he would seek the boy out and resolve this enigma that occasioned him such extreme surprise. Now, however, he had no time. [D.B.K.,p. 204/5]

We see that Alyosha acts in a cool and reasoned fashion. He seeks an explanation for the child's biting him, but he does not find it. At the same time, he does not stray from this Rational approach, he does not lose himself in emotion, by cursing or striking the boy, as might be expected in such an instance. Instead, he sets himself on a Rational path and does not stray from it. The choice that Alyosha has made, being not to fall into emotion, is not reconcilable to the world around him, as is seen through the response of the boy, who cannot comprehend Alyosha's response. The boy expects harsh words, perhaps a fight, but all he gets are questions. The boy shows the collapse of his reason by being unable to understand Alyosha's response.

Alyosha seeks out a Rational explanation, trying to formulate a Rationalist system around it. He does not gain the information he needs, and so is reconciled to postponing the matter until a later date, which in itself is a coolly-reasoned affair. At this point, Alyosha has not yet formulated a Rationalist system into which he could incorporate this experience since he is still on a search for the facts upon which he could make such a construct. We see that his response is incompatible with the world around him. The boy cannot comprehend Alyosha's reasoned response, and neither can the Khokhlakovas with whom Alyosha visits immediately after this incident, nor anyone else he runs into over the course of the night with his bleeding finger. Alyosha is strangely dispassionate at a very passionate moment, which is an attitude he maintains at key moments in the rest of the novel, except at the time of the Elder's passing, where everyone is dispassionate apart from Alyosha. The reader realizes that Alyosha's response is at odds with the moment, since he maintains the level of an ideal state of reflective contemplation, which is a perception that the reader shares with many characters within the book. With this we are led to the question of how a dispassionate response can lead to the collapse of Rationality.

The collapse is possible because the Rational is not existing outside of Alyosha. The world he lives in is a Contingent one, and his reasoned responses to it, even though they seem to maintain a superiority over that world, are not confined by the events of the world. With the inability of anyone else to appreciate the Rational method employed by

the youngest brother, he remains isolated in that attitude. Since his responses are unable to be shared by another, those responses remain at the same level as all the other attitudes of all the other characters, being responses of emotion, inadequacy or incomprehension. His attitude becomes no better, no more superior than any other since it is only the response of one individual, based in his own experience. For a Rationalist system to survive, it must exist outside and independently of the individual, and yet here it cannot. The Rational thus collapses, since it cannot be established on the terms it needs to be.

The collapse of the Rational leads to the emergence of Passion, since Passion is the only response left available to us in a strange world. Passion may be described as the agitation of the mind or feelings which arises in one's experience. It is a tool for us as it allows us to deal with the changes and circumstances which arise in Contingency. When the Rational has collapsed because of its inadequacy in dealing with experience, we have Passion available to us to let us deal with the situations and problems which arise, since it serves as a motivator to action and choice. Passion agitates one's state, so as to compel that individual to action, to make the choice which is now presented. Without Passion, there could only be disinterest, in which case one would not need to act at all, and one would be completely receptive to the events in a world where there is no order. We have seen that the Contingent world is dependent upon the individual to a great extent, and realizing this to be the case, to deny that dependency becomes

impossible; one cannot be completely receptive to something which must depend upon that individual. One cannot be receptive to something which itself is receptive. We must be coerced to choose and act, and it is Passion which compels the individual not to be indifferent.

Such cases are easily seen in the Brothers Karamazov. The child Ilyushechka biting Alyosha is one such example, both the initial act of the biting, as well as his response. In the first case, the child was motivated by Passion to bite the finger of Alyosha, in order to avenge the dishonourable treatment Ilyushechka's father received at the hands of Dmitry Karamazov. The boy was enabled by Passion to commit such an act, just as his father chose not to avenge the wrong he had suffered, although in the latter's case, Passion served to heighten his embarrassment so that he chose not to risk any more insult than what he had already suffered. As well, the boy was filled by Passion in seeing Alyosha's response. At first puzzled, he was motivated to scream and run away, even though he was largely in control of the situation he had made. Unable to interpret Alyosha's cool response to severe pain on a Rational level, the boy could only view it in emotional terms. This manifested itself as fear, fear of the strength of the man who could resist such pain, or fear of the family which insulted his father. The fear which was already present in the boy, was heightened by Passion, so much so that he screamed and ran home across town, which is a strange shift in attitude for one who had previously found a reason to attack his transgressor so viciously.

Passion emerges when there are no other tools left to deal with the unexpected. We see this in the case of the boy, who could not understand Alyosha's response, and we see this also when Ivan collapses on the stand, having lost his control over his testimony, as well as over himself. There is another example of Passion in the Brothers Karamazov which involves Dmitry. Of course, being the emotional brother, everything Dmitry does is connected to Passion in a very direct way, but this is especially true of his actions on the night of his father's murder. First, he is motivated to assault his father over the woman he shared with his father. Then, he goes on a massive spending spree in the countryside. He commits the first action out of Passion for the love he has for the woman concerned, out of anger towards the father, out of frustration and disappointment, not to mention shame and intimidation.

Dmitry's second act of that evening is largely a response to the first. He strikes his father down, assaults another to the point of near-death on his way out, and proceeds to flee the area, spending vast amounts of money on all sorts of extravagances as he goes. Passion had motivated Mitya to overcompensate for the brutality he had shown his father and the manservant of the house. He spent his money freely to show generosity and human kindness, but perhaps also in fear of being caught by the authorities for the murder of the manservant, committing every sort of excess during his last night as a free man. Passion motivates Mitya to every choice and every action he undertakes in the

course of the novel, in a very obvious way, since his actions clearly respond to the conditions in which he found himself. Passion serves as Mitya's only means of coping with the unexpected events of his existence.

Passion does not have to take a responsive or active form. It is a motivator to action and choice, but it does not necessarily have to follow a precipitating event. It simply arises from having to deal with one's experience. We are able to see this in the final moments of the novel, where Alyosha speaks to the boys, about how they must lead their lives never forgetting what has passed in their formative years. For Alyosha, it is a moving speech, a direct response to Passion, calling attention to the responsibility they all have, specifically that of remembering that particular moment and all that led to it. But that Passion did not arise from any one incident as much as it was born from the conditions of Alyosha's experience. It is corresponding to everything we know about the youngest brother, to the whole of the novel. In this way, Passion permits Alyosha to deal with the Contingency of his experience in total, rather than any one event, as we have seen in other cases in the book. Passion is revealed when one must deal with changes in one's world, since Passion allows us to exist when our reason no longer suffice.

Conclusion

We have seen that the Collapse of Rationality leads to the Emergence of Passion, and we have also seen that Dostoyevsky was the first to posit this movement with regard to existence. Others have attempted to account for this movement ideologically, presenting their discoveries in the Existentialist *Romans à thèse*, but these are inaccurate in their descriptions of the crucial element of Passion, which is where the movement of self-definition in Existentialism gains its power. The *Romans à thèse* are faulted since they are not true to the nature of experience in their trying to account for it -- perhaps the *Roman à thèse* is an attempt to present a system without actually doing so, thus circumventing the Collapse of the Rational, but it may be more accurate to say that they sacrifice accuracy in their portrayal of experience for the sake of clarity of experience. Dostoyevsky is painfully clear in his accuracy of the portrayals of the Collapse, the Emergence, and Passion, since he allows those ideas to follow from the work rather than imposing them on it. He typifies the movements described by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, which implies accuracy on their part, in being able to describe (not define) the process of existence itself. Dostoyevsky truly betrays this category, and we could even say that he is a living example of this notion.

Chapter Three:

THE INCREASE OF PASSION BY THE SUSPENSE

Passion plays a crucial role in any account of experience. Our experience is dependent upon ourselves and our environment, which is actually dominated by the Contingent. Passion is a tool which allows us to deal with the frightening aspect of experience, so as to allow us to face further choice-making in the process of our self-defining, as well as our simply living. We have seen that Passion consists of an agitation of the mind and emotions, which motivates us to face our inevitable choices. However, we have not seen precisely what gives rise to the appearance of Passion. The cause of Passion is the circumstances in which Suspense forces its arrival. Suspense is a natural condition involved in Contingency, and it is the Suspense which provides for the agitation which we call Passion. Suspense highlights the Contingent nature of our experience in new ways, making us reconsider the concepts we have established as fixed and certain. The circumstances of Suspense are unique and singular, and are able to be presented in ways which honour the experience which originally gave rise to them. Only a presentation concentrated in experience is able to present it accurately, but more importantly, can hope to establish a new order by which we may seek to

understand our experience, as the case of Dostoyevsky demonstrates in a new and unique way.

We have seen that Passion is a sort of agitation of the mind and emotions, which pushes one into the choice which must be faced at that present moment. Without Passion, one would be content to resign oneself to the 'dictates' of the moment, to let the decision make itself. In so doing, the individual fails to recognize the haphazard nature of our lives which completely envelopes that individual's experiences: One cannot wait for a decision to be made on one's behalf, since life goes on. The individual has to act for its own sense; there should be no 'outside influence' which would make the decision for an individual. The individual is making a choice which cannot be avoided. Such decisions need Passion to face the choices which contribute to the process of self-definition. With Passion, one does not resign oneself to choice, but one asserts one's control over it. But what leads to Passion itself?

Passion is a tool for dealing with Contingent experience as if we were dealing with chance events. Passion does not, and cannot, work in any other kind of system. It does not suit the needs or purposes of Necessary or Rational systems, as it would introduce an element which would disrupt the whole of the construct. In a Rational system Passion has no place; it is intrinsically related to the experience and existence of an individual, outside a Rational system. If Passion were to be included in such constructs, it would disrupt the deductive process upon which Necessary and Rational systems are based, since it is an unknown

element. It is never certain how Passion will affect one's existence; this is the reason why Passion is excluded from Rational systems. To admit Passion would be to admit Contingency into a system which is based on order and necessity. Passion is simply of a different kind, a different order from what is Necessary.

If a 'cause' for Passion is to be found, it will be in connection with these two concepts: individual experience in a world ruled by Contingency. In order to find the cause for Passion, it is enough to look at the function of Passion. We have described Passion as a tool for dealing with our experiences.

But how is it that Passion presents itself only in certain situations? If Contingency is a constant condition of our life, Passion must also be a constant condition, seeing that the tool would respond to an eternal call for its use? But how is it that Passion is needed in some instances, and not in others. Every choice we make is done in relation to our own lives, and our lives are not under the laws of Necessity. However, there are different events, or we may say, more or less important events in our lives. I may choose to have marmalade instead of jam on my breakfast toast, and that decision may contribute in a very minor way to my process of self-definition. This decision does not require Passion. Passion arises in certain circumstances in one's experience where it is simply required. What is the difference between those situations which require Passion and those that do not? What are the criteria separating the two?

The instances in which Passion arises are the ones where we are

baffled by the inexplicable nature of events.

When a situation in an individual's experience involves Passion, it is 'more' Contingent than another situation. The demands on the individual are greater, when there is uncertainty and risk in the choice. With more at stake for the individual, Passion becomes necessary so as to prevent one from becoming frozen in the choice. When there is more risk, it is easy to want to retreat out of the decision which must be made, to simply let the decision make itself. This refusal of choosing is actually choosing, but it nevertheless presents itself as an attractive option since it appears to be so much easier.

The situations in experience which call for Passion are those which involve Suspense, that is, risk. There is more at risk for an individual, and there are fewer certainties by which such a decision may be made. In this sense, we shall define Suspense as those moments which are highly Contingent, since there is little indication as to how we should approach the choices involved. There are no Necessary conditions which may guide us, and the implications for our self-definition are far greater.

There is another aspect of Suspense which makes this term appropriate in defining these highly Contingent moments of our lives. In situations of Suspense, we must *suspend* the normal 'rules' governing our actions, since they are no longer applicable to our experience at that time. In the course of our experience, we devise several informal rules and patterns guiding our choice-making, which are based largely upon the decisions and self-defining we have made in the past. These rules

are by no means absolute, but rather guides for future actions defined according to our past behaviour. There are moments when we can find no basis in our past by which we may choose our present actions. Our regular rules and patterns of choicemaking are inapplicable to the new situation, so the decision must be suspended.

Therefore, Suspense heightens uncertainty and risk in our decisions. We realize more than ever how unpredictable the results of our actions may be. Hence, it is when we are faced with Suspense, that we realize that the decision cannot be avoided. We must choose whichever way we do choose!

This explains why Suspense creates Passion. Passion is created by the need of an individual to deal with a highly Contingent moment. Suspense causes a state of high-uncertainty, since it is clear that there is no fallback upon which one may rely: one must choose, one cannot avoid the choice at hand. Therefore, in a moment of Suspense, we are placed in circumstances which appear to be completely lawless.

Suspense in Dostoyevsky:

A) The Case of the Elder Zosima

In Dostoyevsky, there are many examples of Suspense. One of them comes from the Brothers Karamazov: the death of the elder Zosima. The elder of the monastery was an aged and respected man, who entertained many pilgrims seeking his blessing. Alyosha was among his most devoted admirers, and it is his devotion which typifies the Suspense-Passion-Becoming movement we wish to examine.

When the elder had died, he was considered the holiest of the men at the monastery, and rightly so. His last hours were spent recalling his life, and presenting lessons which he had learned over the course of his existence. These stories were listened to with enthusiasm and reverence by those in attendance, Alyosha among them. However, once the elder had finally died, the reverence felt for him slipped, as his body began to emit a putrid smell. Surely, this could not happen to a holy man, for only the most base and common of men stank such as this. Respect for Zosima fell during the period before his burial, so much so that the monks believed in the denunciation offered by Zosima's rival, Father Ferapont. Only Father Paisy and Alyosha defended the departed elder.

Alyosha did not defend Zosima in such an obvious way as Paisy, if his defense could even be detected at all. Alyosha did nothing other than keep his silence, sitting at the grave of another elder long departed,

weeping to himself:

Going right up to him, Father Paisy saw that, covering his face with both hands, he was silently but bitterly weeping, his whole body shaking with sobs. Father Paisy stood over him for a while.

"Enough, O dear son, enough, friend," he pronounced at last with emotion. "What is the meaning of this? You must rejoice, not weep. Or are you unaware that this day is the greatest of his days? Where is he now at this moment, just remember that!"

Alyosha took a quick glance at him, uncovering his face which was swollen with tears, like that of a small boy, but at once, without getting a word out, turned away and again covered his features with both hands.

"Perhaps it is best so," Father Paisy pronounced reflectively. "Perhaps it is best that you weep, for Christ has sent you these tears.

"Those sweet, affecting tears of yours are but a rest unto your soul and will serve to restore gaiety to your dear heart," he added, to himself now, as he walked away from Alyosha and thought about him lovingly. As a matter of fact, he walked away rather quickly, for he felt that at the sight of him he might begin to weep. [D.B.K., p.377]

Alyosha was the only one who could openly express his sorrow for the passing of the elder, if indeed the others had any sorrow at all. He was placed in a position of Suspense, because he had no past experience as to how he could base his present choices and actions. The death of someone as important to him as the elder was something which was unfamiliar to him, carrying with it greater risk and greater choice, for the simple reason that for Alyosha, this was new territory. He faced new possibilities in his self-definition, and used the tool of Passion to deal with them.

Alyosha's Passion took several forms. Obviously, sorrow at the loss of Zosima was one of them, but several other Passions were present as well. He felt apprehension towards his future, in agreeing to follow the dictates of the elder and leave the monastery, as well as confusion or fear

of his new prospects. However, the Passion of Alyosha for his fellow monks is that which defines him best, both for himself and for the reader. In showing disgust for the actions of the monks in abandoning their dead leader because of the smelling corpse, he is the only one who sets himself apart from the pettiness of that action. Paisy also disagreed, but he himself allowed to consider that action, which lent it a credibility which it clearly did not merit. Father Paisy often rejected the role of Passion in order to stay within the realm of the Rational, (as we can see in the encounter with Alyosha described earlier), and in so doing, became as pathetic as those monks which relied only on the purely emotional, by rejecting the life of Zosima because of his unfortunate stink after death. Only Alyosha, who uses both the faculties of reason and emotion (since Passion is the agitator of both) deserves redemption. Alyosha is the hero of the novel after all, since he is able to remove himself from the pettiness of his surroundings and define his own existence on his own terms. The Suspense of the period following the elder's death increased the Passion of Alyosha for his choice-making.

B) The Collapse of Ivan at the Trial

Another example of Suspense may be seen in the collapse of Ivan on the witness stand at Mitya's trial. The Suspense of the moment is clear, as it is perfectly unknown what the outcome of the trial will be, and how it will affect those involved. In this instance, Suspense takes a very literal form, as both the moment itself is one of Suspense, as well as that moment for the reader: again we see Dostoyevsky creating experience on two different levels. With this similarity of experience in play, we are in a fortunate position to sympathize with Ivan's plight, since we ourselves are in that very same moment of experience. The outcome is so uncertain, and the risks are so great, that the Suspense of this instance can do nothing but increase the Passion involved: it is because of this great Suspense that the Passion has been increased to such a point as to culminate in Ivan's self-destruction before the court.

Is Ivan's self-destruction a form of self-definition? Throughout the course of Brothers Karamazov, Ivan maintained his existence by defining himself as an intellectual, behaving according to Rational norms. In collapsing under the weight of Passion, he acknowledges that his previous choice-making is inadequate for dealing with Contingency, for if it were, he would have been able to systematize the moment into his Rational construct. In collapsing, he finally faces the possibility that his intellectual approach is not suited for dealing with the complexities of

existence. He tries to maintain this old identity, but cannot do so because the Suspense and the Passion of the moment are too great for his past self-definition to withstand it intact. We may see this in the very moment of Ivan's collapse:

'Are you in your right mind?' broke the chairman, in spite of himself.

'Oh, I am in my right mind, all right... and it is a villainous mind, the same as yours, the same as theirs, the lot of them, those... p-pugmugs!' he said, turning suddenly to the public. 'A father has been murdered, and they pretend they are frightened,' he ground out with malicious contempt. 'They give themselves airs before one another. Liars! They all desire the death of the fathers. One vile reptile consumes the other... Were it not for parricide they would all lose their tempers and disperse in a rage... Circuses! "Bread and circuses!" As a matter of fact, I make a good one! Have you some water, give me a drink, in the name of Christ!' he said, suddenly clutching his head.

The bailiff immediately came over to him. Alyosha suddenly sprang up and shouted: 'He is ill, do not listen to him, he has delirium tremens!' Katerina Ivanova quickly stood up and, motionless with horror, stared at Ivan Fyodorovich. Mitya got up and with a kind of wild, distorted smile avidly examined his brother and listened to him.

'Calm yourselves, I am not mad, I am just a murderer!' Ivan began again. 'After all, one cannot ask eloquence of a murderer...' he added suddenly for some reason, with a distorted laugh. [D.B.K., p. 791-2]

In collapsing, he submits to Passion, even though it is directed in maintaining his status as an intellectual being. His self-destruction can only be an act of self-definition, as he is attempting to maintain an old identity in new territory, which is actually the establishment of a new identity: that of a stronger version of his past definition. That he fails in this task is irrelevant to the choice itself. Ivan succumbed to Suspense and Passion, and faced the uncertainties and risks which that moment presented. His failure in reestablishing his previous identity is a result of his very *trying* to maintain an identity which had proven itself

inadequate for his present needs. Ivan's choice failed because he tried to govern experience (which includes Suspense and Passion) by Rationality alone. Nevertheless, the choice can only be seen as one of self-definition. Suspense increased the Passion of the moment to such levels that he was no longer capable of withstanding its pressures and demands for choice.

C) The Idiot and its Existentialist 'Play'

Dostoyevsky provides us with another example of Suspense leading to the increase of Passion in the opening pages of The Idiot. Here we find a truly Existential circumstance, since we are surrounded by uncertain elements, all of which provide Suspense. The opening pages provide the setting of an Existentialist play, lining up the characters in a fashion which seems to lend to prediction, but does not. We are made to want to predict the outcome of the meetings between the various characters, but this remains impossible simply because prediction is impossible in the situations Dostoyevsky is relating. Dostoyevsky writes The Idiot's opening passages so as to heighten our interest in the 'play':

By the window in one of the third-class cars two passengers had been facing each other since dawn, both of them young men, both with little luggage, both unfashionably dressed, both of rather striking appearance, and both wishing, finally, to open a conversation with each other. Had they known about one another and why they were both at that moment remarkable, they would have marveled that chance had so strangely put them opposite each other in the third-class car of the Warsaw-Petersburg train. [D.I., p.25]

The two men arouse each other's interest, but in presenting the observations of an omniscient narrator, Dostoyevsky arouses our interest as well. Indeed, we may be even more aware of the Suspense of the moment, since we are privy to the narrator's observations, and his commentary on the situation as well. Why would the two men 'marvel' at their being together on the train? What is at all 'remarkable' about

the role of chance in putting them together? In creating this Suspense not only for the characters involved, but for the reader as well, Dostoyevsky's story generates Passion. Our Passion to read the work is increased; our Passion to find the patterns behind these clues is increased. We are made aware of the intricacies involved in the moment of our reading the work: we are forced by Suspense into Passion to solve these questions, to find these answers which the narrator hints are there. Our Passion may take several forms, such as the Passion to find the relations which are suggested as being present, or the Passion to finish the novel. All of these Passions push us to face a choice in the process of our becoming: we must decide if we are to continue reading the work; but later, we must choose what impact the book will have upon our own self-definition. If we only decide to finish reading The Idiot, then we have defined ourselves as a reader of Dostoyevsky; if we conclude that the book has merit in explaining existence, we may define ourselves as Existentialist.

The treatment of Nastassya Filipovna provides us with another good example of Suspense, as there is an invitation which is implied by the author to keep reading, to discover what lies beyond the present moment of uncertainty. An excellent example occurs during the parlour game, when the party-goers take turns to reveal their most base act. Nastassya Filipovna stops the game, to ask the Prince a question:

‘Prince,’ Nastassya Filipovna addressed him suddenly in a sharp voice, sitting rigidly in her chair, ‘my old friends here, the general and Afanassy Ivanovitch, are anxious to have me married. Tell me what you think: shall I get married or not? Whatever you say I shall do.’

Afanassy Ivanovitch turned pale, the general stiffened;

everyone was staring, craning their necks. Ganya froze in his chair.

‘To -- To whom?’ asked the prince in a sinking voice.

‘To Gavril Ardalionovitch Ivolgin,’ said Nastassya Filipovna, still speaking in a sharp, firm, and very distinct voice.

Several seconds of silence followed; the prince appeared to be struggling to speak but could say nothing, as though a terrible weight was pressing on his chest.

‘No -- no -- Don’t marry him!’ he whispered at last, and managed to draw a breath.

‘Then so it will be! Gavril Ardalionovitch!’ she addressed him authoritatively, almost triumphantly. ‘You heard what the prince has decided? Well, that’s my answer, and let that end the matter once and for all!’

‘Nastassya Filipovna!’ said Afanassy Ivanovitch in a quavering voice.

‘Nastassya Filipovna!’ said the general in a persuasive yet alarmed voice.

Everyone stirred uneasily.

‘What is the matter, my friends?’ she went on, looking at her guests as if in surprise. ‘Why are you so upset? And what faces you are all wearing!’ [D.I., p.174-5]

The group listens intently to discover what is to be said, but this interest is a mere copy of the interest of the reader. The author creates the movement of Suspense to Passion to choice-making in the novel, but at the same time, he uses the conventions of literature to create that very same movement *in the experience of the reader as well*. This episode involves the reader in a very direct way, as we are offered an invitation to investigate the matter of Nastassya Filipovna’s rejection more fully, through the Suspense which has been created in *our* experience of the novel. We are filled with Suspense, we are led to Passion, and we will use that Passion for our own process of self-definition and choice. Dostoyevsky keeps this movement alive for the course of the whole novel, which again parallels our own movements in the process of becoming: our choicemaking is *continual*, we choose what our next choice will be.

Our experience in reading the work is as much created by Dostoyevsky as the experiences of the characters of the novel are, since we are as motivated to choose as they. Of course, the author does not make our decisions for us; he does not provide us with our own self-definition, but he does not do so for his characters either. He creates the Suspense and Passion whereby these choices must be made, must be faced.

With the Suspense offered by Dostoyevsky, it soon becomes clear that the Contingent world offers many opportunities for question. Since there are no certainties to which we may attach ourselves, we are forced to reevaluate those things which we have established as acceptable behaviour. The concept of Ethics with its punishments and rewards, or the concept of God, all these things stand to be reevaluated in light of the uncertainty offered by Contingent experience. We can see them questioned by the attitudes of the Prince towards the little Mary who was rejected by society and the church; or the Prince's attitudes towards Nastassya Filipovna, a woman of dubious ethical behaviour, towards her beauty, her purity, and finally her innocent death. With Suspense it becomes even more clear that there are indeed no certainties by which we may guide our actions and choices. If there were, then the choices we face in the process of our becoming would be much less difficult than they actually are. Dostoyevsky increases Passion using Suspense, which leads to our questioning of all that we had held as known in our past. The concepts of God or ethics are now put to question.

We can see this questioning of Ethics in the treatment of Prince

Myshkin, Alyosha Karamazov, or in the final judgment handed down to Dmitry Karamazov. By increasing the Suspense and Passion involved with these characters, we cannot help but question the certitude offered by the Rational systems. Indeed, with the Collapse of the Rational in the face of Contingent experience, it is only fitting to conclude that the ethical systems in place in these works fail miserably. As well, God Himself is now put to trial, as the belief in Him by Alyosha seems at times pointless and foolhardy. How is it that Alyosha can commit himself to such an idea when all the ideas he has ever known fall in the face of future uncertainty? Why does Alyosha not give up his belief, as it would seem to suit both his rational and emotional natures? All these concepts are subject to a new questioning, given their treatment and the revelation of the absolute uncertainty of the identity of oneself and one's world.

Have Ethics and God disappeared as useful concepts
in an Existential world?

If we must accept that we must face our choices in a new and unexpected way, then how can these concepts remain in place, especially considering that concepts such as Ethics or God are to remain unchanging and eternal? If we recognize that the world is a Contingent one, as our experience suggests if we live our lives in uncertainty and continual choice-making and self-definition, then can we hold that there are some things which are outside Contingency? If we say that we and our world are Contingent, then are we able to say that there is something eternal and unchanging such as God or Ethics?

To hold a belief in Contingency and at the same time the certainty of God and Ethics would be a contradiction, as there can be no certainty of any kind in a Contingent world. However, we fail to recognize that Ethics, and God especially, lack infallible rational definition, but in spite of it they do exist. If we place our trust in these beliefs; we believe in these concepts with risk. In order to place our faith in these concepts, we must recognize that these concepts are in and of themselves highly Contingent, if we consider their role in existential situations. Thus, to believe in the certainty of God is not incompatible with a Contingent existence, since we risk faith in believing in Him, and we risk our self-definition in choosing to believe in Him.

Here we can see that Ethics and God will have broader meaning in Contingency itself. If we construct Ethics and God only according to Rational means, then they will be bound to collapse as any Rational construct in the face of the Contingency of our existence.

It is here where we can see the value of literature over traditional philosophical writings in presenting our life and existence in the concrete. It is literature alone which is able to give voice to Suspense and Passion, as well as describe life-situations. The beginning pages of The Idiot give the reader a sense of what Existential Suspense is, just as the Brothers Karamazov shows the role of Passion. To present these ideas in a traditional philosophical account is to remove them from the experience and existence they were meant to serve. By presenting Suspense, Passion, and Contingency in a literary narrative, they remain a part of experience -- and it is only through this linkage that these ideas can have any meaning, namely inside of an individual's lived experience.

Conclusion:

THE END OF SUSPENSE

The natural implication of Suspense is that there is no ending to it; that is, even if at some point when we reach a conclusion which satisfies the longing and curiosity which has been aroused in our experience of Suspense and Passion, the last word reopens the mystery and the story continues without the reader.

We may take our answer from the end of The Idiot, which again is not an end in the sense that it is not an answer. The Prince has been occupied with redeeming Nastassya Filipovna for reasons of pity. He realized the injustices suffered by the 'disreputable woman'. The Prince pitied her, and both fearing and loving her, chose to marry Nastassya: he showed 'two kinds of love' towards his fiancée. Finally, she was murdered by Rogozhin before the marriage could occur, as the Prince suspected. The Prince confronted Rogozhin, who by then was out of his mind due to an inflammation of the brain, and was later to fall into a coma. The Suspense seems to end in an obvious way when the Prince's fears have been confirmed; Rogozhin killed Nastassya. However, the Suspense is reopened when the Prince relapsed into his epilepsy. The bystanders were as confused as before concerning the mental health of the Prince.

In any case, when after many hours the doors opened and people came in, they found the murderer completely unconscious and in

feverish delirium. The prince was sitting motionless beside him on the cushions, and every time the sick man cried out or began raving, he hastened to pass his trembling hand gently over his hair and cheeks as though caressing and soothing him. But he understood nothing of what they were asking him and he did not recognize the people who had come in and were standing around him. And if Schneider himself had come in from Switzerland then to look at his former pupil and patient, remembering the condition in which the prince had sometimes been during the first year of his cure in Switzerland, he would have thrown up his hands and said as he had done then, "An idiot!" [D.I., p.628]

The Prince looked as before to be an 'idiot'. Is this the end of the Suspense? We may wonder if someone loving another out of pity, trying to save a fellow man, is really an 'idiot' or a generous person. The Prince had attempted to save Nastassya Filipovna, as well as her murderer, we may note, through the identical physical caressing he offered to both Nastassya and Rogozhin, stroking their heads like a child during their periods of incoherence.

We may wonder why the Prince was considered an 'idiot'. Is he an idiot since he acts differently than others; if he acts aside from normal Rationality, choosing outside the regular patterns of thought? An idiot is simply an extraordinary man. The Prince provides us with a paradigm of this 'idiocy', of love and pity for those whom everyone else rejected. His acting outside of normal Rationality, his care for those he pitied, is labeled as 'idiocy' by those who fail to understand the exceptional. They do not realize that they are trapped within those regular patterns of an ordinary man. What is beyond their understanding is called 'idiocy', or, the absurd.

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