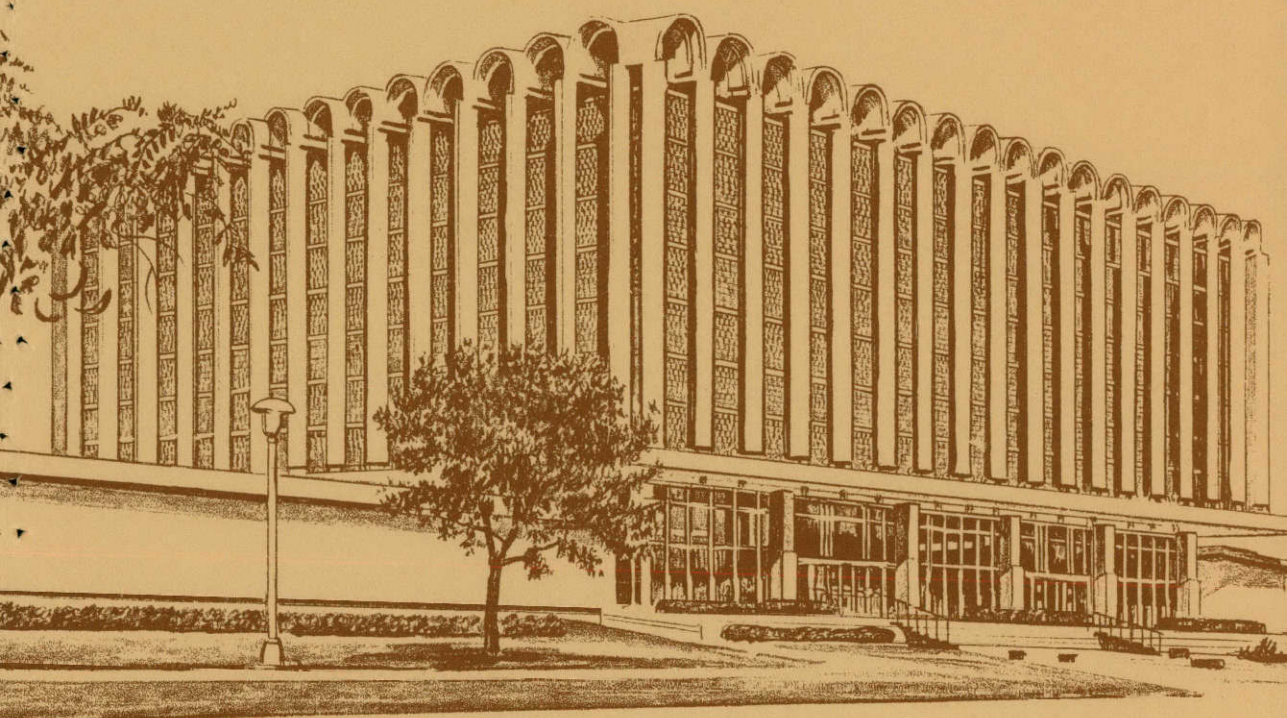
GRADUATE STUDIES
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Nathalie Sarraute and Fedor Dostoevsky: Their Philosophy, Psychology, and Literary Techniques

Ruth Levinsky



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Grover E. Murray, President

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Ruth Levinsky

The emphasis of this study is on the work of Nathalie Sarraute as affiliated with that of Fedor Dostoevsky.[1] By tracing an affiliation with Dostoevsky, that is, the area held in common in terms of their similarities as well as their differences, it may be possible to gain a greater insight into Sarraute's novels and also possibly into Dostoevsky's novels. Sarraute herself admits implicitly in her essay, "From Dostoievski to Kafka" that she has been influenced by Dostoevsky. In this essay Sarraute's description of Dostoevsky's work could have equally referred to her own writing:

> It is this continual, almost maniacal need for contact, for an impossible, soothing embrace, that attracts all of these characters like dizziness and incites them on all occasions to try, by any means whatsoever, to clear a path to the "other," to penetrate him as deeply as possible and make him lose his disturbing, unbearable opaqueness; in their turn, it impels them to confide in him and show him their own innermost recesses. Their momentary dissimulations, their furtive leaps, their secretiveness, their contradictions, the inconsistencies of their conducts, which, at times, they appear to multiply for the mere pleasure of it, and dangle before the eyes of the other, are, in their case, nothing but coy, flirtatious attempts to arouse his curiosity and oblige him to draw nearer.[2]

Undoubtedly, despite Dostoevsky's traditional development of plot and character, some important aspects of his subject matter, characterization, and technique have influenced Sarraute. Dostoevsky's concern with man's alienation, inner torment, ambivalent emotions, and search for an inner reality, and his use of symbol through myth and dream have been topics acknowledged by Sarraute as vital to her own work. Dostoevsky's apprehension about man's anonymity fails to obliterate his optimism, an optimism rejected by the New Realists with whom Sarraute is closely associated, and of whom she is considered the founder.

In this study I will trace differences and similarities in the works of these two authors with the hope of arriving at a coherent overview of important aspects of their novels.

Fiction and the Nature of Reality

Without attempting indiscreetly to invade the realm of philosophy, some thought and comment seems in place concerning the nature of reality, particularly in reference to the way creative writers have often claimed to represent reality in their works. Beginning with Aristotle's view that art holds up the mirror to

1. See Appendix for an explanation of Russian name transliteration.

2. Nathalie Sarraute, "From Dostoievski to Kafka," *The Age of Suspicion* (New York: Braziller, 1963), p. 33. For the French original, see *L'Ere du soupçon* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), p. 39.

nature, each "school" of writing, *i.e.*, the neoclassicists, the romanticists, the realists, the naturalists, and the new realists attempt to portray reality.[3]

Actually, reality itself is so tremendously varied, comprising both the external, objective world and the internal or subjective reaction to an external world, that it appears reasonable to interpret life in diverse ways. Undoubtedly, each interpretation, whether close to an objective evaluation, or so colored by emotional doubts, anxieties, fears, and desires that it can only comprehend objective experience subjectively, is real to the interpreter.

Inasmuch as modern psychology and psychoanalysis claim inner reality as a key element to an understanding of objective data, I have considered ideas of leading psychoanalysts, not as the point of departure, but as a working theory of considerable explanatory power in treating the relationship between the external world and the world of literature. It is my belief that there must always be a relationship between these two worlds.

It should be understood, of course, that a novel also requires technique, or style, but inevitably a dynamic relationship exists between the novel and reality on any of its levels, external, internal, and even the fantastic and symbolic. Fantasy, although seemingly a departure from external reality, must be considered as rooted in the inner reality of the unconscious. Fantasy, whether metaphorical or dreamlike, expresses either conventionally or personally forbidden desires, which are normally repressed. Fantasy releases the reader from the banal reality of the external world, and allows him to project his own fantasies and myths into those of the novel.

It should be recognized that while someone of educated literary taste, aware of the deliberate utilization of fantasy, myth, and symbol, looks for these in fiction, the vast majority of readers, either unable to analyze or uninterested in analyzing the novel, appreciate fiction from an intuitive recognition of its validity. This constitutes a difficulty for Sarraute's fiction, for all too frequently, the reader accepts the traditional novel with its clearly defined story and characters as an ideal form, and lacks interest in new approaches.

For Nathalie Sarraute, the novelist's reality consists of a world which only he sees and seizes, but which remains unknown and invisible to others, at least until the novelist enlarges the general awareness. According to Sarraute, the writer's reality is perceived (the appearance of things) and felt (the intuitive, tropistic reactions of individuals). This reality Sarraute recognizes as differing for each writer, just as each writer feels differently about the world. The felt but unexpressed reality, according to Sarraute, a reality composed of amorphous elements imprisoned in the well known and the usual, challenges the author to penetrate

3. The following comment by C. Day Lewis about poetry is equally pertinent to the novel: " 'Reality' is a precarious word; but sooner or later, in discussing the field and purpose of poetry, one cannot avoid it, for if poets are not concerned with the exploration of 'life, naked living,' at its most intense, and with giving us the feel of it, then I do not know what they *are* up to" ["The Poet's Way of Knowledge," p. 87, in *The Study of Literature: A Handbook of Critical Essays and Terms* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1960)].

the superficial disguises and discover man's interior nature. Despite the studied banality of daily life, man's real feelings emerge, occasionally clashing with the banal and thereby producing startling and contradictory behavior.

Due to current mass media, traditional concepts of man's invisible world have become trivialized through their general acceptance among the populace, and the modern author who must discover and present new aspects of the invisible reality can best do so by penetrating the fallacious external world of appearance. Sarraute considers the novel a barometer of man's most sensitive feelings rather than a vehicle for his rational ideas. In a way the function of the writer relates to that of the detective or the psychoanalyst—to discover the mystery, to solve the riddle of the amorphous elements in the well known and the obvious, to excavate from the obvious the clues to the mystery, and thus to find man's true nature.

Sarraute's conception of reality as deduced from her own statements and her novels appears to be that the only true reality is a reality that consists of man's subjective, invisible feelings. Objective reality is fallacious, insignificant, and banal. Paradoxically, the invisible worlds of feelings are constantly changing in response to inner waverings and uncertainties, which in turn reflect aggravating pressures from the external world. Each world is prismatic and complex; therefore reality is prismatic and complex, and consequently, subjective, invisible, and in constant flux. Somewhat contradictory to her profound understanding of the nature of reality is Sarraute's conclusion that when the novelist (that is, Sarraute) probes beneath the surface of banal reality to the essence of things in a search for man's inner nature, an anonymous subterranean world emerges. There are not individual worlds, only one anonymous world, alienated, tortured, full of doubts, anxieties, fears, hates, and conflicts. The fundamental element of the human personality reduces to tropistic attractions and withdrawals similar to those of a lower species of life. Sarraute does not envisage a change or development from this situation. Thus, her attitude, based on her search for a new reality, and also on her conclusions as to the nature of reality, is profoundly pessimistic.

In each of her novels, Sarraute presents a prismatic view of the complexity of the human personality being gradually reduced to zero. She does this with particular situations in order to expose the invisible world of the personality. Despite the variation of Sarraute's novels, her consistent exposure of man's invisible world unifies her work. Although the reader may disagree with her total conclusion and her pessimistic outlook, it cannot be doubted that Sarraute's revelation of certain extremely sensitive areas of the personality has introduced a new facet into the novel.

Sarraute's novels, *Portrait of a Man Unknown*, *Martereau*, and *The Planetarium* best portray her prismatic view of reality in flux. In these novels, each character has only partial vision of himself and others. As Sarraute readjusts the prism, the reader sees a different aspect of the character highlighted. The two chapters of *The Planetarium* that describe the same situation perceived and reacted to by two different people, Pierre and his sister Berthe, express an essentially prismatic reality, which changes according to the focus, and impedes com-

munication.[4] A constantly changing reality poses a problem for a novelist dedicated to truth, as truth seems to have many faces. Basically however, man's real nature, and thus reality itself, consists of doubt, anxiety, fear, attraction and withdrawal.

Sarraute clarified her attitude about the anonymity of the human personality in an interview with François Bondy, during which she stated that one can no longer believe in traditional fictional characters because today all men have an anonymous quality.[5]

Sarraute's conviction of man's essentially anonymous nature suggests an assumption that man has no god, although she ignores the theological question, as well as the question of good and evil. Of course, it may be argued that a god can create anonymous people, but Sarraute's acceptance of an anonymous nucleus of inner tropistic attractions and repulsions seems to exclude theological associations. On the other hand, a consideration of Sarraute as a behaviorist is negated by her profound analysis of man's emotional world and also by her transformation of her own basic inner world of mechanical pulsations through the media of literature, art, fairy tale, and myth. In fact, Sarraute seems to consider fantasy, and particularly literature, as an essential ingredient of reality, somewhat contradicting her basic attitude toward reality, and then again, perhaps compensating for a too bare and limited inner reality.

Sarraute emphasizes her acceptance of literature as reality when she refers to Prince Bolkonsky and his daughter Mary, characters in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, as real and living:

> For it should not be forgotten that they are really somebody. They belong among those characters in fiction who are so successfully portrayed that we are accustomed to refer to them as "real," or "alive," more real and more alive, in fact, than the living themselves.[6]

I suspect that Sarraute as novelist varies somewhat from Sarraute, the theorist, for not truly desiring to consider reality as composed of purely tropistic reactions, she has included, even at the risk of inconsistency, literary and cultural overtones. Nevertheless, her painstaking analysis along tropistic lines presents death as the solution to life's enigma (*Portrait of a Man Unknown*), endurance as a necessity despite life's futility (*Martereau*), and an animalistic and even plantlike state of the personality (suggested in all her work). Despite her attack on banality and hypocrisy, at the conclusions of her novels, her characters find that they must adopt superficial behavior in order to adjust to life.

The boring and stupid clichés of daily conversation are proven absurd by Dostoevsky. However, with a finesse which Sarraute has not yet achieved, he demonstrates their absurdity by placing them in a suspenseful context, as for instance, Golyadkin's crashing his superiors' party in *The Double* and the Underground Man's insistence on attending the party given for Zverkov in *Letters from*

4. Nathalie Sarraute, *The Planetarium*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Braziller, 1960), pp. 235-268.

5. See François Bondy, "Von Nichts an Schaffen," *Der Monat*, 183 (December 1963):28.

6. Nathalie Sarraute, *Portrait of a Man Unknown*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Braziller, 1958), p. 67.

the Underworld.[7] In both cases the aspirations of the "invaders" are crushed and at the same time the snobbish platitudes of the "elite" are exposed.

Dostoevsky's usage of banality often introduces confessions that bare the soul. In the middle of the most commonplace discussion, the inner reality appears, its doubts and loneliness and its hatreds jutting uncomfortably on the surface. This can be seen very clearly in the family discussions in *The Insulted and Injured*[8] after Natasha leaves home to live with the Prince's son. By inserting truth within the lies of daily conversation, Dostoevsky allows the reader to distinguish between the fallacious appearance of truth and actual truth.

Dostoevsky's characters are always human even though he frequently neglects their exact description. They are so vivid that it is a simple matter for the reader to infer any personal description that the author has omitted. Although Dostoevsky as narrator at times frankly intervenes, the characters have been developed so powerfully that they seem to move of their own accord, following the direction of their passions. At the same time, Dostoevsky is aware of the problem of dehumanization and even treats it heartrendingly in his first novel, *Poor Folk*, in which his protagonist engages in a life and death struggle to maintain some personal identity and reason for living. Dostoevsky presents the various forces that crush the individual personality. The struggle against dehumanization, treated with even more psychological perception in *The Double*, describes the destruction of Golyadkin's identity by a double, who has both his name and all the qualities for which he so longs. The Underground Man, another protagonist existing almost without identity, becomes seriously disturbed by this lack. The fact that an officer simply does not see him rankles interminably. He goes to great lengths to force the officer to see him, buys a coat he cannot afford, and finally trips before the officer, all with little effect. At Zverkov's party, the men ignore him as if he were not there. Only Lisa grants him identity, but he cannot accept her love as he himself no longer believes in his own identity.

Although Dostoevsky focuses primarily on man's internal reality and suffering, he is also moved by the poverty and misery in the external world. His work has a broader scope than Sarraute's; he portrays man's relation to God and to his social environment, as well as his sensitive relationship towards other men.

Dostoevsky uses fantasy, dream, and myth powerfully in order to enhance the contrast with objective reality, and to predict the direction that the novel will take. He also uses these techniques to provide a broader and more dramatic context for daily events as well as to enhance their significance. However, the impression remains that life, and an essentially optimistic view of life at that, has the greatest significance for Dostoevsky; and he plumbs the depths of man's personality so that man, in understanding himself at his most corrupt point, may choose another direction. Dostoevsky's concept of reality, often violent and nightmarish, nevertheless leaves the reader with a margin of hope or at least with the

7. Stefan Zweig stated that Dostoevsky "oppose le sublime à la banalité." Stefan Zweig, *Dostoievski*, trans. Henri Bloch (Paris: Ed. Reider, 1928), p. 126.

8. Fedor Dostoevsky, *The Insulted and Injured*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Macmillan, 1950).

feeling of having participated in a dynamic moment of life. Dostoevsky's reality is composed of perpetual conflict. Although deeply concerned with Christianity, he also questions its validity. Good and evil, constantly opposed, struggle for predominance in the same individual. Despite his presentation of man's alienation and dehumanization, Dostoevsky's characters are vividly lifelike.

Dostoevsky and Sarraute differ from one another in emphasis rather than in basic point of view, although some variations also appear in their philosophy, the most important being Dostoevsky's hope and Sarraute's hopelessness in regard to man's future. Two other basic differences are Dostoevsky's concern with the uniqueness of the personality and Sarraute's lack of concern due to her view of man's anonymity, and Dostoevsky's interest in religion, a topic completely ignored by Sarraute. While these differences significantly influence their characters and cause techniques to vary, their mutual concern with subjective reality, their striving to overcome inner loneliness and alienation, and their commitment to the exposure of banality and hypocrisy provide a common goal for these two authors.

The affiliation between Dostoevsky and Sarraute follows from their mutual distrust of logical reality and their acceptance of the validity of a subjective reality. The perceived and felt reality comprises the only trustworthy reality. The novel is a vehicle that reveals man's inner feelings. Banal reality is valid insofar as it betrays man's inner world. Both these writers attempt to extract truth from false appearance, often utilizing fantasy, myth, dream or dreamlike situations. Their characters expose hypocrisy and strive to arrive at a more honest view of the world.

Contradiction, Ambiguity, and Ambivalence

The author's world view serves as a framework for his development of character. While any discussion of character in literature may attempt to discover consistency and neatly definable qualities in human nature, the naiveté of this inclination soon becomes apparent, as thought and study create an awareness of the extreme complexity of character, and its function and development in the novel. In fact, inconsistency and contradiction are the terms that most suitably refer to character definition. Each human being, filled with contradictory thoughts and beliefs and torn by contradictory or ambivalent emotions, lives in a world where conflict and motivation are often obscure. Nevertheless, he must cope with this ambiguous and troublesome world as best he can. Certainly the outcome of his battle for some control of his destiny lies in his ability to sort out the ambivalence and ambiguities of life and those of his own and other personalities.

Undoubtedly, not all individuals are torn by conflicting ideas and emotions. Some people seem to be born with a passive acceptance of life. However, both Dostoevsky and Sarraute depict characters who suffer through their inability to adjust to the banality of daily life. True to their evaluation of reality as primarily subjective, both authors focus attention on the introverted personality in conflict

with both itself and society, ignoring the simplistic personality, who is indifferent to the paradoxical nature of life.

I shall preface my discussion of character development in the works of Dostoevsky and Sarraute by defining the terms in the heading above. I consider contradiction as the clear opposition of ideas in a novel, whereas ambiguity is confused and confusing blend of thoughts, speech, and action. Ambivalence, a contradiction of the emotions, can be either a clear opposition of emotions, such as love and hate, or can assume an ambiguous nature in that the opposition of emotions is unclear to the protagonist involved, to the other characters, and perhaps even to the reader. A discussion of these concepts should throw greater light on the novels of Sarraute and Dostoevsky as these authors are both intrigued with opposites and ambiguities on every level, ideational as well as emotional. In fact, one of the most important links between these two novelists is their focus on counter argument and the confused personality.

Nathalie Sarraute, in all her novels, points out the contradiction between the banality of the everyday world in its use of complacent platitudes on the surface level of general communication on the one hand, and on the other hand, the nervous excitement of man's internal world with its repressed hostilities, in which man is not at all complacent, but frightened, tense, and aggressive. So far, Sarraute's novels are not too difficult to follow. However, her writing becomes more involved and also more intriguing when it presents contradictions that cannot be defined clearly, but appear confused and uncertain. At this point the reader enters Sarraute's world of ambiguity, a world frequently resembling a dream because of its unclear content.

Sarraute's novels contain a number of ambiguities. One of these is vagueness of character; even when a character is defined, ambiguity pervades all that he does and says, impeding positive identification of his personality. Because the ambiguous reactions of Sarraute's characters to others often seem too extreme, their opinions about others are rendered untrustworthy. Also, Sarraute's ambiguous use of eroticism may be considered by the reader either as metaphor or as fact. The following passage from *Portrait of a Man Unknown* is an example of Sarraute's ambiguous use of eroticism:

> The abscess had burst, the scab was entirely off, the wound was bleeding, suffering and voluptuousness had attained their peak, he was at the end of his tether, at the very end, they had reached bottom, alone together, they were by themselves, now they were quite by themselves, naked, stripped, far from outside eyes . . . he felt steeped in the atmosphere of mellowness, the relaxed tepidity produced by intimacy. (p. 188)

Finally, as has often been observed, Sarraute's blurring of the difference between real and imagined situations gives her novels an overall ambiguous tone, which also occurs in the above passage.

Sarraute avoids character identification, particularly in *The Golden Fruits* and *Between Life and Death* where most of the characters tend to merge. At certain moments the distinctiveness of a character appears easily grasped due to either his acceptance or his fear of another person, but soon the picture changes, and nameless characters form dreamy vignettes. Even in *Portrait of a Man Unknown*,

although the protagonist is far more sharply defined than is the protagonist in *Between Life and Death*, his external statements seem to contradict his internal feelings to the extent of confusing the reader as to his real personality. Does the protagonist really love the girl on whom he is constantly spying, or does he actually hate her as it seems when he is gossiping with his friend, or in his metaphorical flights of fancy? In the latter case, why do his thoughts always turn in her direction, and why is he so eager to accompany her to an art exhibition? Neither Sarraute nor the protagonist answers these questions, and the protagonist's thoughts and actions remain unclear, a situation that suggests as the theme of the novel, the impossibility for man to know others or even to know himself.

In *Martereau*, also, the actual identification of the nephew is impossible even though he is the narrator, and a particularly verbose, intensely self-concerned narrator at that.[9] Sarraute's use of eroticism as metaphorical description of nonerotic situations makes it difficult to determine whether the nephew's attitude toward his aunt, and also toward his uncle, and Martereau is really erotic or merely metaphorical. The nephew presents himself in a feminine sense in relation to the strong masculinity of his uncle:

> Eager for sacrifice, reeling already with the heady joy of the martyr, the victim has come voluntarily, quivering and naked, to surrender to his will. (p. 34)

At the end of the novel, when the nephew once more visits the now redeemed Martereau, he feels ashamed of himself and wants to avoid hurting Martereau as he fears an explosion might take place in Martereau. He describes this possible explosion as

> a frightful conflagration, our clothes torn from us, noxious, deadly emanations, all his distress, his impotence, his forlornness, on me . . . our two nude bodies gripping each other. (p. 249)

The erotic references may allude to the protagonist's extreme anxiety and his need of others, or they may indicate a latent homosexual inclination pervading the ambivalent sado-masochistic imagination of the protagonist, a sado-masochism that definitely does exist in a rather clear and nonambiguous form.

This undetermined nature of Sarraute's erotic passages coincides with the ambiguity found in her novels in regard to what actually has been seen or heard and what has merely been imagined or desired. Sarraute has the protagonist of *Martereau* say "but I believe that I'm about to mistake my wishes for reality, I'm rambling off" (p. 104).

The use of ambiguity appears to be a deliberate screening of reality on the part of Sarraute, who challenges the reader to unravel the mystery and to decide who is actually speaking, who the real person is, what his intent is, what has happened and whether it is real or imagined. It may be argued that the reader who aims at such a resolution of ambiguities is reading along traditional patterns, but undoubtedly Sarraute is aware of this traditional tendency on the part of the reader, and the possibility exists that she might be using it.

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9. Her verbose narrators demonstrate Nathalie Sarraute's excellent handling of interior monologue or as she calls it, "sous conversation."

The emotional ambivalence of Sarraute's characters is often ambiguous due to their concealment of emotion. One can assume the existence of two emotional poles, which also react on one another, the emotions of love and hate on an erotic basis, and these two emotions also in opposition on a social plane. Up to a point, these ambivalent emotional reactions remain ambiguous to the characters themselves. However, love, itself an ambivalent instinct, particularly in its early stages (at least according to Sigmund Freud),[10] is never outgrown in Sarraute's novels, and passes from the realm of ambiguity to a clear ambivalence. Love is viewed by Sarraute's characters as inevitably either a complete possession of the other person or as a complete absorption of one's own individuality. Thus, attraction, soon involving fear of being absorbed, leads to hatred.

On the social plane, the emotional ambivalence of Sarraute's characters converts them into accomplices to their own defeat. In both *Portrait of a Man Unknown* and *Martereau*, the combination of love and hate, manifesting itself as passivity and hostile aggressiveness, pushes the protagonists to structure situations where others will deceive and prey on them. Although, for example, the nephew in *Martereau* is aware of his tendency toward self destruction, he cannot control the situation even when he recognizes what is happening, and blames his passivity:

> It is doubtless precisely this strange passivity, this sort of docility which I have never succeeded in explaining very well to myself, that excites them and makes them secrete irresistibly, when they come into contact with me, a substance like that which certain animals eject in order to blind their prey. (p. 2)

The nephew does come to understand that when his family humiliates him, this serves to build its own confidence. They achieve strength through destructiveness. The members of the family are not spiteful to the nephew alone; they also love and hate one another. When the mother, who has become dependent on her daughter's affection, feels replaced by a girl friend, she immediately releases her pent-up hostility, and maliciously tells the nephew of her daughter's difficulty in obtaining a degree. The nephew describes the mother as she prepares to pass on this gossip: "She leans towards me, her voice is softening, moistened by the saccharine delight of betrayal" (p. 51). Although the nephew appears to be the most self-destructive member of the family, while the rest of the family directs its destructive urges outwardly, a more careful reading reveals the inclination of each member of the family toward self destruction, the daughter by her indifference to her person, the mother by her amours, and the father by his unpopular bullying. The nephew later proves his own willingness and ability to destroy when he leads the family against Martereau.

Dostoevsky is concerned with opposition and contradiction, but on the ideological level. He has saints opposing sinners, believers opposing atheists, good against evil, sacrifice and corruption, gentleness and violence; his novels abound

10. Discussing the stages of love, Freud stated that the early stage is the devouring type of love, "which is compatible with the abolition of any separate existence on the part of the object, and which may therefore be designated ambivalent" ["Instincts and Their Vicissitudes, *Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1942), 54:420].

with contrasting forces in opposition to one another.[11] He concerns himself with the internal, subjective life of man in contrast to the external, surface world with its superficial view of man's essential nature.

Dostoevsky uses ambiguity primarily in order to develop suspense in his character portrayal, as in Varvara's letters to the man who is sacrificing everything for her in *Poor Folk*, letters which vaguely express her fondness for him, but which never totally commit her. In *The Gambler*, Paulina is equally ambiguous in her conversations with the narrator, who falls madly in love with her. The total personality as well as the motives of these two characters, and also of Pierre Verkhovensky and Stavrogin in *The Possessed*, remain unrevealed until the end, and even then are a little mysterious.

Many of Dostoevsky's characters are trapped in a love-hate relationship with another person or with society. Nastasya in *The Idiot* is attracted and antagonistic to both Prince Myshkin and Rogozhin. When she longs for a nobler, more aesthetic relationship, she turns to Prince Myshkin, and then feeling unworthy of him, withdraws and turns to Rogozhin. It is the ambivalent nature of Nastasya that eventually destroys all three of them. Other characters of Dostoevsky are also caught in a love-hate relationship; Katerina Ivanovna and Dmitri Karamazov are another pair of lovers torn between love and hatred. And on a nonerotic level the relationship of Pavel Trusotsky to Veltchaninov in *The Eternal Husband* continually fluctuates, his hatred for Veltchaninov alternating with respect and fraternal feeling.

Dostoevsky's portrayals of social misfits add depth to our understanding of ambivalent emotional attitudes. Such characters as Golyadkin in *The Double* and the Underground Man appear to submit to circumstances on an external level, but underneath seethe with hostility; because of this they can keenly perceive ambivalence in society while at the same time they reveal their own weakness and sado-masochistic relationships with other men. Despite their role of untrustworthy narrators, the intensity and logic of their penetrating analysis extends our comprehension of life, and thus gives them a practical and valuable function.

Although both Dostoevsky and Sarraute write about the contradiction between man's external world and his internal world, both are more interested in the inner world of the mind and emotions. Sarraute varies her use of ambiguity, blurring her characters' identities so that even when identified, their thoughts and actions, their imagination and objective reality remain unclear. On the other hand, Dostoevsky identifies his characters clearly, using ambiguity of statement and action chiefly for suspenseful development of the plot and character.

Doubt as to the characters' identity in Sarraute's novels illustrates her view of man's similarity; once the outer shell of banality is penetrated, all men are mere hollow forms. On the contrary, Dostoevsky's suspenseful revelation of character proceeds from his belief in the distinctiveness and richness of each individual personality.

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11. *The Brothers Karamazov* contains all of the opposites. Alyosha opposes his entire family: the disbelief of Ivan, the evil genius of his father, the corruption of Dmitri, and the inherent violence of Smerdyakov.

Sarraute uses eroticism in the most apparently ordinary of scenes, either in order to create greater interest for the reader through erotic connotations, or to hint at the essentially erotic desires of her characters, or for both of these reasons; her purpose is equivocal. Dostoevsky also uses eroticism ambiguously, only gradually revealing the relationships between his characters, relationships that are frequently obscure, and often ambivalent. Dostoevsky develops this love-hate ambivalence beyond the erotic state to include the desire for acceptance despite the individual's contempt for society. This tendency of Dostoevsky's characters to generalize a specific emotion and extend it to the world at large, also true of Sarraute's work, is one of the most decisive factors in the affiliation of the two authors; it is an outward extension and attempted resolution of the contradictions inherent in the human situation.

Loneliness

Regardless of whether their characters emerge clearly or in a blurred form, both Dostoevsky and Sarraute describe the isolated introvert whose loneliness engenders psychological and social consequences. The completely isolated man retreats into an inner world and remains indifferent to the objective world around him, or he tries every way he can think of to enter into society, to establish relationships that would relieve him of his loneliness. Failing a solution, he becomes either defensive and passive, or terribly hostile and aggressive, thus projecting his psychological weakness into social life.

While loneliness is a universal problem that has existed throughout history, the nineteenth-century novel and to a greater extent, the twentieth-century novel, has especially concentrated on the alienated and lonely person, his inner conflicts, and his relationship with society.[12] Certainly, this concentration is a suitable one for fiction, as the motivation to read books frequently stems from a yearning for contact with another's thoughts, and in a parallel way, a writer often has the same basic motivation for writing. Thus, the need to face or master loneliness is a natural and appropriate subject.

The introverted person, indulging in self-analysis and self-pity, although feeling haughty and superior toward contemporaries, nevertheless yearns for their companionship. However, he has already alienated himself from society through his contempt for people and can anticipate only rejection and the possibility of isolation from his fellow.

Sarraute's protagonists, isolated and lonely in relation to every other person, finding the world dull and hypocritical, withdraw from it. However, after a

12. Examples of the lonely protagonist occur in numerous nineteenth-century novels, *e.g.*, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*; Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*; Chateaubriand's *René*; Benjamin Constant's *Adolphe*; and Flaubert's *L'Education Sentimentale*. Twentieth-century novels focusing on the alienated, lonely person are, for example, Kafka's *The Trial*, *The Castle*, *Metamorphosis*, and *Amerika*; Camus' *L'Étranger*; Sartre's *La Nausée*; Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit*; and Hesse's *Steppenwolf*. Of course, many of Dostoevsky's novels fit into this category, as well as all of Nathalie Sarraute's novels.

period of time, they come to abhor their isolation and to long for contact with other human beings. This usually proves impossible in spite of a willingness to accept other people under any conditions whatsoever, as the nephew in *Martereau* is willing to do: "Always, even when I feel their teeth about to sink delicately into me, I am prepared to blame everything on myself" (p. 68). The nephew goes even further in describing his need for people: "I believe I should be more inclined to take their side against myself" (p. 68). Although the nephew would willingly sacrifice his own convictions in order to be accepted, he never achieves the contact for which he longs. The theme of loneliness recurs in all of Sarraute's novels. Her characters perpetually fail to attain acceptance by others, and despite numerous conciliatory gestures, they remain trapped in the void of loneliness.

Sarraute's characters sometimes react to their failure to make contact by withdrawing into the misery of isolation, and at other times, goaded by their suffering, they plan and execute hostile actions towards others. This occurs even when a character is fond of someone, as Alain is of Germaine Lemaire in *The Planetarium*, and as the nephew is of Martereau in Sarraute's novel, *Martereau*. In both cases, the fondness, subjected to a destructive analysis by the protagonist, demands that the loved person constantly prove his worthiness, and eventually found wanting, he is deprived of his special place in the protagonist's heart. When Alain Gumiez discovers Germaine's ignorance of the quality of a piece of sculpture, his image of her crumbles in an instant; and similarly, when the nephew in *Martereau* believes that Martereau has intrigued against his uncle in the matter of their country house and has also been involved with his aunt, he turns on his former friend as furiously as if he himself were the cheated person and the cuckold. In a moment these protagonists destroy the constructive relationship they have managed to build, a relationship that seems to have been a reluctant idealization based on the protagonist's conception of a better self; and in the process of toppling formerly respected gods, they momentarily believe themselves strong enough to destroy their best friends. The entire family, each in his own way, works at destroying Martereau, who represents a figure of security, and who all unwittingly makes the family acutely aware of its own anxieties and insecurity.

Although the lonely protagonists in Sarraute's novels stoop to any extreme in order to reach other people, they rarely achieve more than a fleeting contact. Having in effect failed, they retreat into self-analysis and consequently develop a sado-masochistic relationship with all whom they know.

Paradoxically, this lonely person becomes a vehicle with which to expose an absurd, hypocritical society, but he himself is always defeated by this society. Each of Sarraute's novels concludes with the triumph of the normal and the banal over sensitive analysis. It seems that Sarraute accepts loneliness as an inevitable condition of man, a condition that cannot be altered except by death.

Dostoevsky's solitary characters also strive for contact and communication with others. Their intense efforts occasionally lead to a tragi-comic effect as in the case of Pavel Trusotsky in *The Eternal Husband*, who, because of his desperate sense of isolation, makes awkward overtures of friendship to Veltchaninov, the

man who has cuckolded him. The Underground Man, also, insists on participating in Zverkov's farewell party even though he despises Zverkov and knows how much Zverkov's friends dislike him. He is willing to abase himself in order to be noticed, and dreams of "the whole world weeping and embracing me." However, despite his apparent agonized honesty in perceiving his dilemma, the Underground Man reveals his lack of complete self-understanding when Lisa, the prostitute, accepts him unconditionally. Only at this moment, does he realize that his isolation makes him inaccessible to as well as incapable of love.

Although Dostoevsky considers human isolation universal, he distinguishes between his disturbed characters and those living normally. However, the normal world appears so dull that even the lonely Underground Man retreats from it to his solitude.

Dostoevsky's description of man's alienation leads him to investigate man's inner world, concentrating on the agonized world of the alienated person. His psychological exploration reveals that extreme loneliness and isolation create a distorted, angry person who is both masochistic and sadistic, and who for purposes of general description, can be called neurotic.[13] *Letters from the Underworld* can be viewed as a study of a neurotic person, who wishes to withdraw from a hated world, but cannot, and consequently becomes potentially, if not actually, destructive both to himself and to others.

Dostoevsky's perception of man's isolation is amply demonstrated in *The Brothers Karamazov* during the interview Zossima has with a mysterious visitor:

> All mankind in our age have split up into units, they all keep apart, each in his own groove; each one holds aloof, hides himself and hides what he has, from the rest, and he ends by being repelled by others and repelling them.[14]

Following this general view of man's isolation, comes Dostoevsky's irrepressible optimism in the face of all obstacles:

> But this terrible individualism must inevitably have an end, and all will suddenly understand how unnaturally they are separated from one another. It will be the spirit of the time.[15]

Although loneliness can be considered a universal phenomenon and has often been presented in fiction, it has not always been employed as Dostoevsky and Sar-

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13. "Both the masochistic and sadistic strivings tend to help the individual to escape his unbearable feeling of aloneness and powerlessness. Psychoanalytic and other empirical observations of masochistic persons give ample evidence (which I cannot quote here without transcending the scope of this book) that they are filled with a terror of aloneness and insignificance. Frequently this feeling is not conscious; often it is covered by compensatory feeling of eminence and perfection. However, if one only penetrates deeply enough into the unconscious dynamics of such a person, one finds these feelings without fail. The individual finds himself 'free' in the negative sense, that is, alone with his self and confronting an alienated, hostile world." Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1941), p. 151.

14. Fedor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Constance Garnett, Great Books of the Western World, 52 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), p. 158.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

raute use it, that is, as a point of departure through character portrayal to the analysis and subtle criticism of society. Dostoevsky and Sarraute demonstrate the disregard of the isolated person by a dull and, at the same time, exacting society, which demands conformity. The isolated person, by his nature unable to conform, becomes a negative and hostile force in his society, straining to preserve a semblance of individual identity. However, Sarraute's people rarely achieve individuality even though they detach themselves from society and from the pressures of conformity, whereas Dostoevsky's people do manage to achieve individuality. Sarraute's characters are caught in the trap of their own isolation. Dostoevsky and Sarraute both analyze society through the eyes of an alienated protagonist, a protagonist in opposition to the banality and hypocrisy of society, and at the same time a victim of society and dependent on it. Repelled by society and by individuals who seem to adjust to society, their characters continually try to communicate with the same people they despise. This paradox is evident throughout the fiction of Dostoevsky and Sarraute. Their characters, willing to submit to personal attack, sacrifice their integrity gladly, even to the point of humiliating themselves, in order to be included. The lengths to which their characters go, their extreme anxiety, agitation, and concentration on detail, their hostilities, sometimes repressed and other times protruding absurdly, their self-destructiveness and zealous undermining of other people even if only verbally, demonstrate a close affiliation between Dostoevsky and Sarraute. They differ in the development of their characters' individuality and in their conclusion: Dostoevsky is hopeful that a positive change will occur in the future, whereas Sarraute retains her pessimism.

Illness and Neurosis

The point of transformation of loneliness to illness or neurosis is so threatening that psychologists have seen fit to warn us of the danger.[16] Man's endurance in isolation varies with different individuals, and whereas one man can tolerate great strain, another succumbs under pressure and becomes ill or depressed emotionally.[17] Illness can serve as a justifiable release from the responsibilities and demands of society, and although it has its unpleasant moments, if not too severe, illness can free people from external strain and allow them to concentrate on an inner world of self-pity and fantasy. Children learn this quickly and affect illness in order to escape from duties, or to win their parents' affection, or as a weapon to brandish against their parents. Adults manipulate illness in the same way, some-

16. Erich Fromm is most emphatic in his warning about the danger of isolation, which he qualifies as not belonging in one's society: "To feel completely alone and isolated leads to mental disintegration just as physical starvation leads to death." *Escape from Freedom*, p. 19.

17. "The individual has perhaps always the choice of endorsing his position of detachment, or of attempting to participate in life. The schizoid defence against 'reality' has, however, the grave disadvantage that it tends to perpetuate and potentiate the original threatening quality of reality. Participation of the self in life is possible, but only in the face of intense anxiety." R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: A Study of Sanity and Madness* (London: Tavistock Publishers, 1960), p. 95.

times intentionally and sometimes unconsciously. The inducement to prolong an illness, with the resulting solicitude from others, is obvious, especially for a neurotic individual who longs for love and recognition.

Both physical illness and emotional instability occasionally play vital roles in fiction.[18] The world seen through sick eyes can sometimes be better magnified or detailed. Dostoevsky and Sarraute both capitalize on the illness or neurosis of their protagonists in order to present unusual ideas generally rejected by society. An acute analysis by a neurotic protagonist can serve as a springboard for the author's views. Because these views proceed from a sick character, the author is at least somewhat protected from accusations that he might be preaching a mad version of reality, and he can deny any personal involvement in his novel. At the same time, he is able to avail himself of the sensitivity of his neurotic or ill protagonist in order to analyze and/or criticize the social structure, or anything he pleases. The reader, as well, makes allowances for the poor mental or physical state of the protagonist, and consequently is more prepared to accept extreme moods, fantasies, and unusual ideas.

Nathalie Sarraute's protagonists are all extremely sensitive, to the point of neurosis, and in *Martereau*, the protagonist is also physically ill. Sarraute, extremely conscious of the closeness of the physical and mental aspects of life, has developed a tropistic theory of human relationships that suggests a physical reaction to every contact with another person. This reaction can be positive or negative, although there seem to be more negative than positive reactions in her novels. Her characters, aware of this physical reaction allied so closely to their mental state, are alert for signs indicating the reaction of others towards them. Each of her neurotic characters is ready to detect any sign of hostility or rejection, be it a raised eyebrow or a pursed lip, and suffers terribly when he encounters such a sign. His suffering, usually entirely out of proportion to the situation, is partly what classifies him as neurotic. Even a disagreement about a literary or artistic interpretation overwhelms such neurotic characters.[19] Any challenge constitutes a challenge to their ego, and they react violently.

Although Sarraute's main emphasis is on the waverings, flounderings, and consequent sufferings of pitiful neurotics, she gives an extra purpose to her work by using her ill or neurotic characters to expose society's illness, neurosis, and hypocrisy. Her work can be called a study of manners as well as of subjective reality. In discussing Sarraute's novel, *Martereau*, Martin Price wrote:

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18. The following are examples from both nineteenth and twentieth-century fiction where the protagonists are ill, either physically or mentally, or both: Gogol's *The Overcoat*; Pushkin's *Queen of Spades*; Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*; Melville's *Moby Dick*; Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*; D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*; Goncharov's *Oblomov*; Henry James' *Turn of the Screw*; Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*; Proust's *À la Recherche du temps perdu*; Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*; all of Kafka's fiction; William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*; Sologub's *The Petty Demon*; Valéry Tarsis' *Ward Seven*; Solzhenitsyn's *Cancer Ward*; Robbe-Grillet's *Le Voyeur* and also *La Jalousie*; and all of Beckett's novels.

19. See *The Golden Fruits*, p. 28, as an example.

> The central character has become a "precision instrument" for detecting inauthenticity, sham, bad faith. And the characteristic images of the novel are, as in some of Sartre's works, those which induce nausea: effluvium that is exuded from people and their words, "the saccharine delight of betrayal," the "sweet stench of carrion," the "nauseous liquid that squirts from us."[20]

The irony of Sarraute's work is that her "precision instrument," the protagonist who presumes to reveal the illness of society, is also ill. As well as doubting others, Sarraute's characters lack self-assurance, and doubt themselves. It can, of course, be questioned whether the neurotic person is a better critic of society due to his own hypersensitivity, or whether his interpretation may be distorted. Because the neurotic individual tends to be unreliable, the reader himself must distinguish truth from exaggeration.

This untrustworthy narrator-protagonist is subject to and controlled by the very ideas and attitudes he attacks. For example, in *The Planetarium*, Alain Gumiez criticizes snobbery, yet longs to belong to the ultracritical, elite literary circle led by the author, Germaine Lemaire. Finally accepted into this circle, he begins to criticize it, and to doubt Madame Lemaire's superiority, completely withdrawing confidence and affection when his idol proves herself human by commenting on the attractiveness of his laundry bag. Alain mistrusts her aesthetic judgment, and feels superior; he is the real snob.

Alain Gumiez and Germaine Lemaire are two outstanding examples of neurotic self-consciousness. They not only constantly watch for changes in the facial expressions of others; they constantly analyze their own expressions. Also, due to their extreme self-consciousness, they frequently overestimate the significance of incidents.

Sarraute's characters repress their over-sensitive feelings. In conversation with others they are careful to utter only the most banal clichés. They cannot confess their fears, and regard every other person, with few and usually temporary exceptions, as an enemy, failing to see that others are often as fearful as they. Their fantasies and intense, dramatic thoughts are rarely vocal; they remain internalized, and consequently, only these thoughts contain any poetic or conceptual value.

Sarraute's protagonists demonstrate an unyielding hostility to the world. Though yearning for communication, understanding, and love, when any possibility of this occurs, the neurotic, self-debasing activity of the protagonist prohibits him from joining his fellow man and impels him toward destructive feelings and actions. The protagonist of *Martereau*, invited by his aunt and uncle to stay at their home because of his illness, shows his ingratitude by describing his aunt and her daughter cruelly: "their hard, glittering bird's eyes" (p. 22). His fear of people manifests itself through his use of metaphorical description:

> I had to . . . examine them slowly, disconnect them as one would a dangerous contrivance, open them in order to extract from them a turbid, dubious substance with a sickening odor. (p. 18)

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20. Martin Price, "Dreams and Doubts: Some Recent Fiction," *The Yale Review*, 49 (Winter 1960):282.

This hostile protagonist, aware of his neurotic condition, blames his physical illness:

> It is this semi-activity which I am obliged to accept, this "mother of all vice," that keeps alive in me my idle musings and gives me that sensitiveness—abetted by my physical weakness—of a hysterical woman, as well as a morbid sense of guilt. (p. 77)

Although the protagonist admires Martereau for his normality and his solidity, he eagerly accepts the reasons for destroying Martereau, and like Alain Gumiez, afterwards can retire to his superior solitude, having found his idol vulnerable and human. This idea, developed sketchily in *Portrait of an Unknown Man*, where the protagonist chooses to regard also the woman and her father as neurotics and limits his destructiveness to spying and slanderous gossip, becomes more solid in *Martereau* where the destructiveness becomes an activity, and again more subtle, but also more general in *The Planetarium*, where Alain's neurotic personality wounds in one way or another all the people who care for him.

Usually, Sarraute's protagonists blame themselves for their unstable positions, but occasionally they become more aggressive and blame society. The narrator of *Martereau*, for instance, in a moment of self defense, attacks the man's world into which aesthetes cannot fit, one of the rare moments when rather than accuse himself as he usually does, he defends himself and accuses the world (p. 35). However, Sarraute's characters, although alienated from the world by their neurotic behavior, have been so damaged that their keen analysis of relationships, of hypocrisy, or their own behavior never quite serves to free them from society's domination; their analysis only causes them greater suffering.

The protagonist admires and respects Martereau for his apparent strength and his ability to withstand social and personal pressures. In the following quotation, the protagonist describes Martereau's ability to protect himself:

> Martereau, from whom there emanated a mysterious fluid that kept their words at a distance and made them bounce far from him, like the little balls that dance on the crest of fountains. (p. 71)

The protagonist also would like to achieve immunity from others, but too weak, too easily destroyed by a word or even a glance, he cannot liberate himself from domination by others. He is crushed when people so much as look at him, as when his aunt and cousin look at him,

> a half-smile on their faces, a sly glance, a sudden peal of laughter, and you may be sure that you have been condemned with no possible appeal. (p. 41)

In Sarraute's novels, the majority of her characters have repressed wishes for power and love, or if not for love, at least for acceptance by society. Because these wishes remain unfulfilled and repressed, the consequent distortion of personality follows quite logically. Her characters become anxious and fearful to an extreme. Sarraute tends to describe anxiety metaphorically, as in the following quotation from *Portrait of a Man Unknown* showing the need a daughter has for her father's love, which need intensifies his negative reaction to her:

> She clung to him like a damp, hot compress that draws pus up the skin and causes an abscess to ripen. (p. 166)

The young girl, sensing her father's hostility, becomes extremely anxious, but later learns to curb her need for the filial affection.[21]

Sarraute details the physical reactions to an anxious, emotional state. Two examples from *Portrait of a Man Unknown* describe the protagonist's anxiety:

> I had that same sense of slight nausea and dizziness that one feels in an elevator when it leaves the floor level and sinks gently down into the void. (p. 76)[22]

> In the same way that the blood distends the arteries, throbs in the temples and beats against the eardrums when air pressure is lowered, so, at night, in the rarefied atmosphere engendered by solitude and silence anguish that has been contained during the day swells and weighs upon us; an oppressive mass fills the head and chest, inflates the lungs, presses like a bar on the stomach, closes the throat like a gag. . . . No one has ever been able to define exactly this strange malaise. (p. 120)

All of Sarraute's novels contain anxious, frightened, and easily intimidated characters, differentiated by the extent of their fright and their methods of coping with it. However, despite their fears and anxieties, Sarraute's characters continually strive to achieve some contact with others even when that contact may menace the ego.

Sarraute's neurotic protagonists fear loss of their own identities through absorption by stronger personalities. They attempt to isolate or dehumanize themselves and others by representation as objects, or as animals and insects. They can thus render themselves immune to attack and reduce the menace of absorption by another personality. This dehumanization is a central feature in Sarraute's novels. I submit some examples from *Portrait of a Man Unknown.* The narrator-protagonist, describing the woman in whom he is interested and by whom, consequently, he feels threatened, says:

> She is well protected, unassailable, shut in, watched over on every side. . . . Nobody can broach her. (p. 40)

Continuing, the narrator then describes the woman's manner as "the stubborn precision of an insect" (p. 40). He uses a beetle comparison in describing the woman and her father as they are quarreling: "The blind, relentless struggle of two giant insects, two enormous dung beetles . . ." (p. 47). Later, as the narrator gossips with his boyhood friend about the woman, he describes their gossip as "our catlike games" (p. 50), in which he relegates the woman to the role of a dead mouse: "There it lay between us, torn in shreds, gray and motionless, a dead mouse" (p. 49). Then, with a mixture of metaphor, Sarraute transforms the woman from a mouse back into an insect:

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21. About anxiety, Freud stated that it is "one of the ways in which the ego relieves itself of repressed wishes which have become too strong." Great Books of the Western World, *The Origin and Development of Psycho-Analysis* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), p. 12.

22. This agrees with Freud's account of physical reactions to anxiety. Freud wrote of dizziness and vertigo as important symptoms of anxiety neurosis: "The vertigo attack is frequently accompanied by the worst kind of anxiety and is often combined with cardiac and respiratory disturbances." Great Books of the Western World, *Selected Papers on Hysteria,* p. 89.

> One of those skillful, sure strokes such as they know how to give, similar to the marvelously accurate javelin strokes with which certain insects are said to paralyze their enemies by striking straight into the nerve centers. (p. 50)

Such variation of animal metaphor is exaggerated in Sarraute's work.[23] However, it could be argued that use of the metaphor exemplifies the neurotic imagination of the narrator in the novel, who having no need to be either logical or artistic, can freely project his hostility against the world by utilizing any comparison he wishes.[24]

Dostoevsky's protagonists also are extremely sensitive, often ill, as the Underground Man, or just recovered from an illness, as Prince Myshkin. Their illness helps them become sensitive barometers of the relations between people. Physical illness also is used by Dostoevsky to intensify the impression of a sick world. Just as Prince Myshkin's epilepsy in *The Idiot* foreshadows future events, so Smerdyakov's epilepsy in *The Brothers Karamazov* serves as a symbol of the general decay of the Karamazov family. Hippolyte's slow death from consumption adds to the general effect of illness everywhere in *The Idiot*, and also affords Hippolyte an opportunity to attack society. In *The Eternal Husband*, Veltchaninov's bad liver seems to foreshadow some of the deaths that take place. Dostoevsky also uses illness technically; for example, Veltchaninov's liver attack brings out both the kindness and the murderous intent of Pavel Trusotsky, and Smerdyakov's epilepsy serves as a convenient ruse for evading the accusation of murder. However, Dostoevsky also employs illness in a symbolic way, integrating skillfully illness as a technique and illness in a psychological and even philosophical context. Witness Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*: beyond suspicion, at least at the beginning, due to his illness, later, the very direction his illness takes implies his guilt.

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23. In illustrating Sarraute's vocabulary in *Portrait of a Man Unknown*, *Martereau*, and *The Planetarium*, Leon Roudiez enumerates Sarraute's animal allusions: "In instances that number in the hundreds characters are likened to, or identified with, animals. Some thirty references are to animals in general (*bête* or *animal* with an appropriate qualifying phrase); I have encountered, in addition (and I have possibly missed a number of creatures lurking in dark corners), one lamb, one boar, two toads, two horses, four tigers and hyenas, four mice, four bulls, five pigs or piglets, six foxes, six monkeys, seven cats, seven wolves (without the American connotation), eleven snakes, and forty-two dogs or packs of dogs. There are also half a dozen larvae, a dozen more developed underwater creatures, forty birds, and forty-five insects of various description that have been drafted to assist in Nathalie Sarraute's metaphoric transcriptions." "A Glance at the Vocabulary of Nathalie Sarraute." *Yale French Studies*, 27 (Spring-Summer 1961):95.

24. Sarraute's animal imagery can also be related to the fairy tale symbolism that permeates her novels.

V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Research Center in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, 1958):40 lists magical agents: "1) animals (a horse, an eagle, etc.); 2) objects out of which helpers appear (a fire kindler containing a steed, a ring containing young men, etc.); 3) objects possessing a magical property such as, cudgels, swords, gusla, balls, and so forth; 4) qualities or capacities which are directly given, such as, the power of transformation into animal forms, etc."

Dostoevsky's genius derives in part from his ability to transmit an idea from one level to another, as in his transference of physical illness to an anguished state of mind. Dostoevsky links the psychological to the physiological in varying ways: the physiological state may prophesy a traumatic conclusion due to psychological stress as in *The Idiot*; it may indicate corruption of the soul as in the cases of two of Dostoevsky's epileptics, Smerdyakov and Svidrigailov, or it may indicate a psychological disturbance as in the cases of Lisa in *The Brothers Karamazov* and Veltchaninov in *The Eternal Husband*. Undoubtedly, the physical linked to the mental condition gives greater power and greater logic to the characterizations. *Letters from the Underworld* begins with the protagonist's announcing: "I am ill, I am full of spleen and repellent" (p. 5).[25] Dostoevsky's Underground Man, reacting to his illness, finds life tedious and unpleasant. This is certainly logical, and explains his "spleen." But why does he necessarily have to repel other people? It is at this point that the transmission from the physical to the mental attitude occurs. And precisely here, Dostoevsky concentrates on the mental state of his protagonist, ignoring the catalyst of physical illness. The Underground Man expects to repel others and consequently behaves coldly and boorishly, thus structuring a cold or boorish reception by others. He completely departs from rational thinking when he becomes perturbed by being treated in the same crude way he treats others. His physical illness has justified a leap into an irrational world.

Dostoevsky uses the disturbed physical and psychological state of his protagonists for the purpose of attacking the blasé and hypocritical roles adopted by many people. He is the anatomist of a dreary and false society. He employs his irritable characters, who are unable to function satisfactorily within the humdrum society, as a weapon with which to attack that society. Dostoevsky avoids didacticism by his truthful rendering of the disturbed person, who lacks awareness of his own trapped role. The unreliable narrator, himself a victim, nevertheless highlights the sensitive areas of the human personality, and attempts to grapple with himself while struggling towards a worthier relationship with others.

However they strive, Dostoevsky's characters feel themselves victims surrounded by the hostile world, and they confess their fears passionately in the hope of liberating themselves. This feeling of anxiety, and even more than anxiety, physical and mental anguish, is found in nearly all of Dostoevsky's work, certainly in *The Possessed*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *Letters from the Underworld*, *Poor Folk*, *The Gambler*, and *The Double*; it is demonstrated particularly vividly in his short story, "The Landlady." The externalization of anxiety and fear in the face of an unknown menace often develops into extreme hostility towards others. Frequently in Dostoevsky's work, fear and hostility project a character toward a situation in which he will eventually be harmed or destroyed. Raskolnikov, in *Crime and Punishment*, is already anxious and hostile before he murders the old pawnbroker and her sister, thus beginning the chain of events that reacts against him; in *The Idiot*, Rogozhin, already antagonistic toward society, invites

25. For comparison with the Russian, see *Zapiski iz podpolya*, p. 401.

folly, as does the neurotic Underground Man. Dostoevsky's situations appear to stem inevitably from the nature of his characters, and they attain greater effectiveness as a result of this apparent dependence. He also carefully ties the development of his characters to their relationships in society and their acceptance by it. His characters long for love and appreciation, but are always rejected or ignored, and this disdainful treatment by others gives them terrible complexes.

Dostoevsky's characters fear absorption by stronger personalities. Although some of the characters in *The Idiot* regard Prince Myshkin with tremendous awe, others consider his honesty dangerous.

Dostoevsky's characters frequently use animal imagery in order to deflate their enemies. Dostoevsky also applies animal imagery directly to stimulate comparisons between instinctive human behavior and that of lower creatures. Ralph E. Matlaw, writing about *The Brothers Karamazov*, cites numerous references to spiders, insects, bugs, cockroaches, and reptiles in the novel:

> All the Karamazovs are sooner or later called insects or bugs, with much of the connotation of Mitja's "insect lust." Ivan, Mitja, Fedor Pavlovič, Katherina Ivanovna and Grušen'ka are affiliated with something reptilian, as a peculiarly loathsome form of human depravity. Mitja's and Fedor Pavlovič's sexual perversions and Ferapont's religious vagaries are heralded by the spider image. Fedor Pavlovič's threat to crush Mitja like a beetle, and Smerdjakov's fears of being similarly treated, find their culmination in Smerdjakov's cockroach infested room. The incessant rustle is an audible reminder that the insect imagery, the symbol of human corruption, now constantly accompanies the parricide.[26]

In *Letters from the Underworld*, Dostoevsky compares his hostile protagonist to an offended mouse who augments an insult through his own doubts and questions until finally an infested swamp of misunderstandings and malignant bitterness engulfs him:

> There, in its dirty, stinking underworld, our poor insulted, brow-beaten mouse will soon have immersed itself in a state of cold, malignant, perpetual rancour. (p. 14)[27]

The "mouse" serves as imagery to demonstrate the dehumanized, animalistic, mental and emotional state of the protagonist.

The close affiliation of Dostoevsky and Sarraute is exemplified by their use of physically ill or weak protagonists who are also mentally disturbed, neurotic, or at the very least, extremely sensitive. These protagonists, often untrustworthy narrators, or at least excessively sensitive viewers of the relationships between men in society, uncover the hypocritical masks men wear, and attempt to discover a truer view of life. However, a protagonist in conflict with himself often presents an exaggerated and disproportionate view of events. Unreliable narrators add ambiguity to the writings of Dostoevsky and Sarraute, and shift the problem of objective evaluation to the reader.

Unreliable as the narrators may be, they nevertheless are able to focus on negative or absurd aspects of society, such as the complexity of even elementary

26. Ralph E. Matlaw, *The Brothers Karamazov: Novelistic Technique* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1957), p. 30.

27. For the Russian text, see *Zapiski iz podpolya*, p. 408.

communication, which hampers recognition and love. Dostoevsky and Sarraute both point out society's responsibility for the distortion of personality. A man rejected by society, withdraws from it, suffers intensely, and sooner or later, makes awkward and frequently desperate attempts towards a rapprochement with society. These attempts at reconciliation with society often attain preposterous proportions and are best demonstrated in Sarraute's *Portrait of a Man Unknown* and Dostoevsky's *Letters from the Underworld.* The tragicomical results of the efforts of the alienated individual to conform stigmatize society.

Both Dostoevsky and Sarraute use the ill and excessively sensitive or neurotic person in approximately the same way. Both authors concentrate on understanding man's motivations and presenting a study of social behavior, and both are interested in the interrelationship of the physical and the mental. Dostoevsky's transposition of the two states gives his novels greater force, logic, and a feeling of symbolic prophecy. On the other hand, Sarraute has developed her tropistic theory of a physical reaction to every situation, which she carefully analyzes and categorizes in her novels.

Dostoevsky and Sarraute both give detailed descriptions of the neurotic person's self-consciousness, his fears, the way he ponders every gesture and every statement, his tendency to overemphasize an apparently trivial event, and his viewing almost everyone as an enemy. Both novelists also criticize the clichés that serve as masks of the truth. Sarraute's characters, fearful of revealing their weakness, cling to the most commonplace of clichés. Dostoevsky's characters occasionally break through the silent agreement among men to speak in courteous platitudes, and in great spasms of confession, they bare their souls and directly attack the false and hypocritical in society.

Although the characters of Dostoevsky and Sarraute strive to penetrate the anxious and hostile undertones in society, they also are victims of society and definitely feel that they are victims; in turn they react with anxiety and hostility even towards those who accept them. Their neurotic self-dislike projects to those around them, and their longing for acceptance and love can be achieved only on the most temporary basis, as they consider themselves unworthy, and are distrustful of others; they stand perpetually on a precipice. When Sarraute allows love to exist at all, as in *The Planetarium*, she permits only a tenuous, uncertain love, inundated by reservations, some expressed, and others repressed. In fact, *The Planetarium* traces the love-hate relation within a family, which is deliberately neutralized so that the family may continue to survive. Here she differs from Dostoevsky's violent delineation of love as heaven, purgatory, hell, or salvation. For both authors, love as an achieved, contented way of life is rare. The pursuit of love, seldom rewarded, is diverted to an acceptance of the most ordinary person as lover, just as when the daughter in Sarraute's *Portrait of a Man Unknown* selects an average, unimaginative middle-class man. In several of Dostoevsky's novels, *i.e.*, *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Crime and Punishment*, a penance must be served before love can be attained. Thus, the protagonist in *The Possessed* offers to go into exile in Switzerland with the two women he has wronged, first with Marya Timofeevna, who is mad and whom he married to test

his perverse attitude towards love, and later with Darya, whom he does not love. Only a few of Dostoevsky's characters realize love's potential; the majority are haunted by the tantalizing but unattainable dream of love.

Both Dostoevsky and Sarraute present vividly the neurotic person's fear of absorption by a stronger personality, and his consequent efforts to reduce other people to an opprobrious state, often by comparing them to lower animals. The neurotic individual also often dehumanizes himself in order to diminish his own vulnerability to attack, his logic being that no one would want to attack something less than human. Dostoevsky uses the same insect imagery to describe several persons, but tends to limit the image to one connotation; for instance, the beetle denotes corruption. On the other hand, Sarraute liberally distributes her animal comparisons, often to the same person and with changing connotations. The same animal imagery recurs in her various novels with the exception of the most recent, *Between Life and Death* and *Vous les entendez?* (not yet published in English) where animal imagery is almost entirely absent, and dehumanization is achieved through the glossing over of character identification. Because Dostoevsky's references generally have one connotation, and Sarraute's insect references are extensively and possibly inconsistently distributed, Dostoevsky's novels gain power through this technique, whereas Sarraute's novels tend to be weakened.

Sarraute uses animal imagery primarily as a representation of man's dehumanization whereas Dostoevsky employs similar imagery in order to emphasize man's depravity. Because depravity is more a human condition than the anonymity to which Sarraute relegates man, usually Dostoevsky, despite his understanding of man's failings, holds out some hope for redemption through love, as indicated in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. In this respect Dostoevsky reflects the nineteenth-century view, which still hoped for man's greatness despite an awareness of his frailty, and Sarraute the twentieth-century view, which more and more sees man as a plant or beast, or even an object, and grants him little, if any, human dignity.

The Dream Worlds of Sarraute and Dostoevsky

In an interpretation of reality as subjective and of man as lonely and neurotic, it seems natural that the novelist should employ techniques that might reveal the true, inner man. Hence the use of the dream world, which expresses the most personal of man's desires by virtue of its removal from the powers of intellectual rationalization.[28] However, cultural taboos apparently play a role in man's unconscious; and repression, evident even in dreams, often obtusely expresses the content of taboos in a fictionalized form in order to escape psychic censorship. It can be considered a part of dream logic that time and space are ignored, tran-

28. The ideas presented on the dream world in this paper are my synthesis mainly of Sigmund Freud's contributions as presented in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. This synthesis is not limited to Freud; it also includes ideas from other authors, several of whom are footnoted in this essay. Also important to my interpretation of the dream as used in fiction, are the novels of Dostoevsky and Sarraute, and the tracing of the dream's role in the novel.

scended, or merged, and that characters condense into one composite character or conversely, one personality ramifies into diverse characters.

The dream world comprises a world of illusions, including the actual thoughts of the sleeping individual, and also illusions that occur during the condition of semiwakefulness when susceptibility to fancy is heightened and images drift through the mind apparently without purpose. The day dream, the most deliberate of dreams, usually relates directly to wish fulfillment desires. The nightmare is a violent dream occurring during a deep sleep, and the hallucination takes place when the subject is awake and either perceives nonexistent objects, or fails to see authentic phenomena. The imagination can also fabricate illusions during the waking state, and if these rove far afield of the usual relation of things, they enter the world of fantasy. In this paper, a reference to the dream world includes the various forms of illusion fabricated by the mind either in its sleeping or wakened state, and a reference to dream logic refers to the pattern the dream takes of breaking up or adding to time and space, event and personality. Situations resembling illusions are called dreamlike even though they exist factually outside of the imagination.

Literature differs from the dream world in that it is carefully planned. However, as a work of imagination, literature can freely choose various techniques from the dream world. It can utilize the displaced incidents and the displaced time of the dream world to its own advantage, and accept or reject past precedent in literature, as well as scientific knowledge of dreams. The novelist may use the dream as the ancients did, to prophesy the future, or he may limit himself to character revelation through the dream. He also may freely extend the dream world into the waking world and merge the two if he wishes. He may use the dream merely as technique, extend it to the basic structure of his novel, or include it because the dream forms an integral part of life.

The novelist has the advantage over life in the flexibility with which he handles dreams. He can ignore space and chronological time just as the dream often does, and he can transpose this concept of displacement to his writing style to form a more flexible syntax, thus utilizing the imaginative approach of the dream as a resource in his own creative efforts.

The inclusion of dreams extends the scope of literature beyond external experience and allows it to penetrate man's personality in order to reveal his unconscious desires. Dreams recall that part of the past that has a valid, subjective connotation for the present. The interpretation of dreams provides the reader with a fascinating task, and further involves him in the suspense of the novel's development. Dreams introduce a variation of the concept of chronological time as they tend either to condense, extend, or juxtapose time in much the same way as they incorporate and divide personalities. The universality of dream content, including techniques or "dream logic" such as antithetical representation and actual substitution of individuals as a part of the dream's concealment of truth, demonstrates that the creation of fiction is an inherent part of man's nature. The creation

of myth actually begins in man's unconscious as he attempts to assimilate, repress, or control his experiences.[29]

The dream world conceived as a general category covers all dreams and illusions, fantasies and hallucinations. Nevertheless, a definite difference exists between the dream world used implicitly to express the imaginative projections of characters as Sarraute exploits it, and the dream presented as it occurs either in sleep or in hallucination as described explicitly by Dostoevsky.

Sarraute's implicit use of dream is evidenced by a protagonist's description of events that were impossible for him to have seen. These events can be considered the protagonist's dream projection of a particular moment, even though the author does not define this moment as a dream. As an example, in *Portrait of a Man Unknown*, Sarraute restricts her authorial omniscience by her presentation of a narrator who is also the protagonist. This protagonist must divulge certain things about the father and daughter on whom he is spying, and yet obviously, he cannot have been everywhere or have heard all the gossip. Consequently, certain scenes appear authentic although the protagonist has merely imagined or dreamed them, and has projected his imagination based on gossip and his own desire or whim, to piece the events together. For instance, his description of the neighboring women's interference in the upbringing of the young girl already resented by her father, and their constant reminders to the father of his duty, must have been a projection of the narrator's imagination as these things could not possibly be known in such detail by anyone but the participants. The same presentation of dream as fact occurs in the major incident of the novel when the protagonist-narrator, who was not there, describes the family quarrel over money. This incident achieves even greater momentum by the incestuous references used to describe the mutual hatred and distrust of the father and daughter. It is either the report of a protagonist who sees through walls, or of one who projects his own dream of the situation, a dream which of course, may be based on reports, gossip, and his own wishful thinking.

In *Martereau*, also, the nephew, who is the narrator-protagonist, describes a number of situations that can only be an extension of the things he already knows. He tells of a particularly private moment in the lives of his aunt and uncle, and a tête-à-tête between his aunt and Martereau in a tea shop. Granting the possibility of his seeing Martereau and his aunt having tea together, nevertheless he certainly could not have heard their conversation with all its nuances; however, his dream eagerly fills in the conversation.

The greatest scope for the protagonist's dream world is in the relationship between Martereau's wife and Martereau. Presented as reality, it projects the protagonist's inference of the limitations of Martereau's marriage, an inference partly based on judicial observation and partly based on the protagonist's desire to see

29. F. D. Reeve wrote that "literature is the meeting ground of the dream and actuality, is the reality and the possibilities as well" ["In the Stinking City: Dostoevskij's *Crime and Punishment*," *The Slavic and East European Journal*, New Series. 4:132].

Martereau as insignificant. This "dream" throws light on man's subjective development, but it is uncertain whether or not it relates to Martereau.

Nathalie Sarraute also uses myth and fairy tale as part of the dreamlike atmosphere, and enhances her technique by metaphorical use of eroticism to describe nonerotic incidents. The following quotation demonstrates both Sarraute's application of the fairy tale and of erotic metaphor to a scene imagined by the protagonist, one he could not possibly have witnessed, the argument over money between the father and his daughter in *Portrait of a Man Unknown*:

> Just as Alice in Wonderland, after she had drunk the contents of the magic vial, felt that she was changing form, shrinking, then growing taller, it seemed to them that their outlines were breaking up, stretching in every direction, their carapaces and armors seemed to be cracking on every side, they were naked, without protection, they were slipping, clasped to each other, they were going down as into the bottom of a well. (p. 176)

Sarraute uses another interesting technique when she invests her characters with a dreamlike, condensed quality, thereby abstracting their individuality, and creating a kind of nebulous, composite personality. For instance, she refers to all of the feminine neighbors in *Portrait of a Man Unknown* as "they" and extends this impersonal reference to the outside world in her novels. "They" are the normal people who use platitudes and try to reduce the world to a simplistic construct.

In all of her novels, but particularly in *The Golden Fruits*, *Between Life and Death*, and *Vous les entendez?* (*Do You Hear Them?*) Sarraute so decreases personal identity and combines personalities that the reader only vaguely perceives a speaker, and tends to fuse the various personalities into one or two characters, who also are nebulous. This composite personality derives from dream logic,[30] and forms a centrifugal part of Sarraute's novelistic technique. Particularly, in *Between Life and Death*, the main emphasis is on this merging of personality. From the characters drawn so vaguely and from the blurred conversations, it appears that Sarraute wishes to demonstrate the nebulous quality of man's life.

Dostoevsky uses the dream on a vast scale, both implicitly and explicitly. He implies at times that life has a hazy and even nightmarish quality, but at other times, he uses dreams in a specific way, as a novelistic technique. As well as for exposition and definition, Dostoevsky uses dreams in order to penetrate the recesses of the unconscious mind and also to prophesy future events. In general, Dostoevsky's use of dream and dream technique gives the impression that the power of unconscious forces actually controls human destiny, and that dreams can foreshadow events.

There is tremendous variation in Dostoevsky's use of dream technique. For example, in *Poor Folk*, the dream that the protagonist has of the beautiful soul of his untouchable heroine makes life worthwhile to him. His dream, actually far from the truth, nevertheless effectively sustains his hope and belief in the world. However, in *White Nights*, the protagonist has been living in a dream world, and

30. Freud, in referring to his theory of condensation of dreams, wrote that "we perceive, as peculiarities of the condensing process, a selection of those elements which occur several times over in the dream-content, the formation of new unities (composite persons, mixed images)." *The Interpretation of Dreams*, p. 259.

when an event in the outside world touches him and then suddenly evanesces, reality becomes dreamlike, and he cannot escape to any other kind of existence but the dream. In *Uncle's Dream*, the rich, old uncle has promised to marry a young girl, but his crafty nephew convinces him that his proposal of marriage was just a dream. In this case, the simulated dream forms an integral part of the plot. In *The Gambler*, two totally unexpected and seemingly miraculous events, the narrator's winning of both 100,000 gulden and Paulina on the same night has a feverish, dreamlike tone due to the unexpectedness of either possibility, and his tragedy consists of his failing to interpret the actuality as a dream; thus he is stunned when Paulina leaves him, and certain that he can make another fortune if he continues to gamble; following his false interpretation, he proceeds to ruin himself. The Underground Man, conversely, flees from the external world to his inner world of dreams,[31] and cannot cope with love when it is in reality offered to him.

Dostoevsky uses the dream, as Temira Pachmuss indicates, "to cast light on the spiritual essence of his heroes, their inner life, and their subconscious."[32] Golyadkin's dream in *The Double* of a double who has all the social refinements that he lacks, exposes his longing to belong, to transcend himself. When the double becomes a reality, another Golyadkin accepted and praised by everyone, but then proceeds to betray the original Golyadkin who has dreamed him into existence, the tragedy of the original Golyadkin becomes even more apparent. He has power only to dream, and is otherwise completely ineffectual.

In novel after novel of Dostoevsky, an imaginary world is created through the agency of visionary and hallucinatory moments. This is true of *The Double*, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Possessed*, *The Eternal Husband*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and also Dostoevsky's short story, "Dream of a Strange Man"; all contain a multitude of dreamlike moments that seem to transcend reality.[33] The numerous dreams and nightmares of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* confuse his judgment about dream and reality; for instance, when he awakens after a nightmare and sees Svidrigailov seated by his bed, Raskolnikov thinks that Svidrigailov is part of his dream.[34] One of the most fantastic scenes in *The Idiot* describes Rogozhin's appearance before Hippolyte in a night-

31. Frederick J. Hoffman, in describing Dostoevsky's "undergroundling," meaning not only the Underground Man, but numerous Dostoevskian characters, stated that "the undergroundling's reason is distasteful to him for it unceasingly points to the futility of his wishes. Hence, he fights the reason and prefers to it the lethe of dreams and wish-fulfillments." *Freudianism and the Literary Mind* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1945), p. 320.

32. Temira Pachmuss, "The Technique of Dream-Logic in the Works of Dostoevskij," *The Slavic and East European Journal*, New Series, 4:220.

33. Temira Pachmuss commented on Dostoevsky's purpose in using dreams: "The author focuses his attention on the innermost recesses of man's subconscious and by means of his dreamlogic technique shows the inner reality of man, and the fundamental incongruity between objective reality and man's subjective experience." *Ibid.*, p. 239.

34. Donald Fanger wrote of *Crime and Punishment* that "this whole novel is like a bad dream." *Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism: A Study of Dostoevsky in Relation to Balzac, Dickens and Gogol* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 206.

mare. When Hippolyte finds the door open the next morning, he suspects that he had not actually been dreaming. *The Idiot*, as well as *Crime and Punishment*, has a dreamlike quality throughout.[35] Many scenes in *The Possessed* are not actually dream scenes, although they have a dreamlike quality, as in Stavrogin's nocturnal visits to Shatov and Kirilov, and his meeting with the convict, Fedka, who offers to murder Stavrogin's wife, and after this, his visit with his wife, who has actually dreamed that Stavrogin had threatened to kill her.

It would appear that Dostoevsky juxtaposes dream and reality in *The Eternal Husband* mostly for dramatic effect. Veltchaninov notices that someone is following him. He returns home and goes to sleep. Awakened from an obscure, tormenting dream by his door bell, he opens the door, but seeing no one, thinks the sound part of his dream, and then Pavel Trusotsky suddenly appears. Later in the novel, Veltchaninov awakens from a dream to find Trusotsky about to murder him with a knife. A terrifying reality dissolves the dream, and Veltchaninov fights for his life. In both cases the dream has added suspense, and has prepared the reader for the subsequent fantastic events.

The splitting of character as if in a dream can be seen in the Karamazov brothers and their father; continually drawn together as if composing one character, they pull apart at definitive moments in the novel, and establish their individual identities. The major dream, or rather, hallucination, in *The Brothers Karamazov* is that of Ivan and his demon, or double. The quarrel between these two demonstrates Ivan's self-conflict and also his approaching madness.[36] This division of a character, that is of Ivan, into two opposing forces, is the opposite of the extension of character in *The Double* when Golyadkin I creates a Golyadkin II who participates in society separately from Golyadkin I. Ivan's double is attached to him, and can be seen by him alone. Rather than the projection of wish fulfillment dreams to the point of absurdity as in *The Double*, Ivan's double represents the duality of man's nature and the infinite agony of that duality.

In "The Dream of a Strange Man," the protagonist's dream view of a harmonious existence plays a deciding role in his life, turning him away from despair and suicide and towards love of his fellow man. However, he must have had an inner love of life even before the dream, because as he himself says:

> It would seem that dreams are generated not by the intellect but by desires, not by the brain but by the heart.[37]

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35. Temira Pachmuss discussed the dreamlike nature of *The Idiot*: "The characters are seldom surprised by any unexpected event, for they appear to have a presentiment of all these happenings. . . . Nastasja Filippovna, Rogožin and Prince Myškin all have a foreboding that Nastasja Filippovna will be murdered by Rogožin long before it actually happens. In a similar way, Prince Myškin knows that Rogožin contemplates murdering him." Pachmuss, "The Technique of Dream-Logic in the Works of Dostoevskij," p. 233.

36. Speaking of Dostoevsky's use of dream, Janko Lavrin wrote: "Long before Freud's and Jung's discoveries, Dostoevsky endeavored to arrive at the fundamental nature of dreams and to show their significance in a new light as symbolic projections of our unconscious into our conscious Ego." *Dostoevsky and his Creation: A Psycho-Critical Study* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1920), p. 46.

37. Fedor Dostoevsky, "Dream of a Strange Man," in *Diary of a Writer*, 2, trans. Boris Brasol (London: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1949), p. 678.

If we can assume that the protagonist's belief is also Dostoevsky's view, this substantiates Dostoevsky's attachment to the nonrational, and also his extension of man's subjective world to the dream world understood as true reality evoked by the emotions instead of by mental processes.

Sarraute's use of the dream as a technique blends her characters into one another as they might in a dream, but their activity remains minimal, their conversation banal, and their existence confined to the surface. Sarraute's attempt to infer the unconscious from the surface banality of a group melting to form one singular, superficial nonentity might have had only dubious success if it were not for one character who continually resists this process, and tries to communicate with another vague form who may lack all significance except for his being another reader of the same books, as in *The Golden Fruits.* On the other hand, Dostoevsky's generally well-defined characters evoke a powerful, dreamlike mood. Dostoevsky's emphasis on darkness, violent passion, illness, and gothic drama, produces an effect of terrifying, nightmarish unreality. Although Dostoevsky occasionally utilizes dreams, visions, nightmares, and hallucinations almost as if they were real, such as in Svidrigailov's nightmare just before his suicide in *Crime and Punishment,* nevertheless the greatest portion of his dream world adds mood and insight into total or cosmic reality, predicts the future, and attains a transcendence beyond reality. Thus, for Dostoevsky, the dream amplifies reality by penetrating the inner recesses of the heart. Dostoevsky shows that the dream forms an important part of life, and frequently it has more inherent value than reality itself. Just as the dream world adds scope to reality, conversely, at times Dostoevsky's external world resembles a dream.

For Dostoevsky, the dream also provides structural assistance, although not for the merging of characters, but rather as a discerning of character or a motivating force for activity, or as an intrinsic part of the plot, as in "Dream of a Strange Man" and *Uncle's Dream.*

Sarraute's real world, on the contrary, far from dreamlike in nature, is specific and detailed. Her use of dream technique, however, projects events that are uncertain or perhaps nonexistent except in the protagonist's imagination, into the objective world. This kind of daydreaming assumes a positive form in Sarraute's novels, and plays a definitive role in composing her original technique. Although Sarraute remains unconcerned with the dream *per se,* and perhaps unaware of dream logic, she nevertheless uses its nebulous qualities as a technique by merging personalities so that they lose almost all individual identity. This is particularly evident in *The Golden Fruits* and *Between Life and Death.* Although Sarraute views inner reality as the reality, she does not directly postulate the dream as representing inner reality. However, for Dostoevsky, the dream represents reality to the extent that the two worlds merge.

Myth and Fairy Tale

Man has evoked myth from his dream world of wishful thinking. I use the term "myth" as a story that represents an intuition of unconscious reality, that is, that reality which is basic to the human being, but which is not immediately

seen[38] The myth, by virtue of its story, touches on this unseen reality and exposes it, but it does so subtly rather than in open discussion. Myth deals with culturally or personally repressed material, and even protects this material from direct exposure by presenting archetypes that serve as refractive agents in order to evoke the deeper impulses of the psyche. As a myth evolves through the centuries, it becomes more dynamic and increases its symbolic association, becoming an even more graphic representation of subjective reality.

Myth, then, is a technique that would obviously interest two writers like Dostoevsky and Sarraute in their exploration of subjective reality. A discussion of the way in which these two authors use myth and fantasy should clarify their distinctive features for it is in the use of myth and fairy tale, and particularly in Dostoevsky's association with biblical myth as contrasted with Sarraute's magical fantasy of the fairy tale that the two authors diverge.

Due to the origin of myths in the repression of tabooed desires, they frequently refer to forbidden, primarily incestuous, sexual relationships, and also to the resulting expression of hostility, which may lead to murder of either the maternal or paternal figure, whoever stands in the way of the incestuous desire. Because they deal with tabooed subjects such as incest and murder, myths usually disguise the material by splitting or doubling traits of the characters and by condensing or enlarging a given action in much the same way as dreams do. In myths, all guilty actions may be identified with one character, just as all the praiseworthy actions may be assigned to another, thus creating archetypes.

Fairy tales are similar in kind to myths, but they can be differentiated in that they employ more magic and fantasy, and often present their topics, at least apparently, in a lighter vein. Fairy tales also intuit the unconscious mind. Fairy tales derive from both life and myth and the need or desire to embellish man's existence by adding magical qualities. These qualities often demonstrate man's weakness and ineffectiveness. The fairy world has greater power than man and can personify moral principals such as good and evil and at times seems to dare men to greater achievement. However, at the same time, fairy tales usually function as either delightful distraction or moralistic education for children.

Insofar as fairy tales enter the adult world, they assume a more sophisticated nature and are more closely related to myths, and often in fiction, certainly in the case of Nathalie Sarraute, fairy tales are used to shed light on the unknown, which is the basic function of myths. Fairy tales tend to recapture a special, sly, elfish quality and also the elements of terror related to youthful fears of the unknown. As used in modern post-Freudian literature, the fairy tale attempts to incorporate the child's world into the adult experience. I believe this element can be seen in Sarraute's novels.

The epochs in which Dostoevsky and Sarraute lived separate them to some extent in relation to myth and fairy tale. Dostoevsky wrote during a period when religious attitudes strongly influenced inner man. Sarraute, who can be considered

38. My interpretation of myth, which, however, basically coincides with the views of Ignaz Goldziher, Sigmund Freud, and Otto Rank. In general, throughout this essay, except where footnoted, the statements represent my views.

avant garde in her own era, is unconcerned with religion's effect on man's subjective nature and gives full play only to the early fictional experiences that invest life with magical personalities and explanations.

Literature, of course, creates new myths and symbols. However, because the basic taboos still exist, novelists can only add to and vary the rich mythic-symbolic associations already in existence, hoping that the more contemporary associations will provide a greater understanding of man's unconscious mind.

In the novels of Nathalie Sarraute, myth and fairy tale emerge in several ways. The structure of myth is contrasted not only with the overall structure of the novel, but also functions in a counterpoint relationship with modern life, thus enriching the novel.

The inherent reality of the myth also reveals disguised incestuous desires and repressed hostilities. When myth projects incestuous taboos in Sarraute's three novels involving specific characters, *Portrait of a Man Unknown*, *Martereau*, and *The Planetarium*, it deals with latent desires never overtly expressed. Sometimes they are suggested as in *Portrait of a Man Unknown* when the suspicious, passive protagonist, bitterly hostile towards the woman whom he cannot admit he desires, conceives of an incestuous, love-hate relationship between the woman and her father, and constantly spies on them in an effort to substantiate his suspicions; this is related by Sarraute to Mary Bolkonsky and her father in *War and Peace*.[39]

In *Martereau*, incest and hostility extend to include both father and mother substitute figures. The nephew's Oedipal feelings for his aunt directly describe his attachment to and also his awe of his aunt's magical powers; she is "the little far-away princess . . . the good fairy" (p. 229) who has merely to wave her magic wand if she wishes to change the emotional atmosphere. She is a *feme fatale*, who attracts and devours men. Her husband is also her slave, and even the stable, solid Martereau comes under her spell.

In *The Planetarium*, Alain's fascination for the older woman-author, Germaine Lemaire, exemplifies another Oedipal situation. This is somewhat justified by Alain's history; his aunt had raised him with a good deal of pampering, and continues her substitute mother role. Germaine also represents a desirable woman, an intellectual goddess. Alain goes to Germaine after he quarrels with his wife, Giselle, whom he has begun to identify with his hated mother-in-law. Eventually, however, his mother-in-law and wife do corrupt him and persuade him to force his aunt into giving Alain and Giselle her large apartment. At the end of the novel, Alain has succeeded in getting his aunt's apartment, and he also decides that he is no longer so impressed by Germaine. Although the Oedipal relationship begins to dissolve as Alain is enticed by daily normality, there remains a faint

39. Sarraute introduces literature and history as a part of mythical association and compares the father-daughter relationship of *Portrait of a Man Unknown* to Tolstoy's characters, Prince Bolkonsky and his daughter in *War and Peace*, and further compares the Bolkonsky relationship with Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver* (p. 66). This analogy assumes that Bolkonsky was helpless against the attack of love just as Gulliver was helpless when attacked by the Lilliputians. The Virgin Mary is added as another force tying the Prince to his daughter.

judgment of Alain—that he has betrayed his aunt, Germaine, and himself as well, and there is also an ambiguous hint that the mythical relationship had greater validity than the banal, normal one.

Germaine's evolution is converse to that of Alain. Her early self-image is that of an ogress because of the power of her creativity. However, the conclusion to Germaine's development is an attainment of warmth and humanity, these positive qualities triumphing over Germaine, the ogress. Whereas Alain's loss of mythic association appears negative, paradoxically, Germaine's mythic loss is positive.

Sarraute's use of ogre images includes men as well as women. In *Martereau*, an allusion is made to Martereau's teeth: "his ogre's teeth are shining" (p. 236). In *Portrait of a Man Unknown*, the father denies that he is an ogre who has prevented suitors from calling on his daughter.

The clue to another mythical reference in Sarraute's novels is the word, "searching," particularly in *Martereau*, where the nephew, presented as a searcher, a quester, a Telemachus voyaging into the uncharted realms of the mind and soul, fearfully and hesitatingly searches for a father figure whom he can respect.

Among primitive tribes, and later in myth, the group accomplishes its identification with the father by devouring him. This act of sanctification allays the guilt of individuals because the entire group participates in the crime. In *Martereau*, the destruction of the father image is figurative, Martereau representing the mythical father-king whom the entire family attempts to destroy.

The fairy tale at times expresses cultural taboos as myths do, but it tends to concentrate on magical means of wish fulfillment. In the fairy tale, the forces of good overwhelm those of evil. Sarraute is fond of fairy tale, dreamlike comparisons, and also of the use of magic, such as the magic wand that can subdue opponents. This magic wand appears in Sarraute's earliest work, *Tropisms* and recurs in *Martereau*, where Madame Récamier can control the emotional situation by merely waving her magic wand. Just as the magic wand creates a new world of fantasy, magic words evoke a delightful atmosphere far removed from everyday banality. *Portrait of a Man Unknown* describes the effect of magic words:

> The world stretched out before me like the fields in fairy tales on which, as a result of a few magic words, the traveler sees fine linen covered with delicious viands spread out before him on glistening grass, beside a spring, or along the banks of a stream. (p. 87)

Once we have magic wands and magic words, it is only natural that good fairies and bad fairies should follow. Sarraute sometimes refers to specific fairy tales as she does in *The Planetarium*, in her comparison of Alain and Giselle to Prince Charming and the Sleeping Beauty:

> Their beloved daughter and her Prince Charming, heir of a powerful house. (p. 105)

Giselle, recalling her wedding to Alain (Prince Charming), comments:

> The baleful fairies themselves stopped talking, while they stood there like that, facing the others, leaning toward each other, looking into each other's eyes. (p. 68)

Later, however, a furious and disillusioned Giselle changes her mind:

> She and Alain are a fraud. Imitation, sham, pictures supposed to represent happiness, and there's something on the back . . . the old witches' laughter. (p. 76)

Sarraute demonstrates her awareness of the substitution of myth and fantasy for hostility in the following passage from *Portrait of a Man Unknown* as the protagonist describes his feelings about the woman:

> I should have liked to see her flying over the chimney stacks, emitting piercing shrieks, pedaling the air with her crooked legs, her black cape flying in the breeze, like the witches in fairy tales. Unfortunately, however, we were not in a fairy tale. I had to curb the feeling of disgust and hatred that came over me. (p. 55)

Dostoevsky uses myth as a convenient device to portray repressed desires and hostilities. The incest is subtle in *The Brothers Karamazov*, and is seen primarily in Dmitri's passion for Grushenka who may be his stepmother; more explicit in the short, "The Little Hero," which tells of the love of an eleven-year-old boy for a married woman, and in *Netochka Nesvanova*, which describes the passion of a young girl for her stepfather.

Dostoevsky's chief ogres, who can also be equated with the devil, are the Prince in *Despised and Rejected*, the old man in his short story, "The Landlady," and Pierre Verkhovensky in *The Possessed*. These men are destructive and cruel to a degree unusual in most of Dostoevsky's writing, in that he usually finds a redeeming feature in even his most wicked characters, as for instance Fedor Karamazov, and Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment*. Similarly, his destructive, temperamental female characters such as Katerina in *The Brothers Karamazov* and Nastasya in *The Idiot* establish their humanity through suffering. The Prince, the old man, and Verkhovensky, however, are utterly diabolical and ruthlessly intelligent; they have a sense of humor that only enhances their diabolism. These satanic characters, determined to win their way at all costs, utilize the weakness of others to their own advantage.

A number of Dostoevsky's characters are questers after the truth and the meaning of life. Alyosha Karamazov and also Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot* are the most saintly questers, whereas Stavrogin in *The Possessed*, a diabolical experimenter, strives to arrive at truth by testing all the extremes.

Dostoevsky is concerned with the father-son relationship, one of the most common mythical themes that treats of the constant rivalry between the son and his father, or with a substitute father figure who may be a tyrant. As a reaction to this rivalry, the son may become a social reformer, ridding the earth of tyrants and monsters, who function as substitutes for the father. Such were the great mythical social reformers as Heracles, Perseus, Theseus, Bellerophon, and Oedipus. In Dostoevsky's novels, however, two totally different types of reformers are found; on the one hand, the vindictive Pierre Verkhovensky of *The Possessed*, and on the other hand, the humanist, Alyosha Karamazov. Both these characters can be considered in opposition to their fathers, with the opposition an integral part of their development as reformers; however, they take opposite directions, and there is no resemblance in their character development.

Each of Fedor Karamazov's sons hates him, with the possible exception of Alyosha, and each is in a sense, guilty of parricide, or at least guilty of desiring their father's death. However, the murder of Fedor Karamazov lacks the ritualistic quality of the murder of Shatov in *The Possessed.* Verkhovensky plans Shatov's murder by the revolutionary group that Shatov has left, in order to eliminate the dissenter and at the same time to unify the group under his domination through their common guilt for the murder. However, once the murder is done, mythic parallels crumble, and the murder proves to have been a disaster, which anticipates the dissolution of Verkhovensky's organization.

Dostoevsky approaches the magical world of the fairy tale in his mythic references to the problem of good and evil. That the sheer power of good can overcome evil is demonstrated throughout *The Brothers Karamazov*; *i.e.*, Zossima persuades a murderer to confess his crime. Both Grushenka in *The Brothers Karamazov* and Sonya in *Crime and Punishment* are redeemed through love and act as regenerative forces; and the virginal figure of Dounia in *Crime and Punishment* defeats the devil personified by Svidrigailov.

The devil, as an impersonation of evil, comprises a mythic subject, which intrigues Dostoevsky. Pierre Verkhovensky in *The Possessed* and the Prince in *Despised and Rejected* are human forms of the Devil. The Prince, whose motives remain consistent—he wants money and power—is the most diabolic, as he destroys the romance of Natasha and his son in order to marry his son to a wealthy girl. Verkhovensky, at least, has some social ideas that he wishes to implement, but both his ideas and his implementation are diabolical. His use of people to serve his purposes follows the Devil's beguiling ways. Any path that assures him of success is justified regardless of whether it leads to the downfall of others; in fact, the downfall of others seems to add to his enjoyment. Svidrigailov in *Crime and Punishment* represents devilish evil, and yet he has some conscience.

In contrast, Dostoevsky writes of a number of angelic souls, even though some of them are fallen angels. Sonya, the prostitute in *Crime and Punishment*, never relinquishes her faith and essential goodness and is ready to sacrifice everything for a friend. An anonymous angel has the protagonist released from jail in *The Gambler.* Alyosha Karamazov spends his time rushing about doing services for people. Dmitri, on sending Alyosha as a messenger to his father and to Katerina, tells him "I might have sent anyone, but I wanted to send an angel" (p. 103). However, in spite of the good angels such as Alyosha and Prince Myshkin, evil usually triumphs.

Literary references abound in Dostoevsky's novels. Three authors who immediately come to mind are Dante, Schiller, and Shakespeare. Particularly *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky's novel about parricide, invites an almost inevitable reference to Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* Ivan Karamazov is the theorist who cannot act, and therefore, the closest character to Hamlet. Eventually his hostility leads to his father's death, and although he has not murdered him, he feels that the guilt is his.

Both Sarraute and Dostoevsky use myth, Sarraute implicitly and Dostoevsky both implicitly and explicitly, in order to illustrate ideas and to compare char-

acters and situations to those in the past. Dostoevsky's use of myth is bold whereas Sarraute's is subtle, veiling the association between story and myth.

Sarraute is more concerned than Dostoevsky with incestuous or potentially incestuous relationships handled in a mythical way. A Freudian critic would assume that Sarraute illustrates a latent Oedipal relationship in *Martereau* and *The Planetarium*; a suspected Elektra, father-daughter relationship in *Portrait of a Man Unknown*; and latent homosexuality in *Martereau*. Although Dostoevsky touches on the topic of incest several times with great frankness, he emphasizes heterosexual passion, which he elevates to Godlike status.

Whereas Sarraute uses ogre-ogress imagery in a threatening way, Dostoevsky incarnates the devil as evil in some of his characters. Dostoevsky acknowledges evil as an actual force, but Sarraute implies evil as an undefined menace lurking in the background.

Both Sarraute and Dostoevsky have characters who quest; the nephew in *Martereau* tries to penetrate the mind and men's motivations in a search for truth and stability, but his scope is extremely limited in comparison to the quest of Alyosha Karamazov, or Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*, who search for beauty and truth in a cosmic sense, and limited in comparison to Stavrogin's tragic quest in *The Possessed* to know all there is to know in life.[40]

There is an absence of religious references in Sarraute; for her the fairy tale creates a magical world in contrast to the banal world. This is more original, but perhaps lacks the strength that Dostoevsky gains from Christian themes with their greater emotional connotations. In Dostoevsky, the possibility of redemption seems real to the reader whereas the fairy tale fantasy of Sarraute does not suggest more than comparison or wishful thinking.

The mythical destruction of the father is represented by Sarraute in *Martereau*. In Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, the father is killed, and in *The Possessed*, this mythical theme recurs with Shatov's ritualistic murder. Shatov's wife has returned shortly before the murder and bears Stavrogin's child, whom Shatov unhesitatingly decides to adopt, thus accepting his father role. The destruction of the father in both of Dostoevsky's novels is physical, whereas in *Martereau* the destruction is psychological, aiming at destroying Martereau's reputation and self-confidence. This psychological destruction is also accomplished by the group, in this case the family, each proceeding in his own way.

Both Sarraute and Dostoevsky use literary references as part of the context of their novels and also for mythic purposes, as for instance Sarraute's use of the Bolkonsky father-daughter relationship in *War and Peace* as a mythic literary point of comparison with her novel, *Portrait of a Man Unknown*, and Dostoevsky's reference to *Hamlet*, also as a basis for comparison with *The Brothers Karamazov*.

The similarity between Sarraute and Dostoevsky in their use of myth is not an exact one, rather it is parallel. Where Dostoevsky is concrete and bold, Sarraute

40. In the novels of Sarraute and Dostoevsky the character who searches for the truth is playing the same role as the writer. This is, in a sense, sanctifying the role of the writer, giving him the highest function of all, or at least turning him into a philosopher-artist.

is indefinite and handles her writing more delicately. What is often explicit in Dostoevsky is implicit in Sarraute. The greatest variation is Sarraute's seeming adaptation of Dostoevsky's devil-angel figures to an ogre-ogress and good fairy-sorcerer construct. In this, Sarraute quite clearly avoids giving Christian or religious interpretations, but at the same time attempts to deal with good and evil by using fantasy.

Conclusions

In my exploration of the novels of Dostoevsky and Sarraute, I have been concerned with their basic concepts of reality, their character portrayal, and their use of dream and myth as novelistic techniques. My approach to these authors stems from the assumption that an author's concept of reality is a determinant of his portrayal of character and technique. This is not a return to Sainte-Beuve's biographical approach, as I have ascertained the writer's concept of reality from his own statements and works. I believe that I have found a correlation in the author's concept of the world and his works. This hypothesis appears to have validity, at least in regard to the works of Sarraute and Dostoevsky, and perhaps deserves further exploration in regard to other authors.

Because both Sarraute and Dostoevsky distrust objective reality and consider the only valid reality a subjective, personal one, they attempt to expose the boredom of a purely exterior world in which banal platitudes are repeated indifferently. Although Sarraute's neurotic characters try to break through the wall of indifference and establish a real contact with others, they cannot succeed in this, and eventually return to their commonplace, dull existence. Dostoevsky, on the contrary, allows for an extension of his concept of reality to include a future where men will wish to express themselves and share thoughts and feelings with their fellow man.

In an approach to reality as subjective, it seems only natural that Sarraute and Dostoevsky should have characters who are full of inner torment, caught in conflicting, ambiguous relations with others. They describe persons torn by ambivalent emotions of love and hate on both the erotic and social levels of life. Their characters are victims and at the same time oppressors; when given an opportunity, they vent their hostility on others. Dostoevsky and Sarraute diverge in their presentation of character in that Dostoevsky's characters are usually clear and distinct, whereas Sarraute tends to merge personalities and identities, forming one or a few individuals from a larger group in order to show the similarity of all men.

Both Sarraute and Dostoevsky frequently employ contradiction, ambiguity, and ambivalence, viewing man as a battleground of ideas and emotions in his struggle for identity. Intrigued by the person who suffers intensely because of his introverted personality, they present him as an example of general paradox and contradiction, as a figure who mirrors the weakness of society and the complexity of life. Whereas Dostoevsky at times suggests erotic situations, Sarraute's use of eroticism is far more ambiguous. The reader is never quite certain whether Sarraute is suggesting actual erotic associations and relationships or whether her use

of eroticism is merely linguistic, a metaphorical device to extend the general tone of ambiguity in her novels.

Dostoevsky and Sarraute's exploration of man's lonely state relates to their concept of reality as subjective. This, of course, also reflects their concept of society as so hypocritical that an honest man has no choice but to retreat from it into a solitary life. Nevertheless, because society can more easily ostracize one man than one man can ignore society, eventually their lonely protagonists attempt a reconciliation with society. The process of retreat and also of effort to re-enter a hostile world affords Sarraute and Dostoevsky a means of both personal and social analysis. They show that the lonely man will go to any extreme in order to establish a relationship with others. However, already having isolated himself, he can only communicate superficially. Although his isolation is unrewarding, he has become committed to a perpetual state of loneliness, a state leading frequently into neurosis as well as into physical illness. Many of Dostoevsky's and all of Sarraute's protagonists are neurotic, and a number of Dostoevsky's characters are physically ill as well, while one of Sarraute's protagonists, the nephew in *Martereau*, is also ill. Both Dostoevsky and Sarraute recognize the close relationship of the physical and emotional. Certainly Nathalie Sarraute's point of departure, her tropistic theory that minute physical reactions accompany every emotional response, clearly shows the importance that she attaches to the association of the two states, whereas Dostoevsky demonstrates his awareness by combining the physical and the mental repeatedly in his works.

Sarraute and Dostoevsky use the neurotic much as they use the lonely person, in order to criticize society. However, the neurotic's penchant for exaggeration and distortion makes him an unreliable narrator. This places the burden of judgment on the reader who must weave his way through ambiguity to find the truth.

Dostoevsky and Sarraute's anxiety-ridden characters frequently reduce either themselves or others to an animalistic state. Through this process of dehumanization, they hope to retain their own sense of identity and to avoid absorption by others. They also demonstrate their fear and hostility towards other people, and by so doing, seem to substantiate the general conclusion of Dostoevsky and Sarraute that fearful people, the result of an ill society, continually recreate society in their own image.

Both authors distort love. Sarraute reduces love to the banal, or presents it deceptively through metaphor. Dostoevsky's love-hate relationships often doom love, permitting its existence only if cleansed by sacrifice and penance as exemplified in the conclusions of *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*.

The major differentiation between the two authors in their estimation of character is that Dostoevsky views men as depraved individuals whereas Sarraute considers men as collective nonentities. Consequently, Dostoevsky feels that there is a possibility for regeneration, whereas Sarraute is completely pessimistic.

In their dream world technique, Sarraute and Dostoevsky appear to diverge. Sarraute uses dream or imaginative sequences as if they had really occurred, presenting them as fact, even though, as in the cases of *Portrait of a Man Unknown* and *Martereau* with their first-person narrators, these situations cannot have been

known to the narrators and must be projections of the imagination, that is, dreams. Sarraute also condenses her characters as the dream does, merging their individuality into a composite personality, which then represents an entire group. This fusion of character is a basic quality in Sarraute's writing. Dostoevsky also applies dream technique in the body of some of his novels, fusing and splitting characters at will. However, he does not merge his people into one "they" as Sarraute does. This technique can be considered an original contribution of Sarraute to the novel.

The dream worlds of Sarraute and Dostoevsky differ in that Sarraute's dreams resemble reality, and Dostoevsky's reality often resembles the flamboyance of dreams. Whereas Sarraute's use of dream technique fuses her characters, Dostoevsky uses the dream to distinguish more clearly his characters. Sarraute never seems to assert distinctly that her daydreams definitely comprise the inner reality, even though this may be assumed by the reader. On the other hand, the dream in Dostoevsky's world merges with reality and tends to coalesce the two worlds.

A number of mythic associations found in the novels of Dostoevsky and Sarraute give their work a greater depth, explore the inner reality, and incidentally add greater scope to a comparison of their work. These myths deal with repressed desires, such as incest and homosexuality, and the wish to destroy the father image; moral constructs, such as good versus evil, the angel opposed to the devil, good fairies and bad fairies; and thoughts and dreams projected through myth, as in the expression of doubt and in the various quests. Although Sarraute and Dostoevsky differ in their use of myths, each includes these three aspects of myth. Both also use literary references and literature as myth.

Although Sarraute's novels reflect concepts found in Dostoevsky's work, they vary from his writing primarily because they were written in different centuries. Sarraute, writing in the post Freudian, Post Existential-Absurdist twentieth century period of which Dostoevsky can be considered a precursor, has focused her attention on a major aspect of Dostoevsky's work. She has concentrated on alienated man living in a hostile society. The novels of Dostoevsky and Nathalie Sarraute concur in this common study. It is my hope that the simultaneous discussion of the works of Nathalie Sarraute and Fedor Dostoevsky has further clarified the theme of alienated man in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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APPENDIX

Russian words and names cause some difficulty when Cyrillic is changed into the Latin alphabet. As I have used the Latin alphabet for titles, authors, and the names of characters, I wish to indicate that generally I have used the transliteration adopted by *The Slavic and East European Journal* with the following exceptions: instead of spelling Dostoevsky as "Dostoevskij" I end the name with a "y" except where quoting authors who spelled his name differently. Despite the numerous spellings of Dostoevsky's name, I think it will be clear enough and will not warrant an identification each time. Where *The Slavic and East European Journal* uses a "j" for a "y" sound, I use a "y." They use the Russian mark (˘) over the "c" and "s" and "z" in order to indicate that they are pronounced as if followed by an "h." I simply omit the mark and add the "h," *i.e.*, I write "Rogozhin" instead of the *Journal's* "Rogožin." Also, I have eliminated the pause marks. Instead of the *Journal's* "Grušen'ka," I have written what I believe is clearer and just as accurate, "Grushenka." Instead of Cyrillic for direct quotations, I have used an English translation in order to clarify the passage for the reader.

Nathalie Sarraute

Following is a list of all the works of Nathalie Sarraute published in French, with date of publication and publisher for each edition:

Brief texts

Tropismes (Written in 1932)
1939. Denoël.
1957. Re-edition (revising one text; adding 6 texts) Éditions de Minuit.

Novels

Portrait d'un inconnu (Written in 1946)
1948, Preface by Sartre, Robert Marin.
1956, Re-edition with preface, Gallimard.
1964, Pocket book edition, Union Général d'Édition.

Martereau
1953, Gallimard.
1964, Pocket book edition, Gallimard.

Le Planétarium
1959, Gallimard.
1965, Pocket book, Gallimard.

Les Fruits d'or
1963, Gallimard.

Entre la vie et la mort
1968, Gallimard.

Vous les entendez?
1972, Gallimard

The following English translations of Nathalie Sarraute's works were used in the present study. Translated by Maria Jolas.

Novels

Tropisms. New York: Braziller, 1957.
Portrait of a Man Unknown. New York: Braziller, 1958.
Martereau. New York: Braziller, 1959.
The Planetarium. New York: Braziller, 1960.
The Golden Fruits. New York: Braziller, 1964.
Between Life and Death. New York: Braziller, 1969.

Critical work

The Age of Suspicion. New York: Braziller, 1963.

Fedor Dostoevsky

Following is a list of Dostoevsky's works, which I read for this study. Because so many editions of Dostoevsky's works have been published, I have listed only the first publication date for the Russian edition, followed by the Russian and English titles, respectively—in those cases where there are two English translations of a Russian title, I have given both.

1846. *Bednye lyudi—Poor Folks*
Poor People
1846. *Dvoynik—The Double*
1847. *Khozyaika—The Landlady*
1847. "Roman v devyati pismah"—"A Novel in Nine Letters"
1848. *Belye Nochi—White Nights*
1849. *Netochka Nezvanova—Netochka Nezvanova*
1857. "Malenky gerowy"—"The Little Hero"
1859. *Dyadyushkin son—Uncle's Dream*
1861. *Unizhennye i oskorblennye—Despised and Rejected*
The Insulted and Injured
1862. *Zapiski iz mertvogo doma—Notes from the House of the Dead*
Memoirs from the Death House
1864. *Igrok—The Gambler*
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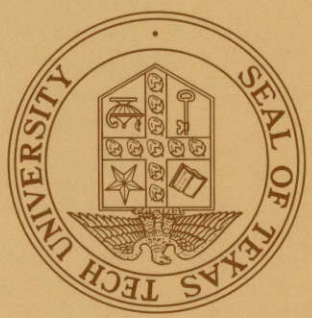
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