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THE FOOL AND THE TWO KINGDOMS: RADICAL REVALUATION IN KING LEAR, LITTLE DORRIT, AND THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

by

Sara Anson Vaux

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

THE FOOL AND THE TWO KINGDOMS: RADICAL REVALUATION IN KING LEAR, LITTLE DORRIT, AND THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

Sara Anson Vaux

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This study explores the function and significance of a typological figure in King Lear, Little Dorrit and The Brothers Karamazov: the "Fool in Christ." These works, each of which has often been regarded as presenting a despairing or "pessimistic" view of the world and of human nature, are reexamined in the perspective of the alternative New Testament vision provided by the themes, images, and actions associated with the figure of the fool. Although each work might be said to express quintessentially what is uniquely "Shakespearian," "Dickensian," or "Russian," the three together demonstrate a remarkable spiritual kinship with one another and with the spirit of the New Testament. Each presents an uncompromising picture of human society and the human condition, where chaos, alienation, and despair appear to be in control—in New Testament terms, a "dark" world, which does not know the "light." However, this kingdom of the world, the temporal realm, is countered in each work by the simultaneous existence of another realm,
the atemporal kingdom of heaven embodied in the goodness of the Christian fool. Not only do these fools manifest personal goodness, but their practice of *agape* love is seen to provide the climate conducive to initiating the conversion process in at least one of the major figures. Such is Edgar's effect on Gloucester and Cordelia's and the Fool's on Lear, Amy Dorrit's on Arthur Clennam, and Alyosha's and Zossima's on Dmitri.

Chapter I discusses the dominant moral and social order in *King Lear* in terms of temporal and spiritual bondage. The response of the King of France to Lear's rejection of Cordelia in I.i sets up the terms by which that established order is to be challenged: it is a speech rich in New Testament images, its wisdom the wisdom of the "fool in Christ" who penetrates sham ceremony and false appearance, laying bare the underlying reality of Cordelia's true worth. Lear's Fool, Kent, Edgar, and Cordelia herself are discussed as each portrays similar or complementary features of the Christian fool's wisdom and goodness: his freedom, spontaneity, and openness, and his fostering of a sense of individual worth and communal relatedness.

Chapter II explores the world of imprisonment and disease in which Amy Dorrit must live and work. Although the world of *Little Dorrit* (like that of *Lear*) is particularly devoid of spiritual nourishment, Amy not only survives in this world but triumphs, winning as well through her
person and her acts spiritual freedom for Arthur Clennam.

In Chapter III Dostoevsky's contention that Alyosha
is his hero is defended, again according to a transvalued
New Testament conception of the hero in which "humility is
a very great power." The arguments of Ivan and the Grand
Inquisitor are examined in the light of the view of human
nature and human freedom they expose. In this novel, the
idea of the "two kingdoms" is more completely delineated,
the examples of "wisdom-in-folly" more abundantly and ap-
pealingly set forth, and the dynamics of conversion more
fully imaged than in the two works previously discussed.
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INTRODUCTION

In this essay it is my intent to examine a typological figure whose dramatic impact is both Christian and existential, whose presence in the works under scrutiny testifies to an affirmative vision underlying the works' apparent pessimism. That figure might be loosely termed a "Christian fool," combining as it does the fool's traditional antinomianism and dramatic flexibility with an ethical statement which is markedly New Testament. In only one of the three major works to be examined, The Brothers Karamazov, is that ethical perspective belonging to the fool specifically labelled "Christian": in King Lear, the old play Leir has been radically altered to remove all specifically Christian references; and in Little Dorrit explicit mention of the New Testament occurs but once, toward the end of the novel. Nevertheless it will appear clear that each work has arisen from a marked commitment not only to a daring confrontation with the complexities of human experience, but also to a conception of human relationship which is firmly grounded in New Testament teachings on agape love, sin, grace, freedom, brotherhood, and sonship. Dramatically embodied in the "fool," these teachings break into the established world of the play or novel, bringing about a radical "revaluation of all values" in that world, a revaluation which testifies to the affirmative possibilities of human
life which till then had been marked by bondage to the conventional, the violent, and the death-ridden.

In establishing the New Testament foundations for the portrayal of the "fool" figures in each of the works to be studied, both the Synoptic Gospels and the Johannine writings will be used. In all three works Jesus' "ethical radicalism" provides the model for the "fools" unconventional conduct: the Christian fool lives and acts not only at the fringe of established society but at the cutting edge of history, as the future Kingdom of God breaks into this time, this consciousness. The "fools" of Shakespeare, Dickens, and Dostoevsky may be seen to play redemptive roles in the worlds they inhabit, not in any utopian sense where society becomes immediately transformed by the magic of their innocence, but in that "revalued" sense in which their acts of caring bring the power of the divine future Kingdom into the present time. The catalyst in that qualitative transformation is *agape* love, the "creative love" which "grants new existence, in spite of the self-asserting arrogance of that which already is." The Greek word *agape* will be used in this essay to denote the kind of love discussed in the New Testament, although as Victor Furnish notes, *agape* and *philos* (friendly love) are used interchangeably as in the Jesus-Peter dialogue (John 21:15-17). The words apparently could be used as synonyms, although the *agape* group occurs most frequently. The redemptive acts of the fool figures
represent a dynamic, ongoing process of relationship contracted in the spirit of agape love (and thus are to be qualitatively evaluated) rather than accomplishing a numerically impressive state of moral and spiritual utopia. Utopia, as More reminds us, is "nowhere": it is Dostoevsky's "Anthill." But the "Kingdom" as revealed in the teachings of Jesus and personified in the lives of Cordelia, Kent, Amy Dorrit, Alyosha, Zossima, and their ideological kin, has been envisioned as possessing validity equally for Lear's barren heath, London's labyrinths and prisons, and Russia's beast-pen.  

Agape love means personal fulfillment which expresses itself in relationship with the other, the Thou, the brother whose essential kinship to oneself becomes apparent: "love for fellowmen is participation in the coming Kingdom of God." Thus the "fool" in his redemptive role might be said to reveal what is uniquely human about human "being": there can be no human "being" without relationship, without someone to evoke "being" from you, to testify to the authenticity of one's separate existence. This need is perhaps most pathetically stated in Captain Snegirov's comment to Alyosha in Brothers: "there must be some one able to love even a man like me." In philosophical terms the primacy of relationship is asserted through Lear's question, "Is there any cause in nature that make these hard hearts?" (III.vi, 76-7); in the original title of Little Dorrit, "Nobody's Fault"; and
in Ivan's cry, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The "fools" in these works testify to the order underlying the disorder, tension, and fragmentation which rend the fabric of Lear and the two great novels: the "fools" are the bearers of light in darkened worlds, as Christ is the "light of all nations"; the fools are the harbingers of man's potential for freedom, new life, and the communion of human relationship.
NOTES


2 Pannenberg, p. 65.


4 The name of the town which is the scene of the Karamazov sensuality and violence is Skotoprigornevsk, "a place-name adaptation of the Russian word, skotoprignonny, that is, 'beast corral' or 'beast pen.'" See Edward Wasielek, Dostoevsky: The Major Fiction (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1964), p. 181.

5 Pannenberg, p. 113.

6 All quotations from King Lear are taken from The Tragedy of King Lear, ed. Russell Fraser (New York: New American Library: The Signet Classic Shakespeare, 1963).
CHAPTER I: KING LEAR

In *King Lear* Shakespeare has constructed a paradigm of human experience, one which does justice both to ambiguity and mystery, and to the hope and desire for life which exists in man despite the misery of his existence and the terror of the unknown. His willingness to grapple at the deepest level with the metaphysical questions which trouble the sensitive mind places him in the company of the greatest philosophers; the treatment of the problems of evil and suffering in terms of a correspondingly great force for affirmation embodied both in imagery and in a character or group of characters places him in the New Testament tradition; his creation of that character or cluster of characters as ones who believe (in the truth), suffer (the burden of knowledge) and serve (the needs of their fellow humans) links Shakespeare with Charles Dickens and Dostoevsky as a writer who dared to put the ideal of human goodness to the test in a corrupt world.

Shakespeare deliberately seeks to universalize the story of the old king. The setting, time, and place are vague.\(^1\) The presence of a sub-plot in which so many of the details of the main plot are duplicated serves to reinforce the lessons taught in the main plot, while driving home the commonness of Lear's predicament: i.e., his story is not just an aberration, but wide-spread.\(^2\) Man is presented in a wide variety of roles, in his most bestial and evil forms, in his hunger, in his egotism, in his sadism, in his
confusion, in his benevolence, in his spiritual striving, in his healing. The story seems to take place not only in pre-Christian Britain, as critics are fond of pointing out, but in pre-historical Britain, that is, in mythological times, akin to that pre-historical time dealt with in Old Testament sagas. The high degree of relatedness of the characters (two groups of families, within the circles of which all characters in the play are included) strengthens the correspondence between the Lear story and the Biblical myths.

The basic question the play is asking is: is life worth living, if man is born only to suffer and to die? Lear exclaims:

> When we are born, we cry that we are come to this great stage of fools.  
> (IV.vi, 184-5)

Gloucester despairs and attempts suicide. The overwhelming physical pain suffered by Gloucester; the exposure and the mental anguish of Lear, climaxing in his madness; the apparent lack of benevolent deities in whom man can trust, to whom he can appeal, whose order would support man and mitigate in part the burden of his misery, would seem to suggest the validity of Gloucester's well-known outburst:

> As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' gods,  
> They kill us for their sport.  
> (IV.i, 36-7)

The most problematical of a host of disquieting events in the play is surely the death of Cordelia, right at the point when the action is moving toward some sense of comic resolution, the death of one whose revival would have meant
the redemption of "all sorrows" the old king had ever felt, a symbolic triumph of good over evil. Dr. Johnson's reaction to Cordelia's death is perhaps the best known: he lamented bitterly that Shakespeare "suffered the virtue of Cordelia to perish in a just cause, contrary to the natural ideas of justice, to the hope of the reader, and . . . to the faith of chronicles."\(^4\) Sherman Hawkins states the problem precisely:

The punishment of Regan, Goneril, and Edmund in no way balances the destruction of Cordelia. Good not only goes unrewarded, it is destroyed; and we are left to ponder the validity of love and justice in a world where the loving and the just do not survive.\(^5\)

The three evil characters lie dead on the stage, and Cornwall has already been eliminated; but the death of Cordelia deflates any sense of triumph one might have. The play deals ultimately with man's metaphysical status, with "the nature and destiny of goodness," as Enid Welford has expressed it.\(^6\)

Are those values man cherishes, perhaps represented in their most highly developed form in Cordelia, integral to the universal natural order; or is man, hopeful and idealistic, an alien in this universe?\(^7\)

Or can the question be answered so simply? Because man appears to be alone in the universe, because his life is subject to the whims of "fortune," most importantly because he does not live forever, is his life absurd, a waste? To interpret the experience of the play this way, and by extension to interpret human experience in this light, is to fall into one of the major traps the play itself exposes:
the tendency to judge the human by standards appropriate only to the inanimate. All is not as it appears in the world: a vast network of imagery operates in the play which deals with problems of perception, popularly known as "appearance and reality." It "appears" that life is not worth living; and Lear's and Gloucester's enlightenment about other kinds of "appearance" by which they have been deceived might be expected to lead either of the men into cynicism and despair. But the "reality" is that "absurd" guilty life can be redeemed by a person, a person who embodies a right perception of the truth about human life, whose presence in the life of the play upsets all previous notions about value, success, strength, love, and relatedness. Shakespeare provides for Lear, Cordelia; for Gloucester, Edgar; to further support his point, France, Kent, and the Fool. To these we shall return.

Once again: King Lear presents a "paradigm of human experience," and that human experience concerns not just the tragic fact that death is inevitable and unbearable suffering and loss highly probable, but the corresponding presence of joy, companionship, loyalty, and self-giving love even in a world so bleak as that of Lear. Just as retaining the happy ending of the sources would have falsified the reality of man's fate, so also does neglecting the affirmative elements in Lear falsify the highly realistic picture of man's possibilities which Shakespeare takes pains to present.
It has been suggested that the high degree of relationship among the characters (ties of blood or service) links this family story to the story of the family of man as portrayed in the Bible or in other world mythologies. The Old Testament sagas tell of numerous broken relationships: Adam and Eve against their Maker; brother against brother; father against son and son against father; social group in war with another group. Strife spreads into all the areas in which man forms relationships. Balanced against this strife is the new covenant revealed in the New Testament, a story of healing personal and social wounds.

King Lear, too, exposes the varieties of broken relationship, which seem the more heinous because they involve blood relatives: Lear curses the daughter whom he had cherished moments before, disclaiming all relationship with her ("propinquity and property of blood"), valuing her on a level with barbarians and cannibals, even cannibals who eat their own children (I.ii, 110-122). Gloucester, upon the slightest suspicion, denies Edgar as his true son, and sets out a writ against his life (II.i, 79-85). Additionally we are presented in the first few lines of the play with evidence of adultery—the broken marriage relationship—obviously relished; the expulsion with threat of death of the most trusted servant of the king; and later with the callousness of Goneril and Regan toward their aged father; the betrayal of Gloucester by his beloved son Edmund; the planned murder of Albany by his wife; the threat of regicide; and
the murder of sister by sister. By extension these crimes against blood relations are equally crimes against the whole of humanity, for we are the human family.

But the world of the play is not presented as all moral jungle with no controlling ethical ideal. The acts of violence, the manifestations of evil and injustice, are meant to be clearly perceived as violations of the natural order of things, as moral aberrations; these acts are to be judged and condemned. Beside the violence, the sense of disintegration of the family bond and the social order, the wrath of Lear, the curses, the discord, there is a simultaneous movement toward healing, restoration, redemption. The play ultimately establishes an ideal by which one's relationships with other members of the human family must be judged: the ideal of agape, disinterested love, which motivates and forms koinonia, true interpersonal communion. In this communion lies true fellowship, true relation-ship, the "I" to the "Thou." The quality of being, the agape, motivates acts of caring, giving of the self without desire of reward, and radiates into the social group in the form of healing. The firm establishment of this moral ideal in the life of the play is the strongest of all affirmations, for it speaks not of man's propensity to cruel and destructive action, or even Faustian damnation, but of the possibility for the fullest exercise of his spiritual gifts.

How is this ideal of agape established in the world
of the play? The evidences of broken relationship which appear in I.i have already been listed. But one must also note that from the first there is a burning interest in defining the nature of personal and communal love: how it is to be defined, won for oneself, offered to others. The first line speaks of love and value:

I thought the King had more affected \( \overline{\text{loved,}} \) cherished the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

(I.i.1,2)

However, despite Lear's previous discrimination between his sons-in-law, each is to receive an equal cut of the kingdom. Attention now turns to Edmund: not affectionate love, but lust went into his making; not fatherly care, but rearing in a foreign land, with Gloucester paying the bills, has been his lot. The loved object has been kept at a distance, and spoken of affectionately but in terms of a possession nonetheless.

I have a son . . . some year elder than this, who is yet no dearer in my account.

(19-21)

Kent's reply to Gloucester's introduction of Edmund is that he must "love" him, and seek to know him better (31), love being the gift of friend to friend, and given Kent's prominent position in the court, his obligation within the social group.

These preliminaries of course prepare one for the staging of the love-test. Lear's ostensible purpose in
dividing his kingdom now is to prevent future strife, to prevent broken relationship over the issue of property (45-7). His references to his "loving" sons of Albany and Cornwall may be ceremonial words, yet the act of his "unburdening" assumes that they will respond lovingly to his intentions, respond with philos, taking up the "cares and business" of state, reverencing their bond of obligation to him as king, while allowing him the respect and comfort due to age. A second kind of "love," eros, is introduced when Lear mentions the two suitors of Cordelia. Then he springs his "darker purpose":

Which of you shall we say doth love us most, That we our largest bounty may extend Where nature doth with merit challenge.  

(53-55)

His bid is for proof of their filial affection, which one would expect had been made amply manifest in their several actions. He wants verbalized what is not easily reduced to words. The real travesty of course lies in "That": "if you tell me you love me, then I will reward you." Goneril responds immediately, hyperbolically. The situation requires politic response, and she meets the demand easily; for to her and to Regan, love is indeed a measurable commodity, to be meted out in spoonfuls of words when expeditious, or in this case, as a cheap price to be paid for the securing of wealth and power. Both Lear's demand and Goneril's glib response violate any notion of love which includes disinterested love, freely offered. However at this point the ideal
has not surfaced; both the question and Goneril's answer seem socially acceptable.

The confrontation between ideal and its perversion appears suddenly, unexpectedly, from the person whose private deeds of affection had most endeared her to her father. Cordelia is Lear's "joy," he laments later:

I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery.

(125-6)

In the shallowness of his understanding of the nature of love, Lear puts the identical question to his youngest daughter, emphasizing the importance of words to rewards:

What can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

(87-8)

Speak again. (92)

Mend your speech a little,
Lest you may mar your fortunes. (96-7)

It is a ritual, ceremony, game; but Cordelia refuses to play.

Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth.

(93-4)

Her self-esteem, her integrity admit of no compromise; she sees how the world goes, choosing to lose worldly fortunes--and the chance of marriage--rather than participate in a prostitution of affection similar to her sisters'.

Let us momentarily suspend our argument to examine some critical reactions to Cordelia's responses during the love-test, and to her role in the play generally. Some have
remarked on her harshness in responding to her father's "harmless" request for love: Coleridge, for instance, has written of her "little faulty admixture of pride and sullen-ness."9 Granville-Barker writes that "it will be a fatal error to present Cordelia as a meek saint; she is "proud," "obstinate," and like her father "unyielding."10 Marvin Rosenberg protests that "no amount of explanation can make anything kind, charitable, or loving of an answer, to the offer of love, of nothing."11 According to the logic of these criticisms, Cordelia is exhibiting in I.i the "flaw" of pride which will bring about her downfall. Northrop Frye, however, in discussing common misconceptions of the Aristotelian "harmartia" or "flaw," notes that harmartia "is not necessarily wrong doing, much less moral weakness: it may be simply a matter of being a strong character in an exposed position," as is Cordelia, who is both exceptional and isolated.12

Frye's observation helps resolve any doubts one might have about Shakespeare's unity of conception in the presentation of Cordelia: one might note, for instance, that she speaks briefly and in negatives when asked to express her love, but at great length when justifying to France the reasons for her silence (see I.i, 223-230). On the surface this bluntness appears reprehensible, particularly since her failure to please her father results in his falling under the governance of the two sisters Cordelia knows wish him ill: her silence in effect allows evil forces to assume
full power in her father's kingdom. However, as Frye recognizes, her goodness is both "exceptional" and "isolated"—alien to the system of valuing underlying this highly ceremonial society. To play her father's "harmless" game would be to acquiesce in great evil; for the love-test, properly seen, symbolizes that failure of sight and understanding which imprisons Lear's spiritual powers—a surface indicator of the moral weakness of the majority of Lear's court.

That Cordelia embodies here as in Act IV a unified conception of personal goodness, the "norm of completeness," as Traversi has termed it, becomes apparent when one examines the poetry through which she takes form before us, particularly as her language presents us with a world ontologically other than that created through the words of Lear, Burgundy, or the two evil sisters. As the word "love" in the first scene of the play can convey the meaning of philos or eros, so also can it be used synonymously with "value," itself a potentially ambiguous word, in that "value" can convey either a concern with quality of being, or an obsession with "quantity"—number, measure, commodity, price—concepts appropriate to the world of the market-place, inappropriate when applied to human relationships. Thus understood, Lear's initial question ("Which of you ... doth love us most") with its qualifying tag ("That we our largest bounty may extend ... ") expresses concisely the composition of his world-view: non-personal, non-relational, egotistical, mechanical, rational. It is a world-view in
which "disinterested love, freely offered," honesty, and the bond of nature are equally foolish notions. Goneril and Regan share this world-view; Burgundy, too, reveals his allegiance to the world of price, where reason demands self-gain and self-protection.

Is this conception of value, or love, to remain the ontological "given" of the play? As suggested earlier (p. 6 and note) it is not: *agape* love asserts itself as the alternative and morally superior mode of "valuing" here at the outset of the play. Interpreting "love" according to the "bond" of nature through which all men are linked in fraternal relationship, it is linguistically impossible to respond to Lear's question as stated: Cordelia "loves" not by "price" but by "person": "which of you . . . doth [bid for my lands at the highest price]" is, logically, a non-sense question for her. She literally cannot answer it, but can only "Love [cherish, care for], and be silent [express her affection through deeds, not words]." The "bond" of which Cordelia speaks, the melodious order of her speech (94-103), her adherence to her ideal of *agape* love, testify to a harmonious natural order underlying the artificial ceremony characterizing Lear's speech and his other daughters' artificial responses. That the ritualized "order" of Lear's court masks a deeper disorder erupts suddenly in the violence of the curses Lear calls down upon his young daughter: the violence lying beneath the old king's initially urbane exterior is one with the blindness which imprisons him in the
world of reason and commodity, shutting out the light of agape love which shines through Cordelia's person.

The curse is hardly uttered when the second "fool," the noble Kent, interrupts: he protests the king's "hideous rashness" and shows his awareness of the importance of the issue. He testifies to the obvious, the love of Cordelia for her father; her "low sounds/ Reverb no hollowness" (155-6). He sees clearly the hypocrisy of the older sisters, and congratulates Cordelia's firmness, she who "justly think'st, and hath most rightly said" (184-5). The bond of affection between the king and Kent is strong--Kent regards him as leader, father, and patron--but a part of that love includes protecting the king against the serious consequences of false perception and evil action. The threat of exile or death does not destroy his determination to resist evil.

The King of France supports the norm of reasonable judgment which was introduced by Kent; his words introduce the third variation on the theme of the true love, agape, which had been manifested in Cordelia's integrity and Kent's loyal courage. Whereas both Cordelia and Kent were in an undefended position, subject to the curses of the king, France combines perception and power, the wisdom to see the truth and the strength to protect his position. He is both "good" and "strong"; his one appearance in the play is absolutely central, for he presents a model of virtue and strength which will be matched in the end by the experienced Edgar who will ascend the throne of England. Additionally,
his words and actions introduce the notion of transvaluation, the radical conversion of worldly folly into moral strength. He demonstrates an ability to separate political modes of evaluation from intrinsic value; he rejects totally the application of monetary standards to human feelings; he does not yield to the poison of calumny. He chides Burgundy for his mercenary attitude:

Love's not love
When it is mingled with regards that stands
Aloof from th' entire point.

(240-2)

Love has nothing to do with possessions; his estimation of Cordelia's intrinsic worth remains unchanged despite the lack of a dowry, or the curse of the king. "She is herself a dowry" (243).

The speech in which France takes Cordelia as his bride contains the seeds for the total transvaluation of values which will take place in the course of the play. France subjects these values by which Lear and his court have acted to severe scrutiny: in a few words, he turns those values on their heads, and shows them to be false, hollow. What Lear, the sisters, and Burgundy had regarded as "love" was "not love" because it was tainted with self-interest (desire for praise, desire for land, desire for dowry). Lear's curse (and the acquiescence in this of all but Kent) has stripped Cordelia of daughterhood, riches, land, home, even the probability of marriage. It is important to realize that except for her personal dignity she is
socially a "non-person" when France addresses her as "Fairest Cordelia." But by the ideal of agape by which he lives and judges, she is "most rich being poor,/ Most choice forsaken, and most loved despised" (252-3). He "seizes" her virtues, takes up "what's cast away" (254-5). The court's withdrawal of nurture from the young princess "kindle[s] to inflamed respect" the erotic love he had already felt for her; to eros is added compassion. "Unprized" by the court, her worth is revalued by the higher standard of agape and she is deemed "precious" (261).

France disappears from the play after the first scene, but he has made an indelible mark through his words and through the daring but joyfully embraced act of accepting the outcast princess. Structurally and thematically his presence anticipates the succession of Edgar, the good and effective man, to the English throne.

Cordelia now enters a period of hibernation. In the movement of breach, suffering, and reconciliation which forms the pattern of the Cordelia-Lear relationship, this period of separation allows for the full development of the consequences of that breach, the cruelty of the sisters, and the rapid descent of Lear into madness. The separation establishes as well a period of safe hibernation for Cordelia in France, from which she need never emerge. The King of France had offered her the security of power and a rich human love in which she could flourish: a haven of peace distant from a father's rage, sisters' cunning, and false judgment.
It is important that one feel that Cordelia could have chosen to remain in France; she was not compelled to return to the scene of her suffering and humiliation.

The first scene of the play, then, exposes the false scheme of values by which Lear and his court live: dearest relationships are sundered; Lear rejects the good and chooses the morally doubtful. The stage is set for his tragedy. At the same time an equal force for right valuing, healing of relationship, reemergence of the good has been asserted in the persons of Cordelia, Kent, and France. Mack is right to compare this scene to the Psychomachia: Lear's exit with Burgundy, Cornwall, Albany, and Gloucester shows the choice he has made, and it is the wrong one. However, he is not left without moral tutors: although Cordelia and her husband depart for France, in Cordelia's place as comforter and teacher are the disguised Kent and the harmless Fool.

Kent as Caius, and the court Fool, offer two more versions of the ideal of agape, in fact might be said to supply the place of the absent Cordelia, accompanying Lear along his difficult pilgrimage until the moment is ripe for his redemption. How is agape shown, how is koinonia (the fellowship of love) created? First, the two "fools" counter the increasing alienation of the old king. "Woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up," said the Prophet (Ecclesiastes 4:10). Kent seeks to serve him whose servants (retainers) are being taken away from him.
The "folly" of this service in worldly terms (i.e., the false system of valuing introduced in I.i.) is pointed out to Kent by the Fool: Kent should take his coxcomb,

For taking one's part that's out of favor.
Nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly.

(I.iv, 101-2)

However, the Fool numbers himself among the "foolish" who by his reversal are morally "wise."

That sir, which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack, when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm.
But I will tarry; the Fool will stay,
And let the side man fly.
The knave turns Fool that runs away,
The Fool no Knave, perdy.

(II.iv, 76-84)

By this "definition" only the Fool and the outcast Kent are true servants to the king. They cherish the bond of loyalty to their sovereign, even though for Kent it means "razing his likeness," i.e., destroying his previous identity so that he can "serve" where he stands "condemned," do good to that master who had wronged him (I.iv, 1-7). Any tangible reward is denied him, except acknowledgement of his goodness by Cordelia (IV.vii); at the end when Kent seeks recognition by his old master, the king is too broken to pay attention to him. Elton has noted somewhat cynically that Kent's good works all end disastrously. But the absence of worldly reward or success does not invalidate the worth of the acts of kindness. As Cordelia notes, life would not be long enough, or any measure adequate, to match Kent's goodness
(IV, vii, 1-3). Such service cannot be measured as the world measures. He did not serve to be rewarded; the act is in itself sufficient reward.

Kent, then, sheds the vestments and titles of nobility to assume the identity of a servant. Lear's other faithful companion is the court jester, another outcast, who upon Cordelia's disappearance from the play assumes the role of mentor to the old king. Cordelia, Kent, and France in the first scene had given the king lessons in truth, to which he had reacted violently. Kent's challenge to Lear to "see better" (I.i, 160); Cordelia's plea that he look beneath the surface of flatterers and their protestations, look at the reality rather than the appearance; and France's daring example of right valuing are ignored by Lear until the pressure of the situation he has created forces him to listen carefully to the babblings of his Fool. The Fool reintroduces the themes which appeared in the first scene; he tries to make Lear see the folly of his actions. His riddles and songs are all aimed at changing Lear's limited perspective, bringing him into a new perception, an enlargement of vision, what Tom Boyd has called "the big picture." As Traversi notes, the king and his fool, the customary situation of wise man and fool (of limited intellect), is inverted: Lear becomes the "fool," and the Fool the wise man. The Fool is "worthless" in the rationalistic world; he is the "all-licensed Fool," as Goneril scornfully calls him (I.iv, 206); for a society based upon the supremacy of wealth and show
values the useful, the productive man, the politic, shrewd man; but the young boy is the opposite of all these traits. He is not "useful"; he is poor, outcast, and defenseless. But one must remember France's speech by which those rationalistic standards were challenged: he stood the accepted values of the courtly society on their head. By the new standard the humble, the degraded, the outcast, the mad, man may become a bearer of truth; in any case he is to be taken seriously.

For a number of reasons the Fool is the fitting instrument at this point of Lear's journey toward redemption. First, he stands in a unique relationship to the old king, a relationship of "love," but one which would never be subject to the poison of the "love-test." He is not expected to play the games of court ritual, but is expected to tell the truth. He is an outsider, and his youth and possibly limited intelligence make Lear protective of him. The first evidence of the strain on the father-daughter domestic arrangement, for instance, is Lear's striking Goneril's gentleman "for chiding of his Fool" (I.iii, 1-2). Additionally, he is associated in the reader's and the king's mind with Cordelia, for he "hath much pined away" since his mistress' departure for France (I.iv, 75). Cordelia is not overtly mentioned during the scenes with master and Fool, but the Fool's former closeness to his mistress and indeed their similar characteristics of youth, frankness, and vulnerability seems to keep Lear conscious of the image of the
wronged daughter.\textsuperscript{19}

Further reason for the Fool's appropriateness as Lear's companion at this point in his pilgrimage is the manner of the Fool's speech: riddling, aphoristic, rich in images. It is speech appropriate to one who is totally outsider, who accompanies one who himself will pass from community into isolation. It is disjointed, nonsensical speech, apparently lacking the rational connectives used in ordinary converse, as say between the two sisters, or the sisters and Edmund. But thus it is again speech appropriate to Lear, who prefers to issue commands or speak with himself rather than communicate with others, as was shown in the breakdown in verbal communication between him and Cordelia, him and Kent in I.i. As Wolfgang Clemen has noted,

\begin{quote}
The words of the others no longer reach him . . . The usual manner of speech can therefore no longer move him; such words can neither help nor heal Lear who, in his madness, needs help more and more.\textsuperscript{20}
\end{quote}

Rational speech, then, is useless, disregarded; ordinary preaching would fall on deaf ears. But the Fool's speech is imaginative and suggestive, presenting Lear's folly in a variety of pictures.

The Fool's manner of teaching Lear is reminiscent of the Socratic method or of Jesus' parables. He constantly inverts the apparent situation to expose Lear's true predicament. For instance, Lear thinks he has complimented the two older daughters, and crushed the youngest; the Fool exposes the truth. Lear has alienated the two oldest, and
"did the third a blessing against his will" (I.iv, 108-9). He drives hard on Lear's folly (in terms of self-protection) of giving away his lands and thus exposing himself to misuse. Having given away his "living," he is left with nothing but a coxcomb, the fool's cap (I.iv, 113-15). Lear is left with "nothing" with which to protect himself; for as this world goes, a man will be neither respected nor sheltered without the monetary leverage to command that regard. Lear is a "fool" for giving away his titles, for parting his crown; in divesting himself of royalty and power he has reversed the accepted hierarchy of values, variously expressed as bearing his ass on his back over the dirt (165-6), making his daughters his mothers (176-7), the cart drawing the horse (230-1), the father obeying the daughters (241). In banishing Cordelia and in giving away his power (the unspoken and spoken subjects of the Fool's chatter) Lear has set the example for further violations in the order of nature, thus far manifested as the insolence of Goneril's servants and the coldness of the daughter on whom Lear had lavished wealth. Lear begins to respond to the suggestive images and riddles of the Fool; he himself begins to make analogies. The "ingratitud" of Goneril recalls the rejection of Cordelia, and the possibility that he had made a wrong judgment:

O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate that let thy folly in
And thy dear judgment out.

(I.iv, 277-9)
However, Lear has not yet grasped the total implications of his acts. He hopes that one daughter will prove to be grateful (he is still thinking in terms of gifts which "naturally" result in devotion), although the Fool notes that Regan is as like Goneril "as a crab's like an apple" (I.v, 14-6). From this comment he passes into the apparently unrelated riddle about the nose and the face, "that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into" (I.v, 24), a stab at the problem of perceiving evil, and thus at Lear's inability to view his present situation realistically. Again the nonrational manner of speech succeeds where moralizing could not: Lear's response to the riddle is not laughter, as one would expect, but "I did her wrong"; that is, responding by analogy to the whole bent of the Fool's lessons, showing Lear the extent of his misjudgment in I.i.

Heilman has observed that "the closer Lear moves to madness, the more he comes to exercise the gifts of the Fool." The Fool teaches in his person as well as in his speech that if a man would be wise, he must first become a fool—the term "fool" here connoting freedom to let the imagination roam in search of truth. The wisdom of the Fool consists first of seeing beneath the façade of worldly appearances, penetrating to the truth about human nature, and then choosing a new, more humane set of values by which to act. The folly which is true wisdom acts with integrity in accordance with values based on agape, the love which does not "serve . . . for gain" nor let go the great wheel when it
runs down hill. This "wisdom-in-foolly" serves as Kent and the Fool serve, willing to follow the loved one into the cold and the rain. For Lear the way to this wisdom will prove to be the descent into madness—a breaking up of all the rational modes of thought, that truth might break in.

An important change in the master-servant relationship of Lear and the Fool takes place during the storm scene. Whereas in the first two acts the Fool serves as mentor, aggressively seeking to bring Lear to wisdom, in the third act he becomes passive, receiving comfort from his master. The Fool has accompanied Lear out into the storm as the King's only companion, laboring "to outjest/ His heart-struck injuries" (III.i, 16-7). The Fool's fragility calls forth pity in the formerly self-centered old king; as the necessity of the cold night makes the protection of the "vile" hovel seem "precious," so by similar reversal the most humble of all the king's "relations," his "poor Fool and knave," is a most dear companion to be sheltered (III.i, 67-74).24 Lear extends similar kindness to Kent (III.iv, 23) and again to the Fool (III.iv, 26). It would seem that his concern for the misery of his friends stimulates his meditation upon "houseless wretches." He feels their suffering because he too is suffering: like Kent and the Fool, he is now a social outcast; like many of his former subjects, his head is now "houseless" and his "sides" unfed:
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.

(III.iv, 83-6)

He recognizes first that he has neglected a part of the
obligation of "kingship"—to "care" for his people, even
those who are without wealth or status. He shows here a
dawning of understanding of another kind of "kingship," the
kinship of man with man which is a present quality of life,
a living of the kingdom of heaven through relationship with
fellow man.

In the establishment of the **agape** ideal which pro-
vides the thrust of affirmation in *King Lear*, then, a number
of persons have appeared, each supporting that ideal from
different perspectives. Cordelia has witnessed for the bond
of child to father, which, while it seems inadequate for Lear,
carries with it implications of the bond which ties all men
together in relationship and in the universal harmony of the
spheres. Kent is the true servant, clear-sighted and self-
giving. France combines knowledge, goodness, and power.
The Fool embodies the absurd paradoxes of wisdom in foolery,
greatness in humility, spiritual worth in social rejection.
All four see how this world goes, but derive their own values
from a love which calls into question worldly appearance,
which puts the bond of humanity before temporal considera-
tions. All speak out bravely against the whole established
order.25
These characters exist in part as examples of an alternate mode of living open to the old king when the folly of his previous choices becomes apparent. However, I think that the truth Lear discovers in the course of the play comes not through the intellectual acceptance of the lessons these characters have to offer, but through the imaginative connections he makes during his madness. The reader profits from the examples of Cordelia, Kent, and France in I.i, the Fool and Kent in the later scenes, and the reinforcement of the subplot; but Lear cannot be changed so easily. All vestiges of the old self, the old orientation, must be razed before he can be reborn into the new kingdom of charity. He passes beyond the physical discomfort of the raging storm, his challenge to the elements, the moments of pity for his Fool, and his prayer for the wretched of the earth. He enters the deepest valley of hell, experiencing there the cruel and absurd torment of life itself, a madness which is death-like but yet whose very freedom from the bondage of rationality and convention allows him to penetrate at last to the heart of reality. Like Job, he is reduced to rubble, faced with the falseness, the nothingness of his life. He is representative man, bearing the pain and suffering of the world, his head crowned with weeds, a "crown of thorns--a symbol of the anguish which is the heart of the redemptive experience." Lear dies to the old life, the "old man" as Paul put it, then sleeps (a sleep which can be seen as either an
image of the final death or as restorative). He is reborn
a "new man," one feels, literally "regenerated"--given a new
origin, and thus new possibilities. The link with the Gospel
of John is quite explicit here, I think, more so than with
Gloucester, in whose story one also sees the pattern of
death and rebirth. Both plots support the generally trans-
valuative, paradoxical movement of the total play: out of
bondage into freedom; out of blindness, sight; in folly and
madness, wisdom; in humility, greatness; from alienation
into community. But Gloucester's story resembles more an
initiation rite, with the symbolic death being simulated by
the human agent, the teacher (Edgar), complete to the decep-
tion of the senses. The pattern of death and rebirth is the
same; the goal is knowledge of the truths lying at the heart
of the universe. And indeed Gloucester's pilgrimage is not
without a blending of Christian elements, particularly in
the agapic motivation of his spiritual guide.

However, several elements tend to link Lear's change
more strongly with the Christian conversion than the pagan.
First, Lear's suffering involves not only physical misery
but psychic derangement. Other characters speak of his en-
during more than one would think human nature or any living
creature could bear.

This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear
would couch,
The lion, and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs.

(III.i, 12-14)
Things that love night
Love not such nights as these. The
wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark
And make them keep their caves.

... 

Man's nature cannot carry
Th' affliction nor the fear.

(III.ii, 41-44; 48-49)

Kent bids Lear come out of the storm:

The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure.

(III.iv, 2-3)

Lear's mental collapse is complete, as severe an inner tor-
ment as was his physical ordeal in the storm.

All the power of his wits have given way
to his impatience.

(III.vi, 5)

His former kingly stature by contrast makes the present mad-
ness the more pitiable:

A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a King!

(IV.vi, 207-8)

O ruined piece of nature! This great world
Shall so wear out to naught.

(IV.vi, 136-7)

The completeness of Lear's dissolution makes his leap into
health appear the more dramatic, the more miraculous.

Then, one must reconsider the significance of Lear's
kingship. In the tightly-constructed world of this play
no detail can be accidental, and it would seem in this case
that Lear's status of king calls to mind not so much the chain
of being, or the master-servant bond so important to the play,
as a contrast between the temporal sphere of the kingdom of this world and the atemporal sphere of the kingdom of heaven, in which Lear is destined to find his true kingly identity. Such a kingdom as is revealed in the Gospel of John is not eschatological but describes a quality of life in the present, the breaking into history of the Holy Spirit. The key quotation is Jesus' words to Nicodemus:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

(John 3: 3-5)

This rebirth "from above," this rebirth in the Spirit, Bultmann describes as "the miracle of a mode of being in which man enjoys authentic existence, in which he understands himself and knows that he is no longer threatened by nothingness." Lear, one might say, loses all evidence of his earthly reign except his perception in madness that he is "every inch a king" (IV.vi, 109); but clothed in "fresh garments," he awakens redeemed and free, heir to the kingdom of heaven revealed by Christ.

The third and perhaps most important element linking Lear's story more closely than Gloucester's with the specifically Christian revelation is Lear's relationship with Cordelia, who, while she cannot be said to have effected single-handedly the restoration of Lear, surely embodies
that "grace" which has wrought the transformation. She has already been described in connection with I.i as one example of the enlightened love, the agape, which acts in this play as a constant counter to the pull of the destructive will.

Her reentry into the Lear world is prepared for by the gentleman with whom Kent converses (IV.iii): the imagery he employs to describe her conveys the idea that the faithful daughter of the first scene has reappeared in the fullness of time, manifesting in her person the harmony of the bond of nature by which she had stood then, her queenliness of spirit reinforced by her queenly rank. She symbolizes all that is life-affirming (the "ample tear," "sunshine and rain," "ripe lip") and holy ("patience and sorrow," "holy water," "heavenly eyes"). Her life is itself whole, and out of that wholeness flows the power to heal others, even nature itself:

\[ \text{She redeems nature from the general curse which twain have brought her to.} \]

(IV.vi, 209-10)\(^31\)

Her associations with light, spirit, harmony, healing, and abundant life present a complete contrast to the sense of darkness, sterility, adultery, lust, fornication, severed relationships, and wars, which permeate much of the play.

The Biblical imagery of the kingdom of heaven is suggested again by this very contrast between Cordelia and the play's "rationalists," Edmund, Cornwall, and the two sisters. The letter to the Galatians lists the "works of the flesh" as "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
idolatry, witch-craft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings," (Gal. 5:19-21), and adds that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21). One can easily draw from the play specific examples of "the works of the flesh" which in this biblical definition exclude one from "the kingdom of Heaven." Theodore Spencer, for instance, feels that the lustful behavior of Goneril and Regan shows their degeneration ("adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness . . ."): in Lear, as in a number of Shakespeare's other plays, "lust is . . . apparently the chief element in humanity that drags men and women . . . down to the level of animals in the natural hierarchy." 32 "Witchcraft" could describe either Gloucester's superstitions or Tom's persecution by "the foul fiend." Though "drunkenness" and "revelings" more fittingly describe Claudius' Denmark than Cornwall's austere regime, "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings"--terms describing the sisters' relations with each other and with their father--issue forth at first in "murders." (One remembers also Goneril's accusation that Lear's knights have turned her court into a "riotous inn" 1. iv, 249-254.) "Idolatry" characterizes the actions of all to spiritual and human values: 33 an enthronement of wealth, power, and ego.

Galatians continues:
But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance.

(Gal. 5:22)

In the world of Lear's earthly kingdom, those "fruits of the spirit" have brought their bearers little worldly protection or comfort: one thinks of the exiled Kent in servant's weeds, then in the stocks; of the rejected Cordelia; of the wretched Fool; of the blinded Gloucester (once he offers Lear charity); of the hunted Edgar. What exists in time as discomfort and disgrace, as weakness, is transformed into spiritual strength in the lives of those motivated by agape. These participate in the moment-by-moment creation of the kingdom of heaven, by which worldly "values" are transvalued, given new definition.

Cordelia reappears in the fourth act as supreme embodiment of the life lived in charity, linked not so specifically to Christ the Redeemer (too heavy a symbolic load for one figure to bear) 34 as to the followers of Christ of all time, who were exhorted to "love one another, as I have loved you" (John 13:34; 15:12). The new commandment of "love" with its implication of "serving" ("Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," Gal. 6:2) replaces the negatively binding commandments of the Old Law; the life motivated by agape love will express itself in acts of charity to other men.

It must be noted again that I do not hold that Cordelia of herself effects Lear's transformation; he awakens healed,
as is indicated in the new coherence of his language. By the imagery in IV.iii he suggests her identification with the source of all human and natural harmony and abundance, that order of grace into which Lear has entered. Lear is now pitifully aware of the rich love he had spurned. That great offering of love, combined with the practical ministrations of herbs, repose, and music, creates the climate in which his new being can form. One feels that through Cordelia's shepherding care all of nature is being called upon to participate in the healing of Lear:

All blest secrets,
All you unpublished virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate
In the good man's distress!

(IV.iv, 15-18)

Lear has yet to reach the depths in his madness and in his perception of truth; the scene on Dover fields follows shortly. When he awakens from his restorative sleep the consciousness of that suffering is still with him:

I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

(IV.vii, 45-47)

The last vestiges of hell-fire and guilt are purged away by Cordelia's free offering of forgiveness, and Lear at last enjoys the fullness of koinonia, a relationship untainted by self-interest, a relationship created out of the inner freedom of two human creatures.

In a variety of ways the presence of Edgar in the drama supports the thrust of affirmation being defined thus
far in this paper. His resilience has been noted, and re-
minds one of the physical, moral, and spiritual resilience
with which Enid Welsford remarks that the fool meets adver-
sity. He responds to the proclamation against his life
with the instinct for self-preservation and the ingenuity
common to the Renaissance fool figures. His speeches are
sprinkled with optimistic moralizings, in which there is
much truth and good sense:

When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
Who alone suffers suffers most i' th' mind,
Leaving free things and happy shows behind;
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that which makes me bend makes the King bow.

(III.vi, 101-8)

This expression of the healing effect of fellowship and also
the "distribution" of "excess" which occurs when the great
as well as the humble suffer has been expressed elsewhere
in the play (by Lear, III.iv, 33-36; by Gloucester, IV.i,
67-73). The rhymed endings make one suspect, however, that
this is too simplistic a moral position, as is the following
reflection:

To be worst,
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:
The lamentable change is from the best,
The worst returns to laughter.

(IV.i, 2-6)

The first statement is destroyed for the reader by the scene
which follows it, the blinding of Gloucester; the second
statement is punctured for Edgar himself by the appearance
of his father, "led by an Old Man." 39

The repeated deflations of Edgar's optimistic meditations (a similar deflation occurs in IV.vi) destroy neither his resilience nor his symbolic value as a bearer of the affirmative values of the play, however. His life threatened by Edmund's deception and his father's credulity, he assumes the disguise appropriate to his alienation, that of the mentally and physically mutilated Tom of Bedlam. But he relishes the role, as is apparent even from his description of his projected part (II.iii, 9-20). The authenticity with which he creates the part through appearance and through language allows him to assume symbolic significance for Lear (see discussion to follow) and later creates the opportunity for him to become his father's guide.

The structural patterning of Edgar's role in King Lear also reinforces the sense of affirmation which builds up in the play. His political fall and ascent contrasts to the gradual sinking of the old king's worldly fortunes, but corresponds constructively to Lear's spiritual growth during the course of the play. His ministering care of a father who has wronged him corresponds to Cordelia's similar role in the main plot. The central structural affirmation in Edgar's story is that of his own spiritual growth, a growth which accompanies that political ascent already mentioned, the progress from alienation to community and to the summit of earthly power, the kingship. Edgar is essentially good, but his passivity and his naïveté tend to cancel out that
goodness, making it ineffective. His love, one feels, is pure, but he hasn't Cordelia's perception of evil, the perception necessary if he is to become an agent of regeneration in the world of the play:

The jewels of our father, with washed eyes
Cordelia leaves you. I know what you are,
And like a sister, am most loath to call
Your faults as they are named.

(I.i, 270-3)

In the following section his educative process will be described, as will his gradual movement away from passivity toward an active expression of his inner goodness, his entry into the life of the world.

The behavior of the early Edgar, Bradley comments, is "so foolish as to provoke one." Of the four "good" characters, "Edgar excites the least enthusiasm," although Bradley does acknowledge Edgar's "marked" character development and praises his "purity and nobility of mind." By contrast we see that the bastard Edmund speaks with wit and acts with zest; intellectually sharp and physically, animally attractive, the initial encounters between the two brothers do indeed create the feeling that evil is wickedly appealing and good "foolish" and rather dull. Edmund states the essence of the feeling: Edgar is

a brother noble
Whose nature is so far from doing harms
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy!

(I.ii, 170-3)

Virtue without perception allows evil to thrive.
There is in Edmund in this scene (I.ii) something of the morality Vice who stage-manages events to his perverse liking—the clever villain who dupes the foolish hero.\(^42\) (One is reminded of the clever rogues in Volpone and The Alchemist as well.) This feeling is reinforced in II.i, where Edgar is forced to fly while Edmund holds center stage, his mask of loving virtue unchallenged and apparently proof against discovery.

Edgar is indeed duped by his clever brother. But if morally innocent, he does not remain naive. As Christ advised the disciples to be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16), so also does Edgar move into the world of experience. His naïveté makes him at first vulnerable to be acted upon by evil and hence unable to protect his father from treachery and torture. His first soliloquy shows that he has been educated; he realizes the seriousness of his danger. He is capable, once alerted, of protecting himself until such time as he can confront evil with power:

\[
\text{Whiles I may 'scape, / I will preserve myself.}
\]

(II.iii, 5-6)

Edgar realizes that as himself he is "nothing," non-being, under sentence of death. He has in effect died to his former life, to be reborn in the simplest of forms:

\[
\text{the basest and most poorest shape}
\]
\[
\text{That ever penury, in contempt of man,}
\]
\[
\text{Brought near to beast.}
\]

(II.iii, 7-9)

Like Cordelia, he has been cast off by his father, isolated
from society. But unlike her, he has no redeemer who will remove him to another world where his virtue will be fittingly valued. He must save himself, and school that virtue to survive in the present world. The "foolish fool," he whose innocent goodness makes him powerless, becomes in disguising himself as Poor Tom the "wise fool" who, while preserving his moral innocence, is wise in the ways of the world, able to protect himself and effectively aid others.

Thus the presence of Edgar, the final agape figure to be studied, supports the thrust of affirmation in King Lear through his essential characteristics (his "essence") which are buoyancy (resilience), purity, and educability. His structural pattern is one of political and spiritual growth, simultaneously developing. Finally, he supports affirmation in Lear because he is a healer. In this role he is to be studied in his relation to Lear and to Cordelia, and in his relationship with his father.

Tom of Bedlam's assumed mental and physical wretchedness mirrors of course the inner torment of Lear and the mutilation of Gloucester. Each man is moved to compassion by the sight of the ill-clad Tom: Gloucester comments at one point that the sight of Tom had made him think man a "worm," and at the same time had reminded him of the son he had rejected (IV.i, 32-5). Lear calls Tom "the thing itself"--the concrete embodiment of the "houseless poverty" Lear had pitied--no abstraction, but "unaccomodated man," cold and guilty. Lear in stripping off his own clothes
seeks to identify in the flesh with this suffering; he responds no longer with an intellectually apprehended pity, but with compassion, an "entering into" the misery felt by another human creature.

One immediate implication of the reactions of the two old men is that the sight of Tom's misery has lifted some of the burden of suffering from them: the outward-reaching movement of compassion, even without the works of compassion (relieving the misery of the afflicted one), frees a man in part from his bondage within the closed world of ego. (Compassion must bear fruit to work for healing, however; significantly, the storm calms after Tom's plea for Lear to "let poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes" (III.i, 607.)

At a deeper level Tom symbolizes more than a creature separate from one's self upon whom one is to bestow pity or kindness; for Tom is part of both Lear and Gloucester. The comparison with Gloucester is perhaps the more obvious. While Tom is feigning his sins of the flesh—"let me that slept in the contriving of lust, and waked to do it"—Gloucester's life as we know it from the play has been one of surrender to the flesh: not only the adultery mentioned in the first lines of the play, but his silence during I.1 (failing not only to oppose Lear, but to support Kent), and his initial desire to adjust to Cornwall's new regime. The Fool's joke about "an old lecher" which connects by association the guilty "servingman" with the king's servant, also
anticipates the blinding of Gloucester: for Tom bears on his body and in his mind the "just" consequences of his former animal behavior. Having debased his precious gift of rationality to the service of lust, oath-breaking, obsession with dress, and other examples of animal-like behavior Tom lists (III.iv, 85-102), Tom suffers now the complete loss of reason and all, even the least clothing, which distinguishes man from the beasts.

For Lear the encounter with Poor Tom is catastrophic (which by the system of paradox within which the play is operating, may be transvalued to read "catalytic"—i.e., in the redemption process). Lear immediately identifies his own situation with Tom's:

> What, has his daughters brought him to this pass? Couldst thou save nothing? Wouldst thou give 'em all?

(III.iv, 63-4)

That is, human agents are surely responsible for this extreme of degradation. Tom, like Lear, must have been "sinned against." The shock is in seeing how low man can fall; Lear seems to grasp how inadequate were all his previous rational categories to deal with human suffering.

> Thou wert better in a grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this?

(103-5)

The presence of this extreme of human misery, for whom death would be preferable to a life of such torture, lays open for Lear the problem of evil and human suffering. (As one might expect, at the very point at which Lear begins
his intense exploration of this problem, the "reality" which lies beneath the "appearances" he has always known, the other characters begin to comment upon his madness: "His wits begin t'unsettle" (I.657.)

The madness which Lear now experiences as a result finally of his encounter with Poor Tom frees him from what one comes to recognize was "inauthentic existence," in which "man is ultimately a stranger to his fate and to his own acts."45 In referring to Tom as his "philosopher," Lear is showing his eagerness to become acquainted with man's fate and his acts, which he feels must have some connection with the personal guilt and social rejection of the beggar. The mock trial which is staged in III.vi probes human evil as it occurs beyond personal suffering, within the social sphere, where either overt acts of evil will (as in I.i) or failures in will (Lear's failure to meet the needs of his subjects; also his failure to curb injustice in his realm) have united to cause human suffering.

The scene which follows that of the farmhouse trial represents at once the lowest moral point in the play, the blinding of Gloucester, and an act of personal sacrifice which pulls the drama once again toward affirmation. The encounter of Cornwall with the servant who would risk his own life to prevent his master from further evil action resembles that of Lear with Kent; except that in the context of the raging force of cruelty set free by Lear's series of mistakes, the scene here is the more overtly physical and
the threat of death certain. The issue is the gouging out of the eyes of an innocent man. Lear had asked in the last scene (and the play itself constantly asks):

Is there any cause in nature that make these hard hearts? (III.vi, 76-7)

There appears no answer to that metaphysical query; but in this scene one encounters equally with evil a surprisingly powerful force in the love, loyalty, and respect for human life which one supposes moved this servant to challenge his master. This faithful servant's blood seems to bathe the moral atmosphere of the play. Moments after the servant's death, Gloucester receives the gift of spiritual sight. Fellow servants, moved both by their comrade's sacrifice and by pity for the blinded man, deliver Gloucester to the "fool" who will be his spiritual guide and companion. In a sense one feels that the servant's sacrifice purchased new life (new in-sight) for the man whose eyesight he had been unable to protect.

It is in comparison with the person and role of Cordelia that the most fruitful observations about Edgar emerge. Both, I believe, are motivated by agape love. As noted above, Edgar does not possess initially the sophistication of Cordelia; however, his first soliloquy reveals his awakened knowledge of evil's power, and the need to adopt a disguise appropriate to its challenge. The disguise he does adopt suggests the extreme to which man's will can be corrupted and his body destroyed, an example of the vulnerability
of man's reason and his physical body to the working of the power of evil in the world. When Cordelia reappears in Act IV in her role of healer, she suggests the pastoral figure, supremely in harmony with nature, fellow man, and the universe. Edgar seems by contrast a most unlikely healer. The heath on which he encounters first Lear, then Gloucester, is an "open wasteland," an inverted pastoral landscape—barren, sterile, life-defeating. The storm itself suggests not the moisture which encourages growth, but "fretful elements," "impetuous blasts," violence all out of the order of nature. Edgar appears as Tom, the manifestation of that violence, a being out of tune with nature, fellow man, and the universe. Yet from this unlikely beginning Edgar emerges as a healer.

The effect of "Tom" on Lear has already been noted, as has the servants' instinctive choice of the wretched madman as a fit guide for the blinded Gloucester. From this point (IV.i) Edgar exerts a decided influence on his father. The miserable state of Tom reinforces Gloucester's feeling that his own present misery is just punishment for his former blindness, his failure to "see" because he did not "feel." That he now suffers makes such as Tom the "happier":

So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough.

(IV.i, 72-3)

The weight of guilt has destroyed his desire to live, however; as weak in adversity as he was in prosperity, Gloucester yields to despair.
The scene on the fields near Dover (IV.vi) shows Edgar fully conscious of the role he must play with his father:

Why I do trifle thus with his despair
Is done to cure it.  

(33-4)

The opening of the scene presents Edgar steadily undercutting Gloucester's sense perceptions: that of touch ("Methinks the ground is even." "Horrible steep.") and hearing ("Hark, do you hear the sea?" "No, truly." "Why then your other senses grow imperfect by your eyes' anguish.") Gloucester's ability to discriminate among sensory phenomena is also challenged: he rightly discerns that Tom's voice is altered, that he speaks in "better phrase and matter" than he had. This intelligence too is denied him:

Y'are much deceived: in nothing am I changed
But in my garments.  

(9-10)

The hidden suggestion here is that Edgar himself has not "essentially" changed despite his protean changes in costume; the immediate effect is to further undercut Gloucester's dependence upon what his remaining senses can tell him about reality. This psychological conditioning prepares the old man to accept the otherwise unbelievable fake fall: it is crucial that he believe that he has truly fallen, that he might believe in the "miracle" by which he has survived. Edgar stages for his father a death which he creates through the power of language: the denial of sensory evidence; the illusion of great height; the horror of the fall which the
old man has survived.

Edgar (in yet another role) "meets" his father "at the bottom of the cliff" to reinforce the impression (again through the vividness of his language) of a great fall, and to assert the miraculous nature of Gloucester's preservation.

Think that the clearest gods, who make them honors Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

(73-74)

Gloucester now begins to "look up"; he will no longer try to end his own life.

Henceforth I'll bear Affliction till it do cry out itself 'Enough, enough' and die.

(75-77)

The scene of the simulated suicide (part of the total scene, IV.vi) is rounded out with Edgar's counsel to Gloucester, that he "Bear free and patient thoughts" (80).

Edgar's staging of an event by which his father will suffer in order to benefit raises the question of the validity of man's belief in the "clearest gods"--beneficent other-worldly powers which actively support man's physical or spiritual wellbeing. Is the source of all such "miracles" man himself, rather than a transcendent Being? That the staging of the mock suicide is not meant to suggest this cynical view of man's relation to the ontologically "other" is clarified by a comparison of Edgar's and Cordelia's roles as "redeemers."

With Edgar I believe that process can be differentiated
from person. As person Edgar, like Cordelia, is a bearer of agape love. This love is set forth in the play as deliberate contrast to the feigned filial love of the bastard Edmund: the fruits of Edmund's "love" are deception, betrayal, and theft. The fruits of Edgar's love are forgiveness, guidance, and acts of charitable service. (He "nursed" his father's "miseries," "begged for him, saved him from despair," as he later tells the assembled company.) Gloucester had remarked at one point that

'Tis the times' plague, when the madmen lead the blind.

(IV.i, 46)

But the picture one has of the rejected son tenderly shepherding his blinded father presents an image of a desirable, life-supporting love; while what passes for love in the "sane" world of Edmund, Goneril, and Regan ends in poisoning and suicide.

However, in the realm of process I am speculating that the two stories, Lear's and Gloucester's, operate on differing levels of reality, the atemporal level of grace, and the temporal level of works, where the redemptive act represents a human effort to simulate the divine act of grace. Lear's story emphasizes the complete dissolution of his former identity; he is reduced to a pile of rubble, like Job on the dung-hill. By a miracle of grace he is reborn a new creature, in harmony with the universe, able to accept Cordelia's forgiveness and begin a new life.

In the Gloucester story it is less the spiritual
anguish of the father than the human agency of the child which is emphasized. When counseling his father, Edgar stresses patience and endurance of his present life, as in his gentle rebuke of the again-despairing Gloucester:

What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure Their going hence, even as their coming hither: Ripeness is all. Come on. (V.iii, 9-11)

I have included in this quotation not only the famous lines but also the opening note of surprise at Gloucester's falling away from his former firm resolve, and the final words "come on," which encapsulate the general tenor of Edgar's counseling. "Endurance" and "patience" are basically Stoic virtues, and the advice Edgar gives is based ultimately upon the strength of the human will to act upon its knowledge of the good. Gloucester can receive insight into his past actions, and long to correct those past errors:

O my follies: Then Edgar was abused. Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him. (III.vii, 92-3)

But being a man of weak will, he hasn't the inner strength to continue to live in that arena in which such correction, such forgiveness, might take place. He falters under the burden of his guilt, and needs the repeated encouragements of Edgar to maintain a hold on life.

Edgar exclaims at one point in the play:

Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow. (IV.i, 38)

Yet in rags and a succession of other disguises, Edgar
attempts the redemption of his father. The succession of roles he plays while leading Gloucester demonstrates the fertility of Edgar's imagination, bent upon urging the old man toward a vision of life powerful enough to support him in spite of the reverses he was suffering. These efforts testify to the depth of the son's love, yet prove ultimately to be only marginally successful: Gloucester murmurs a weak assent to Edgar's final speech about endurance, but one might anticipate his further lapses into despair.

The moment of redemption for Gloucester occurs off-stage. The redemption is finally achieved through Edgar, but through his personhood, not the process by which he had hoped to save his father. The acts of care which Edgar had bestowed upon the old man are powerful for change only in retrospect, when seen by Gloucester as manifestations of a free and forgiving love by that son whom he had sought to kill. It is the love revealed in the person of Edgar which changes Gloucester, giving him his first taste of joy in a life early full of empty pleasures, and of late full of guilt and regrets.

I asked his blessing, and from first to last
Told him our pilgrimage. But his flawed heart--
Alack, too weak the conflict to support--
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly.

(V.iii, 197-201)

The note of weakness is again present in the "grief" which mingles with Gloucester's joy in Edgar's love. He is unable to bear the "conflict" between the consciousness of that joy he has lost through his own wrong actions, and the awareness
of the intensity of the love which is offered him in this
moment. Nevertheless his heart bursts "smilingly": he dies
forgiven, and loved.

In discussing Edgar as a redemptive agent, no mention
has been made of the increasing activity which accompanies
his changes of speech and dress. On the heath as Tom, the
emphasis is on his defenselessness, his unprotected state
eliciting pity from Lear and Gloucester. Later he serves
as guide for the man who "has no way." He leads Gloucester
to the place where the old man would die; he awaits him at
the "bottom" of the cliff, full of encouragement. Together
they encounter the mad Lear; after this pitiable experience
Edgar again awaits his father, this time in the guise of a
poor man, who like Gloucester, has suffered reverses of for-
tune and is thus the more compassionate toward the miseries
of others. When Oswald appears, Edgar becomes aggressive in
defense of his father, who is all too willing to be murdered:
he adopts from necessity the weapons of violence to defeat
violence. This brief scene anticipates Edgar's entry in
V.iii as an armed champion, challenging in the person of
Edmund the whole force of evil. Edgar represents here the
hero who "redeems the wasteland," a St. George defeating the
dragon to release Adam and Eve (mankind) from bondage. "Fair
and warlike" in appearance, military victor, he shows that he
now possesses both the ability to identify evil and the
physical means to defeat it on its own terms.

But in the person of Edgar, as this discussion has
shown, are united both temporal hero and atemporal fool: the man who ascends the throne at the end of King Lear has demonstrated both physical and spiritual strength. In protecting the good, he has seen the necessity of employing the weapons of violence; but he has also operated in the world of the play within the realm of transvaluation, where love alone is the power. He joins in one person the figure of the military hero with the graceful humanity represented by the fool.

The question of the ending in Lear always remains, the ending which Dr. Johnson found unbearable and Tate wrote out of existence for a century and a half. By any quantifying system the deaths of all four of the evil characters plus Oswald should compensate for the death of the frail young woman; but of course one does not feel this to be true. One protests her death with shock and horror. But does this death repudiate what she stands for, or prove that the good are unable to survive in a morally corrupt world?

That the good can survive in the world, even rise in it, is shown by the example of Edgar, who could have been destroyed by deceit yet who demonstrated the adaptability to learn from experience and adjust his mode of action to the needs of a corrupt society, while retaining his integrity.

One returns to the initial question posed by the play: is life worth living, if man is born only to suffer and to die? Can one endure living in a world where it is the given
not only that man is mortal, but that the loving and innocent are guaranteed no protection, but can be cut down young? Are the affirmations we have discussed strong enough to counter the temporal tragedy?

King Lear in no way denies or attempts to falsify the burden of pain which is man's simply by being human and therefore both mortal and conscious.\textsuperscript{48} There is no attempt to cheat by promising to the suffering some kind of eschatological satisfaction—life after death. But the realm of the atemporal has repeatedly broken into the world of the play, and should not be forgotten at the last. "Quantification" operates strictly in the world of the temporal, and is the value system dominating the first scene. Quantification, which suggested that Cordelia was of little or no worth first because she would not compromise her integrity, and second, because she was cast away without parentage or property, would judge likewise that Cordelia and the love she shows for Lear are not ultimately "valuable" because Cordelia does not live a long time, which is to say forever.

But quantification is part of what the play has been seeking to repudiate. The speech of the King of France asserted the moral priority of a system of values based not on extrinsic appearance but on intrinsic worth. Kent's disguise, the fool's riddles, the servant's sacrifice, Edgar's disguise, Cordelia's return to England all have existed in an atemporal realm, a transvalued realm, the "kingdom of heaven" lived in the present situation—a realm
not subject to the false judgment of temporal society, a realm whose values likewise are not corroded by the passage of time. The investment of love one makes in the other, in the "Thou," exists outside of time, and thus cannot be said to be lost when either the giver or the receiver dies. The drama centers after all on two old men: in differing degrees each suffers, but is loved, changed, and redeemed. Death within a few years can be expected for each from the beginning: Lear states in the first few lines that he is investing his daughters with his power so that he may "Unburthened crawl toward death" (I.i, 43). He will die, as do all men; furthermore, in a man of "fourscore" that death is not far away. Yet the movement of the play is directed toward the moment when Lear awakens from restorative sleep, to be reunited in forgiveness with the daughter he had rejected. (Lest his "redemption" be seen as a fluke or a carry-over from Shakespeare's sources, the pilgrimage toward salvation movement is doubled in the subplot with another old man who even dies off-stage.) That moment of reunion, that new inner freedom and insight which Lear discovers, is of intrinsic and permanent worth, coming though it does to a man who will not have time to enjoy it. Neither is Cordelia's faithfulness, her healing and self-giving love futile, given the small circle of her influence and the brief time of her service. The examples of Cordelia, of France, Kent, the Fool, and Edgar, have asserted the great healing power of agape love, a love which faces the outrage of death in
all its human and natural manifestations, but which cannot be cancelled out; a love which accords with harmony, fertility, joy, fellowship, and freedom. The "kingdom of heaven" which is created through this love assumes furthermore that the related givens of death and evil must not lead man to despair; for to despair (as Gloucester does) is to deny responsibility for past and present actions, to surrender one's obligation to do his part in healing the wounds in the body politic, to neglect one's own part in creating that harmony and mutuality which even in the bleak world of Lear one feels is the right order of things.
NOTES


2 That Shakespeare used the double plot device both to universalize and to reinforce the lessons in the main plot is now a critical commonplace. Hawkins states concisely that the presence of the sub-plot "deepen[s] our sense of the main action" as symbolic, archetypal ritual." See his article "The Kingdom and Trials of Love: Theology in King Lear," Princeton Alumnae Review, Dec. 1963, p. 15, hereafter cited as "Kingdom." Mack has suggested that the relation of the main and sub-plots is homiletic rather than dramatic; the events occurring in the sub-plot come to Lear's attention only marginally, forming no essential part of his tragic experience. The Gloucester plot, Mack believes, is meant for the audience or the reader: it "extend[s] and consummate[s] the play's wide-ranging vision of the nature and destiny of man." See Time, p. 71. William Elton, who is generally dubious of all attempts to confine Lear to any schematic interpretation, writes that the double plot is "an instrument of complexity, the assurance of a multifaceted ambivalence which, contrary to the salvation hypothesis, probes and tests, without finally resolving, its argument of mysterious human suffering." See his provocative book, King Lear and the Gods (San Marino, Cal.: The Huntington Library, 1966), p. 283, hereafter cited as Gods.

3 One of the major problems in Lear criticism revolves around the play's ostensibly pagan setting. One of its major sources, The True Chronicle History of King Leir, is thoroughly Christian and didactic in tone. That Shakespeare retained in his main plot so many of the elements from the older play, yet omitted every explicitly Christian
reference, has led many critics to speculate on the dramatist's personal religious-philosophical bent: his "pessimism," his possible representation of Jacobean scepticism, or his reflection of the break-up of the medieval world-order and its religious certainties. D. G. James expresses this view:

There is nowhere in the play implicit Christian feeling; what seems certain is that it was Shakespeare's fully conscious decision not to give to the story any fraction of a Christian context. The play's action is terrible in all conscience; but there is no crumb of Christian comfort in it.


What troubles James most is that "virtue" in the play is shown to be inefficacious and helpless, with no "power over the course of events" (p. 129). Granville-Barker feels similarly that Shakespeare has deprived the argument of the play of "comfortable faith in virtue rewarded, here or hereafter." See his Prefaces to Shakespeare, I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), p. 288, hereafter cited as Prefaces. More recently Elton has listed the play's pagan setting as yet further evidence to support his opposition to the "optimistic Christian" interpretation of Lear. He contends that the play reflects the increasing scepticism of the age, whereas Leir reflects medieval confidence in the justice and benevolence of God (pp. 63-64).

Harry Levin, however, while well aware of the pre-historical nature of Lear's setting, grants that certain of the characters nevertheless represent familiar Christian traits. He refers to Edgar as a "Good Samaritan," a man who demonstrates "faith, humility, and charity," who "seems to be anima naturaliter christiana." See his article "The Heights and the Depths: A Scene from King Lear," from More Talking of Shakespeare, ed. John Garrett (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1959), rpt. in the Signet Lear, ed. Russell Fraser (New York and Toronto: The New American Library, 1963), p. 270. L. C. Knights has written that "the positives that emerge from the play are . . . fundamentally Christian values"; though he notes wisely that the play "does not take these values for granted." See Some Shakespearean Themes (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959), p. 91, hereafter cited as Themes. Theodore Spencer cites the opinion of the older critic Edward Dowden that Shakespeare set the play in "heathen times, "partly . . . that they might be able to put the question boldly, "what are the gods?"." Dowden

The debate between "secular" and "christianizing" readings of *Lear* has become a tense one in recent decades, particularly after the appearance of Knight's *Wheel* in 1930. Although there has been fine critical work done on both sides (i.e., Spencer, Elton, Danby, Heilman), many articles and books have appeared which incorrectly seek to restrict *Lear* either to a pagan, naturalistic reading or to a narrowly Christian one. Roland Frye, for instance, expends much of his critical energy in proving that it is not "an explicitly Christian standard of ethics" by which Shakespeare wants his drama judged; that "an explicitly New Testament ethic is less relevant to Shakespeare's plays than an ethic of purely natural law, based equally in the Scriptures and the Greek and Latin classics." See Shakespeare and Christian *Doctrine* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), hereafter cited as *Doctrine*. One of his chief arguments concerns the nature of Christianity itself: he sets forward as a somewhat original idea that "Christianity contains not only unique features but many elements common to human wisdom everywhere" (p. 132). Such is the tenor of the arguments advanced to squelch "christianizing" interpretations of *Lear* for all time: arguments, that is, which respond defensively to what sensible literary critics would recognize as "optimistic" interpretations as narrow as Frye's own; and arguments about Christianity itself which might seem amusingly naïve to New Testament scholars.

Frye, James, Brooke, Elton, Leech, and others of the "pagan," "pessimistic" school of *Lear* criticism suffer equally with those Frye has termed "sentimental and maudlin ethical emotionalists" (p. 35) from attempting to read *Lear* heteronomously, that is, according to schema of thought introduced into the play from without, rather than allowing autonomy to the play's unique vision of human experience. As Knight has noted, *Lear* deals with mankind rather than with historical personages alone (p. 177); and Mack has added a recognition of the play's incorporation of mankind's universal myths and archetypes (Chs. 1 and 2). Shakespeare's use of imagery and themes indicates that he responded creatively to New Testament language and thought. While my
reading of Lear in no way seeks to restrict the vast metaphysical and poetic scope of the play, it does insist that Shakespeare shared with those writers of the New Testament a concern with the truth about man's relationship with his fellowman and with the transcendent. Recognition of Shakespeare's creative affinity with the inner spirit of the New Testament, and exploration of the ways in which he employs central biblical themes and images, enriches, rather than impoverishes, our total comprehension of his genius.

4 From his commentary on King Lear, excerpted in the Signet Lear, p. 224.

5 "Kingdom," p. 17.


7 Not only Dr. Johnson, but a sizable group of critics since his time have reacted to the playwright's uncompromising honesty. A. C. Swinburne has written that "on the horizon of Shakespeare's tragic fatalism we see no ... twilight of atonement ... / or pledge of reconciliation ..." See A Study of Shakespeare (London: Chatto and Windus, 1902), rpt. in part in Perplex, p. 38. "The greatness of King Lear," Nicolas Brooke has stated more recently, "is in the perfect completeness of its negation, and in the superb energy with which it is enforced." See his article "The Ending of King Lear," in Shakespeare 1564-1964, ed. Edward A. Bloom (Providence: Brown University Press, 1964), p. 87. The problem of the ending has inevitably become one with the problem of setting (see n. 3) and with that of the play as a whole: is Lear to be read pessimistically or affirmatively? Elton believes that any movement in the play toward a pattern of suffering and redemption is "shattered" by the catastrophic events of the fifth act. Rather than clarifying in the end universally valid human principles, the play tends rather to further confuse the reader's or audience's perception of right valuing. Elton concludes that the ending of Lear reflects the image of horror and chaos, "the unsteady new world of the later Renaissance" (p. 338). Another critic, Robert Ornstein, purports to see no "reaffirmation" in the play but rather a "cheerless, dark, and deadly close." See his Moral Vision in Jacobean Tragedy (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), p. 261. Curiously enough, later in his chapter on Lear he states that Shakespeare indeed "penetrates beneath the shattered exterior" of the world of his plays to bring to light the certainties of the human spirit, among which would list love (p. 273).

8 In this chapter I am maintaining that the basic value assumptions of King Lear arise from a world-view which is at
once medieval Christian, Renaissance humanistic, and universally timeless: a Weltanschauung where the moral norm of human behavior is interpersonal mutuality and social responsibility. While I can agree quite readily with Roland Frye that during the age of Hooker, Calvin, Luther, and humanism the function of literature was "in no sense" to be "regarded as indoctrination in revealed religion" (p. 8), in his attempt to defeat the christianizers of Shakespeare, Frye misses the profound sense in which Lear is deeply concerned with fundamental spiritual issues. Shakespeare is indeed involved with the temporal, secular aspects of man's life in society; but he probes as well into the questions and issues which lift man out of his secular bind and cause him to storm the heavens, raising the eternal cry of "Why?". He is concerned with the fate of goodness in that secular, time-bound world. In the total picture, of course, the temporal and the atemporal, the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom of God, are shown to be inextricably and necessarily linked, the kingdom of heaven of which the New Testament speaks representing finally the "natural order of things," the moral norm which must be continually reasserted in the face of individual and social behavior which destroys the very meaning of "human being."


10 Prefaces, I, 303.


13 An Approach to Shakespeare (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1956), p. 162, hereafter cited as Approach; see also Knight, p. 202; Hawkins, p. 20; L. C. Knights, p. 100. John Danby, whose book has greatly enriched my understanding of Lear since I first prepared this chapter, has written that the "apparently proud isolation of Cordelia in the first scene is only one aspect of 'the proper love of myself'" which reflects her essential integrity (p. 132). As Danby recognizes, "love of the self" is a conception both Biblical and medieval (pp. 131-2).

14 Norman Holland seems to have anticipated me in pointing out the double application of the word "value" in Lear: that which deals with "price" or "commodity," and that which deals with the human being. See The Shakespearean Imagination (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1968).
pp. 252-4. Holland, noting that the play is preoccupied with number and quantity, writes that "the tragedy of King Lear seems to hinge on the problem of quantifying what you cannot quantify, the things in human experience like love, like suffering, sin, grace, loyalty, the relationship of father to daughter or father to son." See on this point Roy Battenhouse, Shakespearean Tragedy (Bloomington, London: University of Indiana Press, 1969), p. 283, thereafter cited as Tragedy; James Kirsch, Shakespeare's Royal Self (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1966).


16 Numerous critics have commented on the morality antecedents of Lear: Knight, for instance, has noted the unusual degree of polarization of the characters into good and evil camps (p. 177). Danby observes that the characters line up in the play according to which concept of "nature" they embrace, the orthodox view or the scientific view (p. 40). Mack characterizes Lear as an "Everyman" or "Man-kind" figure (pp. 57-63). See also Ribner, pp. 122-3; and Virgil K. Whitaker, The Mirror Up to Nature (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1965), p. 216, hereafter cited as Mirror.

17 Gods, p. 83.

18 Approach, II, 152; see also Heilman, pp. 186-7.

19 It is possible that Cordelia and the Fool were played by the same actor.


21 Theodore Spencer remarks that in the Fool's speech and songs things are "upside-down or backside foremost, or out of the natural order, as things are in Lear's erstwhile kingdom" (p. 143). But the images of reversal are medieval commonplaces representing a general dislocation in the order of things natural and spiritual, as in the travesty of the love-test in I.1.
Heilman has observed that "the Fool . . . starts Lear off on the imaginative restoration by which he will grasp . . . permanent values" (p. 191).

Stage, p. 187.

D. G. James, while observing that the Fool "is at the centre of the play's imagination," laments the boy's virtue, "pitiable in its helplessness; he, like others, is an image of helpless and suffering love; he exerts no influence upon the course of events." See Perplex, p. 130; cf. Elton, p. 314. This view appears to restrict value to efficacity, thus running directly counter to my argument in this chapter.

Danby discusses this ability to live both inside and outside the temporal order in terms of the medieval dream of the City of God, where "the good man had a ground whereupon to base himself, affirming faith in community while standing critically aside from the corrupt society" (p. 52).

A number of critics have also noted Lear's similarity in his anguish to the trials of Job: see Knight, p. 191; Ornstein, p. 272; Kirsch, p. 186; and R. W. Chambers, "King Lear," Glasgow University Publications, LIV (1940), rpt. in part in His Infinite Variety, ed. Paul Siegel (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1964), p. 364.

Heilman, p. 78. See also Knight, p. 179, and Ribner, p. 127, on Lear's madness as purgatorial; Traversi, p. 150, and L. C. Knights, p. 94, on Lear as Everyman. Russell A. Fraser presents the most colorful picture of Lear mad: crowned with flowers in his mad scene, "he figures as Christ, who is the king of fantasies." See Shakespeare's Poetics In Relation to 'King Lear' (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 127.

A number of critics have pointed out the correspondence between Lear themes and the Corinthian letters. Roger L. Cox constructs his entire analysis of the play in terms of Shakespeare's use of the varying types of "love": the subject of the play, he feels, is "love in all human relationships." See his fine chapter on Lear in Between Earth and Heaven (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), pp. 71-95. Thus the primary text for interpreting the play becomes in this context I Corinthians 13, Paul's classic statement of the meaning of Christian agape love. Cox's perceptive analysis complements the bulk of the argument concerning agape love which I have made in this chapter. However, I believe that the New Testament affinities with King Lear,
both in defining the nature of that unique love and in establishing the mood of paradox and transvaluation which is at the heart of the Christian experience, begin with the Gospels, particularly the Gospel of John, and are then developed in the Pauline and Johannine writings. The Grund- sätz underlying all New Testament writings is of course the epiphany of Christ himself, who makes possible the birth of the "new man" and the continuing possibility of the joyous and authentic life. On the idea of Lear as the "old man," see also Battenhouse, p. 272; Northrop Frye, p. 221; Ribner, p. 116; and Whitaker, p. 210, pp. 214-16.

29 Sherman Hawkins' article originally stimulated my thinking on the subject of the double implications of "kingship." Hawkins comments initially: "kingship is the central concern of the play" (p. 15); he then explores the ways in which Lear--and the reader--alter their conception of the nature of kingship. "What makes Lear kingly," Hawkins writes, "is finally his unlimited capacity for suffering: the energy, the intensity with which he embraces his passion and explores the ultimate depths of our condition--alienation, nakedness, madness, and solitude . . ." (p. 18). Hawkins notes too that in Act IV Lear "enters a different kingdom, in whose borders the meanings of things change," the kingdom of the spirit (p. 19).


31 That "twain" may refer to Adam and Eve as well as to Goneril and Regan has been noted by Battenhouse, pp. 271-2; Danby, p. 125; and Paul Siegel, Shakespearean Tragedy and the Elizabethan Compromise (New York: New York University Press, 1957), p. 186, hereafter cited as Compromise.

32 Nature of Man, p. 144.


34 Battenhouse refers to Cordelia as a "suffering servant," and several other critics have referred to her as "Christ-like": see Siegel, Compromise, p. 186; and S. L. Bethell, Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1944), pp. 66-68. A larger number of critics have discussed her actions in the play and/or her death in terms of "sacrifice." Whether that sacrifice be seen in religious terms--a "sacrifice" in the sense of "making holy," as Hawkins uses the term (p. 20)--or in the alternate popular sense of "waste," depends upon the philosophical disposition of the critic's overall interpretation, as has been discussed in earlier
notes (see particularly notes 3, 7, and 8). The spectrum could be sampled perhaps in comparing the comments of Hawkins and Granville-Barker: Hawkins insists that Cordelia's death is not "meaningless catastrophe," but rather is a "sacrifice," the price of "redemption." He continues: "Thus the Christian pattern reveals itself in Cordelia who is not Christian: whenever we press to the limits of human love and sacrifice, the face which emerges is the same" (p. 20). Granville-Barker employs the term in stating that Cordelia is a fitting "sacrifice" to a view which sees the tragic truth about life as including its "capricious cruelty" (Signet Lear, p. 258).

Whitaker, whose incisive analysis of Lear I have discovered since initially preparing this chapter, distinguishes between the two levels of action in the play: that occurring in the "order of nature," and that occurring in the "order of grace." "The plot of King Lear," Whitaker writes, "insofar as it operates in the order of nature, is a thorough working out of the concept that nature is order until man's folly destroys the equilibrium" (p. 211). The "moral regeneration" of Gloucester and Lear gives rise to a "totally new kind of structure," the "order of grace" (pp. 213 ff.). This concept accords with my distinction between the two kinds of kingdoms, that defined by I.i generally and by the subsequent power struggle of the play's "rationalists," and that "kingdom of God" whose realm enters the play with Cordelia, Kent, France, the Fool, and Edgar.

Love is defined in a rich variety of ways in the New Testament: Paul's definition in I Corinthians 13 has already been mentioned, as has the Letter to the Galatians' description of "the fruit of the Spirit." Battenhouse has suggested an additional definition which is to be found in Luke 7, where love is shown to be related to the acts of forgiveness (p. 282): after relating the story of the creditor and the debtors, Jesus asks: "which of them will love him most? Simon [the Pharisee] answered and said, I suppose he, to whom he forgave most" (Luke 7:42-43). That forgiveness calls forth love and personhood is dramatically instanced in Lear by Edgar's relationship with the blinded Gloucester and Cordelia's with her outcast father.

The Fool, p. 317.

39 Elton, who discusses these deflations of Edgar's moral confidence, uses this evidence to support his contention that this structural juxtaposition of bitter reality with abstract moralizing reinforces the play's scepticism (pp. 329-34).

40 Mack has noted the variety of roles Edgar plays simultaneously in the play: he is a "loving son, a choral device, a complement to Edmund, a voice of dislocation or disintegration in the storm, a thrust of hope and patience in Act IV, and possible a naïf in process of learning throughout the play" (p. 76). Combining and going beyond all these "functions" Mack assigns Edgar are of course the twin emphases embodied in his person: his enactment of the ideals of agape love, and his growth toward kingship.


43 Harley Granville-Barker characterizes Tom as the "living instance of all rejection. ... Lear's new vision of himself" (Signet *Lear*, p. 251). "'Poor Tom,'" he observes, "is in effect an embodiment of Lear's frenzy, the disguise no part of Edgar's own development" (p. 246). As stated earlier, however, Edgar's adoption of this disguise reflects his growing awareness of the uses of protective devices, and perhaps his intuition of the fittingness of this particular role to his present status as social and relational non-person. Mack sees Edgar's role as representative, acting out for the audience or reader "the forced alienation of the good man ... from security and civility in a corrupted world," an alienation which in the play is duplicated realistically in the stocking of Kent, the repudiation of Lear, and the mutilation of Gloucester (p. 67). Battenhouse draws a comparison between the straw hovel which Lear and Tom enter and the Bethlehem "stable"; for at this point both men are moving toward a rebirth in charity (p. 297).

44 While there is no doubt that the entry of Tom "intensifies the tragic pathos" of the play, as Levin suggests (Signet *Lear*, p. 266), Bradley mistakenly laments Tom's injurious effect on Lear's mind. One feels, Bradley states, that if Lear could only sleep after his prayer, that his mind would be saved; but at this moment Edgar, "the last man
who would willingly have injured Lear," enters, and "henceforth Lear is mad" (pp. 424-5). However, as is seen in my analysis of Edgar's role in the play, this encounter between beggar and displaced king moves the play's action toward healing.

45 Bultmann, p. 141.

46 Both Battenhouse and Kenneth Myrick comment on this action as a turning-point in the play (Tragedy, p. 270; "Christian Pessimism," in Shakespeare 1564-1964, pp. 68-9).

47 Robert L. Patten has suggested that the distinction existing here between grace and works may be related to the feminine and masculine aspects of salvation, Cordelia representing the feminine (grace), and Edgar the masculine (works).

48 L. C. Knights has written that "Shakespeare's total view of human life in this play has a toughness and actuality that makes most pessimism look like sentimentality. It is because the play has brought us to this vision of horror—seen without disguise or palliation—that the way is open for the final insights" (p. 99).
CHAPTER II: LITTLE DORRIT

_Little Dorrit_ deals expansively with the problem of evil in its multitudinous forms, as _King Lear_ had explored this metaphysical problem with the economy and concentration of tragedy and the particularly intense focus of that play. However, despite certain plot similarities and a striking correspondence in thematic concern between play and novel, until the appearance of Lionel Trilling's seminal essay in 1953 _Little Dorrit_ had not received the critical attention it so justly merited.\(^1\) An early review in Blackwood's lamented that _Little Dorrit_ was not like _Pickwick Papers_, while James Fitzjames Stephen assailed the novel's "cumbrous and confused" plot and its "uninteresting" characters.\(^2\) An 1858 review of the Cheap Edition attacked Dickens' disconnected world, his unskilled plotting, his loss of humor. Clearly Dickens' powers of excellence had declined since the earlier works.\(^3\) No less an authority than Dickens' biographer, John Forster, referred to "a droop in the author's invention," lamenting that "the old, unstinted, irrepressible flow of fancy had received temporary check."\(^4\) The novel's defect, Forster continued, "was less the absence of excellent character or keen observation, than the want of ease and coherence among the figures of the story, and of a central interest in the plan of it."\(^5\) George Gissing, while asserting repeatedly that _Little Dorrit_ contains some of Dickens' finest work, nonetheless believed that on the
whole the novel reflected the author's "domestic unhappiness"; and that occasionally "the hand of the master is plainly weary." Even so astute a critic of the late novels as Edmund Wilson agreed in 1939 with Forster's opinion that *Little Dorrit* marked the "ebb of Dickens' bursting exuberance." One of the major barriers preventing adequate appreciation of the stature of this novel is the characterization of the heroine herself, who in initial encounters often recalls for the reader or critic images of Rose Maylie, Little Nell, Florence Dombey, Ruth Pinch, and Esther Summerson—no doubt generally removed from the context of their individual novels. Forster, for instance, commented that "what is meant for attractiveness in the heroine becomes often tiresome by want of reality." "On the whole," Gissing remarked (in what he no doubt considered an understatement), "*Little Dorrit* is not a success in characterization." Wilson, emphasizing Amy's mothering role, termed her a "devoted and self-effacing little mouse, who hardly aspires to be loved"—his praise for Georgina Hogarth (who he thinks may have inspired that portrait) scarcely erasing the denigrating effect of that word "mouse." Even after Trilling, critics have persisted in dismissing Amy Dorrit lightly, without fair consideration of her central position in fully delineating the profound themes of the novel. Earle Davis, while acknowledging that *Little Dorrit* is "Dickens' deepest masterpiece"
with "the most complex of Dickens' narrative patterns," fails to adequately deal with one major factor in that complexity and that depth: *Little Dorrit*, he states, "suffers from an excess of goodness." Taylor Stoehr also criticizes Amy for being "too good," for knowing "the worst about herself and her condition," and therefore furnishing the plot with no mechanism of reversal or discovery. Ross Dabney, while praising Amy's "soundness in the midst of rot, purity in the midst of dirt," repeats the older criticism that as a character, Amy is not "particularly interesting." Donald Fanger judges Dickens' "angelic" characters in general as being "inferior" to his "devil" characters (like Rigaud) in that Dickens does not allow for "monstrous innocence" while he does clearly indicate that his devils are "monsters of wrongdoing." Fanger's comment perhaps moves us close to the basic objections to Amy Dorrit as character: readers and critics find delineations of evil figures inherently more fascinating than representations of good figures. The empirical world outside the novel, they reason, affords more instances of evil embodied than good embodied. Since the "devil" figure supports what we believe we have personally experienced of man's nature and his potential, the evil Rigaud or Merdle or Casby is judged more "realistic" than the quiet Amy Dorrit. Similarly, were the reader to accord both Amy and her moral opposites with strictly "emblematic" significance, their fictional personalities and attendant values ultimately
refer back to the empirical world, what the reader judges by his experience to be "reality."

In the creation of Amy Dorrit, however, it is just that conception of "reality" which is being called into question. Again, Trilling's essay has marked a turning-point: not so much from disparagement of Amy to adulation, as from facile dismissal of her characterization as "too good" or "insipid" toward some sane appreciation of Dickens' skill in creating a character so rich in symbolic suggestion, so central to his thematic purposes, so radically other, yet a part of the world in which she appears.

. . . the whole energy of the imagination of Little Dorrit is directed to the transcending of the personal will, to the search for the Will in which shall be our peace.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . .

. . . we do not reject, despite our inevitable first impulse to do so, the character of Little Dorrit herself. Her untinctured goodness does not appall us or make us mis-doubt her . . . Even the physical littleness of this grown woman, an attribute which is insisted on and which seems likely to repel us, does not do so, for we perceive it to be the sign that she is not only the Child of the Marshalsea . . . but also the Child of the Parable, the negation of the social will.15

Rather than impoverishing the novel in which she appears, Amy attracts an increasing wealth of symbolic suggestion which by its accumulated weight effects a gradual alteration of the reader's perception of the novel's persons and events. The role of Amy Dorrit, I am suggesting, accomplishes what the roles of France, Kent, the Fool, Cordelia,
and Edgar accomplished in the Lear universe: a radical revaluation of all the terms in which those separate worlds are commonly understood; a fresh and startling perspective on the temporal kingdoms of our common experience from the standpoint of eternal values.

Dickens effects this transvaluation of values—i.e., establishes a "fool," a small, fragile, retiring young woman as his normative figure—through a variety of means. The jungle of human society is courageously anatomised by Dickens; yet in its multiple disguises it is always associated with a ruined paradise—self-destructive and spiritually barren, a negation of human possibility. As in Lear, these wasteland images carry the implication that there is an order of nature and of the spiritual life which has been, and is being, perverted. For Dickens, the quiet but active goodness of Amy (whose name derives from the French aimer, to love, and âme, the soul) represents the proper natural and spiritual order: she demonstrates the morally "right" and "true" way to relate to one's family, beloved, and community—the realization of human possibility. Appropriately, she is associated with images of light (as on the cover of the monthly numbers and on the title page), order, fertility, and quiet (peace, harmony). Thematically, Little Dorrit is continually associated with freedom as opposed to inner repression (bondage); insight rather than blindness; spiritual wisdom and worldly folly instead of spiritual emptiness and worldly success; spiritual riches and material poverty in place of the goods
of this world. Each of these themes carries a wealth of New Testament suggestion which Dickens fully utilizes.

That Dickens in fact is creating a setting in which temporal and eternal values, earthly and heavenly "kingdoms," can interact, becomes clear in the opening pages of Book One. In enlarging the frame of reference, Dickens alerts the reader to the ethical and metaphysical issues he will be exploring: the tale will go beyond specific families, societies, and countries to embrace all of mankind in its universal misery and glory. The opening chapter is set in Marseilles, where the narrator observes that men from a variety of the world's nations, "descendants from all the builders of Babel," come to trade (p. 1). Two points are made on the opening page: though the people are of diverse languages and nationalities, all suffer from the intense heat and seem therefore to experience a shared humanity. Similarly, the story about to be unfolded, though dealing primarily with Englishmen of the early nineteenth century, is mankind's story as well. The mention of the Tower of Babel emphasizes the potential universality, this incident being but one in the Old Testament narrative of mankind's history.

The wealth of biblical and mythological associations triggered by the reference to the Tower of Babel (which will continue reverberating throughout the novel whenever "Babel" is mentioned) continues to accumulate in the following paragraphs. The sun does not warm and nourish, but scorches the
earth and its inhabitants: the water is foul, the vines are dusty, the trees are parched. "Everything that lived or grew, was oppressed by the glare . . ." (p. 2). The description of desert-like wasteland accords with the reference to Babel: this is a world in which both man and nature have been expelled from Eden. The distance man has "fallen" since that expulsion has literally been made concrete in that Marseilles prison which is now introduced: as physical entity and as manifestation of the social will, that prison duplicates the state of alienated consciousness and poisoned nature which exists outside its walls.

Without relinquishing its continual Old Testament undertone of fall and degeneration, the chapter now presents characters whose contrasting features suggest a medieval morality conflict: Rigaud, who is symbolically linked with Satan, the principle of evil; and John Baptist Cavalletto, who may symbolize here "Everyman," subject temporarily to the influence of the Devil but possessed as well with the capacity to be "baptised" or "converted." Significantly, the Satan figure in this chapter is a "cosmopolitan gentleman," who owns "no particular country," a "citizen of the world" (p. 7). Although he is by no means the sole representative in this novel of the evil will, Rigaud's cosmopolitan upbringing emphasizes both the omnipresence of evil in the world's countries, and the slick surface which conceals that moral and spiritual corruption. Rigaud is important for establishing the tone in which most of the characters
and actions are grounded: it is his nature to be served (i.e., to victimize others, as he dominates John Baptist); he manipulates his environment to suit his own interests and cultivates a façade which masks his true nature. His favorite expressions, "Death of my life!" and "Death of my soul!" capture at once the imminence of his beheading (a fate he escapes) and his voluntary damnation of his soul, the evidence of which repeatedly appears in his cruel, distorted smile. The conflict between good and evil intensifies with the arrival of the prison-keeper's daughter, emblem of "divine compassion" and type of Amy Dorrit, the adult "prison-child": both the morality play configuration of the scene between the child and her two "birds," and the presence of the child herself, draw on New Testament allusions to supplement and enrich the Old Testament and mythological associations the reader has been making throughout this chapter.

Chapters 2 and 3 elaborate with variations the themes of imprisonment, wasteland, and pride introduced in the opening chapter. The gentle earthiness of Cavalletto and the element of "divine compassion" embodied in the prison-child alike seem to be swallowed up in the mood of despair with which the place of quarantine and its inhabitants, and the city of London and its inhabitants, are described. Dickens unfolds a portrait of a world in which the universal condition of life is imprisonment, not an "accidental and exterior" imprisonment, but "inner and permanent"
bondage in all its parts. As Hillis Miller suggests, this sense of interior imprisonment is conveyed not only through images of "static enclosure" (the Marshalsea, the Clennam house, the Marseilles prison, etc.), but through references to the labyrinthine nature of reality and to the idea of life as a journey, the course determined by inexorable forces. Miller notes the significance of the labyrinth in symbolizing man's "metaphysical alienation," being lost "within a maze whose beginning, ending, or pattern cannot be perceived." The idea of purposeless movement is caught too by the references to life as a journey, during which man searches for a "haven" or for meaning but finds none. The three images of enclosure, labyrinth, and purposeless journey convey a pervasive sense in the novel that man is a stranger in this world; that he is powerless to control his destiny or escape any of the prisons which constrict the free exercise of his will.

What, then, in such a world as Dickens by his art is shaping in these first chapters, is the nature of the "ethical and metaphysical issues" which will be explored in Little Dorrit? I am suggesting that the ultimate concern in this novel is identical with the underlying concern which has been exposed in King Lear: to examine the fate of "goodness" in a predominately evil world, where Rigaud and his ilk are admired and catered to, and where human nature seems not only to accept but to demand Merdles and Barnacles. The despair of the hero, Arthur Clennam, arises in part from precisely
this consciousness of the disparity between what "is" (the existence of external forces which are hostile to the human will) and what he envisions "ought to be," a world in which "the gentle and \text{the} good" could thrive, in which human society were perhaps cast more in the mold of the prison-keeper's daughter and less in the mold of the diabolical and self-serving Rigaud. But throughout the entire first quarter of the novel, any possibility that goodness could survive in this hostile environment is severely questioned.  

For not only does it appear that evil is active and pervasive; but the settings in which positive values are commonly formed and nourished are curiously absent, or seriously perverted. For instance, the most intimate unit of human relationship, the family, which one feels ought to foster the sense of personal acceptance which would allow a child to become a loving and free human being, in this novel poisons, represses, and emotionally disables the child in ways which cripple his ability to cope with the entangling social prisons which await him in the larger world outside the family.

As it is described in this initial quarter, then, the world of \textit{Little Dorrit} reminds one of the barren heath, the physical/moral wasteland of the \textit{Lear} universe, where nature itself seems hostile to those values which distinguish human beings from beasts (\textit{Lear}) or from mechanical devices (\textit{Little Dorrit}).  

Integrity, order, fertility, harmony, affection, freedom, joy—-the stifling heat, the foul poisonous air of the Marseilles prison had shut these out. As the "imprisoned
air" and "imprisoned light" of the prison itself had introduced the first note in the novel of perverted pastoral imagery, so Rigaud upon his first appearance exemplifies a total perversion of the rational and spiritual faculties bestowed upon man by his creator, anticipating the appearance in the next chapter of Miss Wade and Tattycoram, and in Chapter 3 of the vindictively righteous Mrs. Clennam and her cruel, cold, screwed-down butler Jeremiah. The "prison taint" which blights the soul of Rigaud is reflected also in these four persons.

Concurrent in the novel with the facts of physical and spiritual confinement is the idea of metaphysical imprisonment—determinism or fatalism. Miss Wade expresses this view to the Meagles, who in their travels (to avoid Henry Gowan) and in their counseling of Arthur (concerning his vocation) have acted confidently out of the belief that man's will is free, that he can shape his destiny. Miss Wade asserts that in fact the opposite is true; man is not free:

"In our course through life we shall meet the people who are coming to meet us, from many strange places and by many strange roads . . . and what it is set to us to do to them, and what it is set to them to do to us, will all be done."

(p. 19)

Living by this code first absolves one from responsibility for others' welfare, and second, allows the evil will free reign in the belief that all actions are determined. It authorizes Miss Wade's sinister appropriation of Tattycoram
and her hiring of Rigaud to invade the Gowans' domestic privacy. It strikes the note of victimization of man by a superior power, thus anticipating the delineation of Mrs. Clennam's religious code in Chapter 3.

Mrs. Clennam embodies the combination of the three kinds of imprisonment: external, internal, and metaphysical. She is confined to her room on a "black bier-like sofa . . . propped up behind with one great angular black bolster like the block at a state execution" (p. 25), and dressed in black. Her kiss is glassy, and the flesh of the hand she presents her son is protected by worsted against human contact. She luxuriates in her isolation from the world's "hollow vanities" and in her imperviousness to the changing of the seasons. The spare, meager dining room below reflects the spare, meager meals consumed by the widow above; she makes no concessions to the life of the senses. Appropriately, the rooms in this house are hung with representations of the Plagues of Egypt; for again, above stairs the widow lives out her belief in the plagues of a wrathful god visited upon his enemies. The passages she selects to read from the Old Testament are those dealing with the extermination of a sinful people by a just Jehovah. Arthur had earlier identified this fierce piety with materialism of the most deadly kind:

"I am the only child of parents who weighed, measured, and priced everything; for whom what could not be weighed, measured, and priced, had no existence. Strict people . . . professors of a stern religion,
their very religion was a gloomy sacrifice of tastes and sympathies that were never their own, offered up as a part of a bargain for the security of their possessions."

(pp. 15-16)

The physical paralysis which prevents Mrs. Clennam's free movement can be seen, then, as an external manifestation of the absence of inward grace. She has killed love, joy, and life itself; she has foresworn human relation; all has been consumed in the fires of fanatical religious belief. The idol she worships binds her to endless revenge, self-denial, and bargaining—determines her actions as completely as the fatalistic code of Miss Wade purports to determine her life: both are able to rationalize their inhuman and unjust treatment of other human persons by the false light of a "religion" which is of their own devising.27

Four chapters presenting interlocking outer and inner prisons, secrets, blighted childhoods, and extensive imagery suggestive of a ruined paradise: the view of the world and the human condition is bleak. The "grave dark man" who is designated to be the hero of this novel speaks of the world as a labyrinth in which he is a "waif and stray" with no will; the dark closet in which he was shut as a child yielded to the exile of his youth and his present return to the special prison of England, in which he is an unloved, displaced "orphan" seeking his inheritance, his rightful measure of affection and human responsibility and social utility. The tears he sheds upon arriving "home" express his despair at
ever finding his way through the labyrinth of human experience, when no hint of greater love, duty, or usefulness has ever been his. How can he work out his own redemption, when the major sources of the love necessary to foster that redemption, religion and the family, have been as severely perverted as they are in this novel? Is any measure of freedom possible within such a stifling world? Can a man exercise his will for good—good for others, and fulfilment for himself? By the end of the first number, structure, characterization, and imagery are weighted toward a negative answer to these questions.

It may be that Dickens himself began the novel with such a pessimistic view in mind: it is well known that he first entitled the novel "Nobody's Fault," intending it as a satire on governmental and political irresponsibility. This title persisted for five months, through the writing of the first eleven chapters. Gradually Amy assumed a greater importance for him; and when the novel was advertised, it bore the title Little Dorrit. Butt and Tillotson suggest that the change of title reflects a change in Dickens' basic conception of the novel, from satire to an "optimism about humanity which sets the rest in perspective."

I want to argue, however, that the first quarter is all of a piece, that Dickens from the first planned to set Little Dorrit against the rest of the world. The intensity with which he sets forth the apparently dominant concerns of the novel, the evil which permeates human society in all its
parts, and the despair of the good man at the prospect of trying to transform this world or even to preserve his own integrity, is necessary to demonstrate Dickens' own unflinching confrontation of the problem of evil. But the novel is elaborately patterned to create a sense of the constant tension existing between the world of the time-bound, the "determined" or "imprisoned" persons whose movements apparently dominate plot, imagery, and structure, and the simultaneously existent world of Little Dorrit, whose free and loving actions in fact received the author's whole-hearted endorsement from the beginning. The novel deals extensively with the theme of false appearance and underlying reality (as in the false gentility of Rigaud/Blandois and William Dorrit), but nowhere so effectively as in its very structure. The irony of the two-part division of the book is created by the reader's growing awareness that "poverty" and "riches" can be either material or spiritual. The true "riches" are those Amy Dorrit represents: faith, hope, and active love. The true "poverty" is spiritual barrenness: a cold, mercenary, unfeeling heart.

The appearances of Little Dorrit, her surrogate, or an allusion to her, are strategically planned to provide an alternative perspective on the world of evil, time, and imprisonment. As was mentioned earlier in discussing the opening chapter of Dorrit, the first example of such an alternative vision appeared in the person of the prison-keeper's daughter:
The fair little face, touched with divine compassion, as it peeped shrinkingly through the grate, was like an angel's in the prison.

(p. 4)

As this innocent child is preparing the reader for the appearance of Little Dorrit, it is important to notice the particulars of the "feeding scene" which occur here: Rigaud's hands are soft, smooth, and well-shaped, the hands of a gentleman; and the food she is to give him befits his position. Nevertheless she instinctively fears and distrusts him. However, she places the lump of coarse bread in the "swart, scaled, knotted hands" of John Baptist "with ready confidence," and caresses his face with her hand. The imagery of the bird in the cage which is to become so prevalent in the novel appears here, and serves to differentiate the two prisoners strikingly: John Baptist, the "tame bird," kisses the little hand which feeds him, showing in his loving response to the girl's goodness his potential for redemption, anticipating the time when he will play joyfully with the Plornish children and chirp like a bird.

The imagery of the "caged bird" of course is part of the larger pattern of perverted pastoral imagery. In the true Arcadian or paradisial setting the birds fly about freely, singing harmoniously, as they do at the Meagles' home. In Casby's house, there is a "songless bird . . ." pecking at his cage, as if he were ticking" like the "grave clock" in the same room, both symbolic of the sterile "air-tight" environment of Casby's house, his mechanical repetition of
phony benevolent sentiments, and his grasping, life-negating business philosophy. Mrs. Merdle's parrot climbs around in unnatural positions on its golden cage like a social climber (p. 174); Mrs. Merdle herself, perched in her nest of crimson and gold, is expressly described as a "parrot of a larger species" (p. 290), the irony becoming more pointed by Mrs. Merdle's repeated references to her natural preference for the pastoral, more primitive life (p. 291). The footmen who stand in front of London's fashionable houses are described as "an extinct race of monstrous birds" with "bright parti-coloured plumage and white palls" (p. 240). The prisoners of the Marshalsea are of course "caged birds" (p. 319), as Mrs. Plornish's father is prisoner of poverty, "a poor little reedy piping old gentleman, like a worn-out bird" (p. 270). Rigaud, however, is a bird of prey who feeds on all those who are incapable of this innocent child's moral discrimination, who accept his surface gentility and fail to look at the soul within.31

Against this negative world picture Dickens repeatedly sets the figure of Little Dorrit, who, as E. D. H. Johnson says, embodies "the regenerative power of love . . . represented as inhering within the social scene."32 The problem becomes one of judging whether the virtue which Little Dorrit manifests possesses in fact "regenerative" or redeeming power, or whether instead the very desirability of the goodness she embodies makes her inability to transform the people she encounters, and makes the absence of her values in the world
at large, the more pitiful. To determine the answer to this problem, the analysis of Amy's structural, thematic, and symbolical relationship with her world must be continued.

If the "type" of Amy Dorrit has been represented in Chapter 1, the "anti-type" for which the reader has been prepared appears in Chapters 3, 5, 7, and 9. In Chapters 3 and 5, as in 1, the spiritual climate in which this "love-figure" makes an appearance is one little conducive to a mood of hope or joy: in Chapter 3, London is presented as a ruined Arcadia, through the heart of which "a deadly sewer ebbed and flowed, in the place of a fine fresh river" (p. 21). Even the falling rain is poisoned:

In the country, the rain would have developed a thousand fresh scents, and every drop would have had its bright association with some beautiful form of growth or life. In the city, it developed only foul stale smells, and was a sickly, lukewarm, dirt-stained, wretched addition to the gutters.

(p. 23)

Poverty and monotony combine to deprive the city's inhabitants of joy; furthermore, religious custom has dictated that everything be "bolted and barred that could by possibility furnish relief to an overworked people" (p. 21). 33

As Arthur prepares to enter his mother's house, he observes that nothing has changed, that it is as "dark and miserable as ever" (p. 23). One feels this about the city in general: those changes which affect Nature, which bring her a rebirth out of death, have occurred neither in the city, nor in his mother's house and heart. The kind of time which
governs the lives of the Londoners is represented by the "large, hard-featured clock" which stands on his mother's sideboard: a time which is not renewable or redeemable, but which witnesses the space of suffering which man endures from the cradle to the grave. The tears Arthur sheds are tears of despair, the marks of a nature with "hopeful yearnings" for the good and for love and acceptance, keenly aware of the difficulty of securing these things.

One discovers in retrospect three items which serve to undercut the pessimistic vision presented in this chapter. First, Arthur's tears express his bitter awareness that human relationships as he has experienced them have not met his deepest human needs. That his hope is being defeated does not destroy the validity of that for which he longs: the gentle and the good, a sense of purposiveness, mutually enriching relationships. The absence of fulfillment is felt by the reader to be exactly that—a void, a lacking; this is not the way man "ought" to live.

The second item is the mention of the "beneficent history of the New Testament," the knowledge of which has been denied Arthur. Sunday is associated in his mind with the perversions of religion which he knew as a child. Yet the twisted uses man has made of religious truths and of the scriptures themselves do not change the truths themselves; that Dickens directs the reader to feel that Mrs. Clennam's beliefs and practices are "perversions" makes one reconsider what truth has been distorted. For Dickens, the lessons
of the Bible should foster, rather than fortify the human heart against, "sweetness of temper, natural affection, and gentle intercourse" (p. 22).\textsuperscript{36} The virulence with which he condemns Mrs. Clennam's false religion insures that the reader will observe closely her spiritual opposite, Little Dorrit, when she appears.

The third element which undercuts the force of the steady build-up of death and prison imagery is simply the physical presence of Little Dorrit in the room in which Arthur holds his homecoming interview with his mother. Her presence cannot be accidental; even the mention of her name is strategically placed, occurring as it does immediately after Affrey relates to Arthur the story of her marriage to Jeremiah.\textsuperscript{37} Arthur asks Affrey the identity of the "girl" he had seen in his mother's room. Arthur's interest in Little Dorrit, which first appears with this question, will develop into the true "love story," a relationship which will also reveal to him the fullness of that "beneficent history" of which he has been unaware, and literally as well as figuratively dry the tears of disappointment he had shed earlier in this chapter.

In the second and third numbers one finds the same theme/counter-theme movement which was present in Chapters 1 and 3 of the first number. It was during the writing of the third number that Dickens wrote to Forster that he hoped he could "make \textit{Little} Dorrit very strong in the story";\textsuperscript{38} however, in the second number he has already made it clear
that he intends to use Little Dorrit as a moral contrast to individual and social irresponsibility. Of necessity she lives in the world, London, and the Marshalsea, all shown by Chapter 7 to be prison-like; but her life refutes the statement that to be human is to be imprisoned, worked upon, and destroyed by impersonal social and political forces.

The first chapter of the second number picks up the Old Testament/New Testament contrast which had been suggested in Chapters 1 and 3 of the first number, and identifies more firmly Mrs. Clennam with the Old Testament and Little Dorrit with the New. The imagery associated with Mrs. Clennam in Chapters 3 and 5 prepares the reader to identify the moral character of others in the fallen world of the novel; and thus points out repeatedly the contrast between those who thrive in this society, and the ones who stand against it. The chapter is ironically entitled "Family Affairs," but the "affairs" are matters of business rather than affairs of the heart or hearth. Images of death and enclosure are even more prevalent than in Chapter 3: on the first page alone, the city clocks strike reminding one of the cacophony created the day before by the maddening striking of the city church bells. Mrs. Clennam luxuriates in her approaching death; seated at her business desk, she appears to be "performing on a dumb church organ," a church ceremony with the heavenly music gone; her thoughts are a "gloomy labyrinth" (p. 33). Her religion is inseparably coupled in her mind with business methods; she has fabricated an idol who deals with human
beings as she has dealt with debtors, and has attached this image to the Jehovah of the Old Testament.\(^40\) Thus her paralysis is "just," "righteously" inflicted upon her for her "sins." The austerity she practices has been "offered up as a part of a bargain for the security of [her] possessions," as Arthur had noted previously (p. 16). Arthur characterizes his parents' business practices as "grasping at money and . . . driving hard bargains" (p. 36); the same mentality Mrs. Clennam attributes to the Almighty, with whom she is always "balancing her bargains . . . posting up the entries to her credit, strictly keeping her set-off, and claiming her due" (p. 37). The narrator observes:

Great need had the rigid woman of her mystical religion, veiled in gloom and darkness, with lightnings of cursing, vengeance, and destruction, flashing through the sable clouds. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, was a prayer too poor in spirit for her. Smite Thou my debtors, Lord, wither them, crush them; do Thou as I would do, and Thou shalt have my worship: this was the impious tower of stone she built up to scale Heaven. (p. 34)

Mrs. Clennam's religion, then, leaves no room for love, not even familial love, the closest natural human bond of affection. Her heart is shut against her adopted son as tightly as the oysters she customarily consumes.\(^41\) No hint of the love freely offered man in the personhood of the "Son" of God appears in this family conference; on the contrary, the vengeful old woman responds to Arthur's earnest request for confidence by threatening to renounce him if he broaches the topic of reparation again. In biblical times, she reminds
him, "pious men, beloved of the Lord" would have cursed their sons, exiled them, sent them out to perish, "down to the baby at the breast" (p. 37). She appears to associate piety with abuse, torture, and murder of one's own children. What Mrs. Clennam suggests she is magnanimously sparing him (e.g., punishment for inquiring about the family's business ethics) she has in fact already done to him, the child given her to nurture from babyhood. He has not been forgiven the curse of his birth, but has been "trained by main force; broken, not bent; shipped away to the other end of the world before [he] was of age, and exiled there . . ." (p. 15). He is perishing now for lack of spiritual and emotional sustenance as surely as if he stood under a divinely-inspired curse.

Little Dorrit is present in the room during this interview, as she was present during the last one: present as a counterstatement to the alienation, hatred, darkness, and bondage represented by Mrs. Clennam and her religious beliefs. At this point in the novel Little Dorrit exists merely as a symbol, an anticipation of her actions which follow in the numbers ahead. Little is revealed about her save her small stature, her occupation, and her tidiness.

Her diminutive figure, small features, and slight spare dress, gave her the appearance of being much younger than she was. A woman, probably of not less than two-and-twenty, she might have passed in the street for little more than half that age.

(p. 38)

Her child-like appearance in itself suggests a central New Testament theme: that of spiritual rebirth. Christ's words
to his disciples in Matthew 18 provide several ideas relevant to Chapter 5, and consequently to the entire novel. The disciples ask Jesus who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

(Matthew 18:2-6)

The same idea is repeated later in Matthew and in Luke:

Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 19:14)

Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

(Luke 18:16-17)

Illumined by these scriptural allusions, Little Dorrit's stature assumes new significance. Like a child, she is to be protected, being defenseless and slight. The moral worth of others is to be measured by their treatment of this "little one." (Curiously, Dickens makes her the dependent of a woman who has woefully discharged her duty to the gentle "little one" given her to rear.) Most
importantly, Amy's diminutive appearance suggests that she might possess the child's innocence, freedom of spirit, and humility, virtues which allow the spirit of love to enter and direct one's life. 43 "Being like a little child" describes a quality of being, a willingness to abandon pride and show, to shake off the "old man" aged by guilt and anxiety and become faithful and trusting like a child. In all three quotations from the Scriptures, there is the specific statement that unless one be converted (changed) and acquire this quality of being, he will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

The pointedness of Dickens' emphasis on Amy's size, her shyness, her consciousness of "being out of place among the three hard elders," her humility, becomes clear when one remembers the contrast Jesus himself makes between the child-like and the Pharisees. He who possesses a child-like spirit will enter the kingdom of heaven; while those who attempt to storm heaven by adhering to a strict code of laws, who make a parade of their piety, who lack human compassion, are to be severely judged. 44 It is clear that Dickens intends to identify Mrs. Clennam with the Pharisees, who are like those of whom Isaiah wrote,

Honoreth me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from me.

(Mark 7:6)

In Matthew 23 the Pharisees' legalism (i.e., bondage to the law) and religious show are juxtaposed against the image of
Christ as servant:

He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

(Matthew 23:11-12)

(In Luke this theme occurs immediately preceding the passage about "little children," Luke 18:14). In contrast to those who have been spiritually reborn, who have been freed from the bondage of sin and the law, who are as "little children," the Pharisees are

like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

(Matthew 23:27)

Even so, Jesus continues, the Pharisees "outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within . . . are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matthew 23:27-28). The identification of this attitude with Mrs. Clennam is quite evident point by point, even to Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees' tithing (supposedly an outward sign of inward piety) while omitting "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith . . ." (Matthew 23:23). As the Pharisees' observance of religious form conceals an inner moral corruption, an absence of the true spirit of faith, so Mrs. Clennam's fanatical piety masks a soul which is a "labyrinth," lacking compassion, joy, and freedom, a soul "full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness . . . full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

Little Dorrit of course makes no religious show, adheres to no dogma; she mentions the New Testament but once,
and that in her final interview with Mrs. Clennam. Nevertheless as she moves through the novel and is seen in relation to the world's other inhabitants, the reader comes to identify her with the life lived in Christian freedom. Her presence in Chapters 3 and 5, supported by the actions of the true child, the jailer's daughter in Chapter 1, and by the wealth of scriptural allusion suggested by her childlike appearance, has introduced significant new imagery and themes into the otherwise unrelieved prison atmosphere of the first six chapters. In Chapter 7 Dickens begins to expand those images and themes—light, freedom of will, forgiveness, affection, regeneration, innocence—and to show them in direct every day conflict with evil men and entangling events.

The chapter devoted wholly to Little Dorrit is placed strategically, alternating with chapters presenting internal and external prisons: between the chapter on the "father" of the Marshalsea, the self-pitying and irresolute William Dorrit, and the chapter in which Arthur Clennam enters the Marshalsea expressly to offer assistance to the Dorrits but becomes its unwilling prisoner. Although in all other ways the men are different, Amy's father and Arthur are alike in their want of "will"—Mr. Dorrit's essentially weak nature having been further corrupted by the poison of the debtor's prison, and Arthur's essentially generous and affectionate nature having been disappointed from childhood. Chapter 7 recounts the
ways in which the older man has depended upon Little Dorrit for physical (and emotional) survival, revealing in the process the qualities this small person possesses which will enable her to regenerate the spirit of the younger.

Two points are stressed in the beginning of this chapter which have particular bearing on the development of Little Dorrit's career as healer. It had been made plain in the previous chapter that Amy's father is at best an inadequate parent, and at worst an emotional leech. The Lear-Cordelia, Gloucester-Edgar familial relationships are re-created in the Dorrit-Amy relationship in gruesome variations: the parent dragging the child away from health with his own death-like obsessions and needs (a psychological recreation of Lear's banishment of Cordelia and Gloucester seeking Edgar's death); the child loving sorrowfully, her affection not returned, endlessly working to restore her father's spiritual health. But Amy's godfather, Bob the turnkey, seems to fill the vacant place of father: the collegians, seeing Bob's tender care for the small child, often remarked that the bachelor turnkey "had been cut out by nature for a family man" (p. 49). It is he who takes Amy to the fields outside the prison, outside the confines of the city, to pick grass and flowers and wander about freely. A symbolic identification of Amy with nature, the pastoral, and freedom is created by the description of the two friends' "Sunday excursions."

When in the next paragraphs Dickens reveals that the turnkey
pondered for years the matter of bequeathing Amy his small savings, and comments that Bob could find no satisfactory way to do this, and "died intestate after all," the irony is clear: the "inheritance" Bob has transmitted to Amy was not, could not have been, monetary. He bequeathed her his paternal affection, the quality of which was manifest in their country walks, and symbolized by his occupation, "turnkey." Love is the most valuable inheritance which can be bestowed upon one person by another; the story of Bob and Amy illustrates this, and prepares the reader to judge the "worth" of William Dorrit's monetary inheritance, and the "worth" of that bequest withheld from Amy by Mrs. Clennam.

The second major point made at the beginning of this chapter concerns Little Dorrit's precocious human sensitivity. Very early in her life she becomes aware of the prison/freedom opposition; awareness leads to pity (fellow-feeling for her father and the other "listless" prisoners), and pity grows into protection (action arising from caring). After her mother's death, Dickens writes, "the protection that her wondering eyes had expressed towards her father, became embodied in action" and Amy "took upon herself" the burden of being a father to the "Father of the Marshalsea" (p. 51). "Through this little gate, she passed out of childhood into the care-laden world." She assumes the role of parent to all three members in her family, the role of father. Indeed she is the only true parent in the novel (with the exception of Arthur, who is a responsible "father" to Little Dorrit herself,
his "adopted daughter"; and she muses quite early that Arthur would make a "good father," thinking of course of her own children and not of herself). She lives responsibly, as one would expect a parent to live, providing her brother and sister first with schooling, then attempting to equip them with the skills necessary not only to earn a living, but to improve their lot and eventually escape the Marshalsea. "Recognised as useful, even indispensable" to her family (p. 52), all of her efforts seem lavished on intractable material; she can provide for the family's physical necessities—food, clothing, cleanliness (i.e., p. 61)—but cannot transmit her own spiritual strength, her own ability to live in freedom within an imprisoning environment.

Here as in Lear the good act is felt to be intrinsically valuable, despite its apparent defeat. If her plans for Tip repeatedly fail, if Fanny relentlessly follows her own self-destructive will, if her father's illusions cause pain and discomfort to others, Amy's loving actions nonetheless demonstrate the responsible and the "right" way to care for one's family. To love others, and to implement that love in practical ways which will foster the physical well-being and spiritual growth of the loved ones, though ineffectual, is the normative way to relate to one's family, and by extension, to the human community which is the family of man.

Amy "was inspired to be something which was not what the rest were, and to be that something, different and laborious, for the sake of the rest" (p. 52). The connection
between that "inspiration" and New Testament revelation is
made more explicit by Dickens' emphasis on Amy's "self-
devotion to the lowliest work in the lowliest way of life,"
i.e., the work of a servant. Her motivating inspiration is
akin to Arthur's belief in action rather than words, in
"duty on earth, restitution on earth, action on earth."

[He could never mount on wings of words
to heaven . . . Strait was the gate and
narrow was the way; far straiter and nar-
rower than the broad high road paved with
vain professions and vain repetitions,
motes from other men's eyes and liberal
delivery of others to the judgment—all
cheap materials costing absolutely no-
thing.

(p. 235)

That is, rather than professing to love mankind (as Casby
and Dorrit seem to) or God (as Mrs. Clennam does), she per-
forms the works of love.

This idea is central to the Gospel of John, as Victor
Furnish has demonstrated. Throughout the "Farewell Dis-
courses" (Chapters 13-17), Jesus emphasizes his "new command-
ment," "That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that
ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

This is my commandment, that ye love one
another, as I have loved you. Greater
love hath no man than this, that a man
lay down his life for his friends.

(John 15:12-13)

How is this "love" (variously written as agape or philos)
to be manifested? In answer to this question Jesus washes
the disciples' feet, thus providing his friends with an
example to follow in their relationships with one another.
The footwashing, this servant's action, is for Jesus an actual instance of the divine mission of love for which the Father has sent him. As Furnish observes, this "footwashing" is the Johannine substitute for the institution of the eucharist, which occurs in the Synoptic gospels at this same point in Jesus' life, his farewell meal with the disciples. Thus in John the meaning of the love of God for his Son, the Son for the disciples, and the disciples for the world is to express itself in concrete ways. The metaphysical and the ethical are interrelated: one "abides" in love (the metaphysical dimension), but the fruits of that love are one's actions in the ethical realm.

As Chapter 9 occupies a central structural position, falling midway through this quarter, so also does it mark a high point in the presentation of the themes and imagery surrounding Amy Dorrit. The motto for this chapter, and perhaps for the entire novel, could be Arthur's thought that "Little Dorrit seemed the least, the quietest, and weakest of Heaven's creatures" (p. 70). That "seemed," clearly written and unchanged as early as the original manuscript, indicates Dickens' awareness of the irony of the observation: the surface weakness hides spiritual strength, as the surface tone of this quarter, despair, masks the underground reality of hope and possibility present in Amy's actions. She does not appear again until Chapter 14, that is, after two full numbers; yet she continues to influence the reader's attitude toward the material presented in intervening chapters.
Certainly by the end of Chapter 9 one feels that the humility, compassion, sensitivity, and orderliness of Little Dorrit run directly counter to the supposedly dominant tone of despair in the quarter, and suggest a viable alternative response to human experience. Born and reared in the most "determining" of environments (she is the "small bird, reared in captivity," who "tamely fluttered" into the "cage" of the Marshalsea (p. 75)), Little Dorrit yet is free--free to love, free to create order in what she knows to be a chaotic world.

The chapter title itself discloses the paradoxical nature of Little Dorrit's service: she is "little," yet is "mother," source of stability and fountain of love not only for her family within the prison walls, but for that family in the outside prison of the world. She orders and protects the lives of Uncle Frederick and Fanny insofar as she is able, given the broken "crippled" will of the one and the false pride of the other. The chapter concludes by introducing the idiot Maggie, for whom Little Dorrit is "Little Mother," the good parent who behaves responsibly toward her child. Maggie is of course childlike in mind, "never to be more than ten years old, however long she lived," as Amy has retained a childlike spirit into adulthood. Most significantly, Maggie is described in terms which recall to mind Matthew 25, for she is by want of intellect and general physical appearance the "least" of human creatures, weak and foolish; yet Amy lavishes affection on her, concerned about her human needs rather than her worldly station. As
this free offering of love ennobles Amy, so it also ennobles the foolish Maggie, who is "wise" enough to accept, cherish, and return Amy's love.

Sandwiched in between Arthur's trip to the clarionet shop (fittingly located above "Mr. Cripples' Academy") and his encounter with Maggie, Arthur speaks with Little Dorrit on the Iron Bridge. In a novel where irony and paradox are so pervasive, the symbolism of this location must not be overlooked: "iron" symbolizes the hardened heart; but the meeting is of the most tender kind. Arthur's heart is warmed anew by pity for Amy's hard lot, "her long acquaintance with the squalid needs of life, and . . . her innocence," and with admiration for "her solicitude for others," her "affection," "compassion," and "great soul of fidelity" lavished on an undeserving family (pp. 70-72). What Arthur does not realize is that his relationship with this quiet young woman (who already loves him) is to provide the "bridge" by which he crosses from despair to hope, from debilitating anxiety to spiritual health. 50 This chapter suggests, and Chapters 13 and 14 make quite clear, that Little Dorrit embodies "all the gentle and good things [Arthur's] life had been without," of which he had previously only dreamed, toward which his soul yearned (p. 119). Dickens builds dramatically toward that recognition on the part of the reader; for it is essential that the Amy/Arthur relationship have spiritual as well as romantic implications. It is not only Arthur who is to be converted—"saved," "healed"—but the
reader as well.

The second quarter builds upon the patterns established in the first, with Little Dorrit's values juxtaposed to those of the "prison" world. The dominant movement in this quarter appears to be the rising fortunes of the Dorrits, accompanied by the emergence of Pancks' conspiracy to spring the Dorrits from the Marshalsea.\footnote{51} The ascending movement in the Dorrit family plot is accompanied by a corresponding intensification of the power of the evil will. Rigaud with his gentlemanly façade insinuates his way into the Clennam household. The falsity of Casby's "charity" remains undetected, as with William Dorrit's similar "benevolence." Mr. and Mrs. Merdle, idolized by Society because of their reputed wealth, are introduced to the reader. As the Dorrits, the Merdles, and Rigaud prosper increasingly, Arthur's and Amy's fortunes appear to decline. Pet marries the cruel and irresponsible Henry Gowan, thus crushing Arthur's last dream of romance. Similarly, Amy despairs of securing Arthur's erotic attachment, so insistent is that man on regarding her alternately as a child and as a "strong heroine in soul" (p. 283), thus depersonalizing her, as Gold has recognized.\footnote{52} As Job lamented long ago, in this world the wicked seem to prosper and the good suffer (Job 21:7-14).

But in this second quarter as in the first, Dickens is at work undercutting the surface world-view. Pancks' conspiracy, for instance, while it is connected with the rise in the Dorrits' fortunes, a movement which the reader might
anticipate will have a demonic rather than a beneficial effect on all concerned, was initially inspired by his admiration for "the quiet little seamstress," whose happiness he disinterestedly wanted to promote. Although in the novel his two attempts to promote the good of those he respects (Little Dorrit here, Arthur later) result in disaster, his association with Little Dorrit and the "fools" who are her friends--Maggie, the Plornishes, John Baptist--enriches his life and gives him the strength later to confront Casby, thus freeing himself from bondage to a dehumanizing way of life.

The opening chapter of this quarter, Chapter 19, reveals with new intensity the sham of William Dorrit's life. All the relations in which he is seen are poisoned by his egotism and the "maudlin pity for himself" (p. 166). He patronizes, thus degrading, his brother Frederick. He exudes Casby-like benevolence to the collegians, thus depersonalizing them. To the daughter who "alone had saved him to be even what he was" he behaves shamefully, expecting on top of her life of faithful service to him the sacrifice of her very personhood--marriage to a man she detests, merely to secure for himself an extra measure of attention and respect within the prison. "The impurity of his prison" has "worn into the grain of his soul" (p. 167); his life is indeed "blighted," and of little worth to anyone, as he observes. Though one feels finally that Amy is unsuccessful in her efforts to redeem this man, her devotion to this "worthless" creature exhibits the saintliness of which man is capable; she "comforted" her father's
wasted heart upon her innocent breast, and turn[ed] to it a fountain of love and . . . fidelity that never ran dry or waned through all his years of famine" (p. 167). If man can sink as low as William Dorrit, so also can he rise as high as this frail woman. While Dorrit lies in a physical and spiritual "living grave," Amy is a fountain of gentleness and compassion, associated symbolically with "the sunrise on rolling rivers . . . the sunrise on great forests where the birds were waking and the trees were rustling" (p. 169), images of abundance, order, and freedom.

Dickens intends that the reader be reminded of this scene in which the fullness of love is revealed when encountering the maze of Fanny's music hall, which lacks both light and air; the artificiality of Mrs. Merdle's residence, and that woman's coldness; and Fanny's view of human relations as "using" others, making other people "pay" for their lack of proper respect. Suitably Fanny calls Amy a "little Fool"; for she is out of place both at Mrs. Merdle's and generally in the scheme of things where persons are manipulated for self-interest. As this chapter is juxtaposed to the last, in which the beauty and dignity of human love were revealed, Fanny and Mrs. Merdle are by association strangely likened to the parrot who tears at his food with his cruel beak and dances around on the outside of his golden cage, while Little Dorrit, the "fool," places these social gyrations in perspective merely by her quiet presence.

The reader remembers Little Dorrit too when confronting
for the first time Mr. Merdle, whom Society adores. The burden of his guilt casts a shadow of death upon Merdle which darkens his life from within as the shadow of the Marshalsea wall exerts a "darkening influence" on the lives of the Dorrit family. In addition to images of darkness and imprisoning compulsive behavior which are associated with Merdle, this eminently successful "man of business" epitomizes the contrast between the "goods of this world" (the topic of discussion at Merdle's dinner, pp. 183-5) and the spiritual riches of Little Dorrit, who is sitting in the prison stitching new shirts for her father. In the third quarter this opposition becomes more pronounced, as Dickens begins to pull in New Testament references to the connection between kinds of "riches" and the kingdom of heaven. (Who "inherits" the kingdom of heaven?) In this quarter the theme is only touched upon; but it is present in the obviously ironic references to Merdle's "disinterestedness" and "liberality," and the possible direction of Merdle funds into African missions, or distribution in ways which will further "the welfare of our brethren at large" (p. 184). Even assuming Merdle to have the money he is purported to have, such wholesale "charity" makes a mockery of the word, being both condescending and insincere. The sphere of Little Dorrit's action and influence is small, but her charitable acts are unselfish, sincere, and responsible.

In the concluding chapter of four out of the five numbers in this quarter the Arthur-Amy relationship is
advanced, and the remaining number carries the interpolated tale of "The Princess and the Tiny Woman" in its middle chapter. Although Amy's romantic hopes are being frustrated at this point, still she continues to exert a strong influence on Arthur. The example of her life supports his belief that man should act generously and compassionately. To him she is a "strong heroine in soul," though a "slender child in body"; while he grasps the essential paradox of her personhood, he fails to see that the care she lavishes on her unappreciative family, the "light and strength" (p. 283) of her person, are being offered to him. The possibility of knowing for the first time youth and joy, of finding new life and new hope, is bound up in this woman he persists in regarding as his "child." In Number 6 the time of his prison captivity is foreshadowed in the context of the "comfort" she will bring him, i.e., redemption through her love.

In Chapter 32, despondent over the loss of Pet to Henry Gowan, Arthur voices his consciousness of his advancing age, his disappointed hopes:

> Forgetting how grave I was, and how old I was, and how the time for such things had gone by me with the many years of sameness and little happiness that made up my long life far away, without marking it . . .
> I fancied I loved some one.

(p. 283)

The "dead hand of the past" has become now for Arthur the dead hand of the present, in which instead of his Flora and his Pet with the roses, he is joined symbolically with Pet's dead twin, and has become a "very much older man" for whom
joy and sexual fulfilment are no longer so much as a dream. One irony of this situation is that he is speaking with the woman who will show him that it is possible for a man to claim love at any age; he may be chronologically old but spiritually young. The reader may grasp this irony but fail to see that a portion of Arthur's despair is self-created; for Amy represents in relation to this man not only a possible sexual partner, but the model for free and joyous living in the midst of the most stifling circumstances. He is keenly aware of her goodness, and treasures her friendship as precious in his affection-starved life. He observes at one point that

the little creature . . . [was] the only person between whom and himself there were ties of innocent reliance on one hand, and affectionate protection on the other; ties of compassion, respect, unselfish interest, gratitude, and pity.

(p. 136)

Yet he cannot free himself from the bondage of despair, believing himself to be unlovable, unable to make Kierkegaard's "leap of faith" into personal freedom.

The five numbers in the third quarter describe an increasing of the gulf which had previously separated Little Dorrit from the code by which society lives. Numbers 11 and 12 reveal the prosperous Dorrits' "complaint," that "something is wrong with Amy." The name of Merdle, however, is "the name of the age" (p. 362), and the man himself is extolled as "the shining light of the time" (p. 384). Mrs. General, "a model of accurate dressing, and whose manner was perfect,
considered as a piece of machinery" (p. 326), enjoys the respect of William Dorrit, while Amy, by refusing to abide by the life-negating code of "varnish," "habitually hurt[s]" him (p. 358). The gentlemanly façade of Rigaud, now Blandois, epitomizes "something right somewhere," the life which is all sham surface, all self-interest: he is respected, while Little Dorrit and Pet are neglected.

As Dickens exposes repeatedly the false personal and business relations of Dorrit, Mrs. General, Blandois, and Merdle, he also brings forward the perversions of healthy erotic love which are a predictable part of this way of life. A little-emphasized marital relationship is the Merdles', where the wife has been chosen as an object on which to display the outward signs of one's wealth. The woman herself is described impersonally as "the bosom," a "snowy bosom" which contains no human feeling, much less marital affection. Fanny suspects the equally frigid Mrs. General of having "designs" on her father, ludicrous in view of that woman's distaste for the "shocking," i.e., anything to do with human life:

> Passion was to go to sleep in the presence of Mrs. General, and blood was to change to milk and water.  
> (p. 338)

The third perversion of romantic love is the marriage of Pet and Henry Gowan.

The romance which holds center stage in the quarter, however, is that of Fanny and Sparkler, a horrible parody
of love and courtship, with Fanny willfully sacrificing her future in order to revenge herself on Mrs. Merdle.

He little thinks how I would retort upon her if I married her son. I would oppose her in everything, and compete with her. I would make it the business of my life.

(p. 444)

The final sentence resounds with Dickensian irony: for as in earlier works, one immediately asks the question, "Is this kind of business a worthy goal for one's life?" What, indeed, should the "business of life" be? In this novel alone the question is much insisted upon: for there are many different examples of people engaged in "business": Merdle, Casby, Jeremiah and Mrs. Clennam, the practical Mr. Meagles; and Pancks. Doyce deliberately separates himself from this category, telling Arthur that "no inventor can be a man of business, you know" (p. 138). The business of his life is the pursuit of the truth. Pancks, however, asserts that the world of business is all-consuming:

"But I like business," said Pancks . . . .
"What's a man made for?"
"For nothing else?" said Clennam.
_pancks puts the counter question_ "What else?"

(p. 115)

In his private life, of course, Pancks daily refutes the callousness of this statement, as does Riah of Our Mutual Friend, by living Dickens' alternative model for mankind, the charitable life. As Marley tells Scrooge, the archeotypal Dickensian man of business:
"Business! . . . Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business."

(A Christmas Carol, p. 33)

Fanny, though not involved with finance, orders her affairs by the same sterile, life-denying pattern as Scrooge, Merdle, Casby, and Mrs. Clennam: hers is a misdirected life, the business of which is the sale of her body for the exaction of meaningless revenge. One thinks here of the words of the Westminster Confession: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." To set for one's goal revenge in place of love of God and service to one's fellow creatures is nothing short of blasphemy.

The tension between the two worlds represented respectively by varnish and Little Dorrit is at its high point in this quarter. Dickens keeps Amy's normative values before the reader's mind in order to provide a standard by which the movements of the other story lines might be judged. Although Amy has been rejected by her father, Mrs. General, and Fanny, and displaced from her role as loving servant by the decorative family attendants, she still functions as the moral mirror of the events and persons around her. For instance, when Pet faints, Fanny calls for the maid to help, while Little Dorrit ministers personally to the young woman (p. 327). Mr. Dorrit and Fanny consider "nursing" and other acts of kindness a "menial" activity, suited only
for the prison life (pp. 340-1). For Little Dorrit, of course, such acts are the natural expression of love and freedom, whereby one person bears the burdens of another "and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). The deeds of mercy and personal care are the more necessary in the prison of the outside world, which as Amy realizes resembles "a superior sort of Marshalsea" (p. 382).

In this quarter Little Dorrit is not as isolated as it appears, although she feels "displaced," having no useful work to do, "no one to think for, nothing to plan and contrive, no cares of others to load herself with" (p. 347). However, she finds in Pet a kindred spirit and in her Uncle Frederick a champion. Frederick, who so long has accepted the condescension of his brother without protesting, cannot stand by and see Amy treated badly. His outburst gives voice to the disgust the reader feels at the family's shocking treatment of the one who had provided for them so faithfully during their lean years. To Fanny and Mr. Dorrit, however, Frederick is a fool, incapable of taking care of himself, a "Wreck," as Dorrit comments. Like Amy, there "must be something wrong in him somewhere," for him to protest their cruel disregard of their "affectionate invaluable friend," their "more than mother." To their credit, Fanny and Tip are vaguely touched by this momentary puncturing of their illusory world. Dorrit, however, seems to rationalize Frederick's accusations by attributing his outburst to his weakened faculties. Although Frederick quickly runs out of energy and shuffles out
of the room in his old manner, his witness has been made. The effect his speech has is principally on the reader, not only in pointing out clearly the deification of false values which has been taking place during the Dorrits' period of prosperity, but also in linking Amy once again with the "weak and foolish of the world" for whom she has always had consideration and who in turn are "wise" enough to recognize her real worth.

God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen.

(I Corinthians 1:18-9)

It is relevant here to confront the problem of the ending of the novel, in which it appears that for all of Amy's goodness she has been able to "save" only one man. She has affected decisively the lives of others in this world, however. In the first quarter Dickens, through Arthur, emphasized Amy's "redeeming" effect on Maggy, the idiot. Her brain damaged by illness, her spirit by neglect, Maggy was one of the hopeless forgotten ones of London until befriended by Amy. "At length, in course of time," Amy tells Arthur,

"Maggy began to take pains to improve herself, and to be very attentive and very industrious; and by degrees was allowed to come in and out as often as she like, and got enough to do to support herself, and does support herself . . . ."

(p. 74)
Arthur of course recognizes that the cause of this miraculous change has been the love and patience of Little Dorrit, who has met in this "fool" of limited intelligence, Maggy, a heart receptive to her ministrations as the sophisticated of the world are not. In the second quarter Dickens emphasized Little Dorrit's thoughtfulness "of the feelings of the weak," her respect for the human dignity of even so reduced a character as Old Nandy, who is made by Amy's attention to feel important (p. 272). In the third quarter Dickens unfolds Amy's healing influence on yet another "fool," her Uncle Frederick. The first chapter of the fourth quarter reveals the transforming effect that love can have on the receptive soul. Ignored by her father, discouraged from performing those practical acts of service which express her love for him, Amy turns to her uncle for companionship. Without Tip, Fanny, or William to impress upon him his "worthlessness," Frederick comes to life under Amy's care. Society's opinion of this broken man undoubtedly would be identical with Fanny's, who remarks after her uncle's death that "his death was a happy release, for, if you are not presentable you had much better die" (p. 525). But the true merit of the man is revealed through his response to Amy's attentions. He is grateful for her affection, and gives her his protection and thanks in return. He acknowledges his own weakness, and her consideration in not making him feel weak and worthless.

The brief scene in Book Two, Chapter 16 where uncle and niece are conversing alerts the reader to the marked
contrast between the mutual love relationship now established between the "unpresentable" Frederick and his niece, and its destructive parallel, the relationship between William Dorrit, "gentleman," and his daughter. But more than this, where the father had considered the total devotion of his child, the sacrifice of her will, his just due, the uncle speaks of treasuring up her tenderness in his heart (p. 482). The choice of words accords with Dickens' comment that the uncle had shown increased respect for Amy after the family became prosperous: as his outburst made clear, he became increasingly conscious of the great price the girl had paid to maintain the family throughout its lean years. Amy's love for him is "treasured up, treasured up," the old man remarks, and adds, "Thank God!" The word "treasure" recalls Matthew 6:19-21, and thus an important theme in the book:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.55

Frederick, though regarded by society and his family as "worthless," a "fool," is able to discriminate as the others are not between the vanity of material wealth and the priceless love of Amy. That he is so strikingly changed, drawn out of his almost cataleptic trance to take new interest in life, testifies as well to the power of love to draw forth life out of death-like states of consciousness.
The conversion of Arthur at the end of the novel is important; but any critics who might hold that Arthur alone of the characters in the book is redeemed are disregarding the regeneration of Frederick and the education of Maggie. Though the one is an idiot and the other a "wreck," they are none the less valuable as human persons: each merits love merely by the fact of being human. And as has been suggested, these are transformed where others in the novel are not, largely because of their receptiveness to love, their child-like humility. Maggie's severe intellectual limitations should not detract from the real miracle which was worked through Little Dorrit; similarly, the beauty of the love relationship established between Amy and her uncle must not be undervalued because of its brevity and its limited effect on others in society. Amy's relationship with these two "fools" provides additional evidence of the redemptive power of the love she embodies--she affects decisively more lives than one--and also suggests to the reader the quality of spiritual readiness a man must possess in order for that kind of love to enter his heart and transform him.

The third quarter of the novel is a section devoted to money ("riches"), praising its power to influence people's opinions, to blind them to the most elementary evidence of their senses, to corrupt even men of noble intentions. The corrupting influence of money on the already-tainted actions of the Dorrits has been mentioned. The function of Merdle in this quarter seems to be to intensify the theme
of the power of wealth to enslave the human will; and in terms of plot, to provide the means by which William Dorrit and his family again become impoverished. Whereas the Dorrits are a self-aggrandizing family of recently-acquired wealth, Merdle is lionized and idolized by others, supposedly against his wishes.

Although Little Dorrit appears in this quarter to have been totally eclipsed, cowering before Mrs. General, subservient to her own maid, ignored by her father and berated by Fanny, Dickens keeps before the reader the value of the simplicity and integrity she maintains throughout this period. Her growing attachment to Frederick picks up from previous quarters her regard for the weak and rejected. The final chapter in Numbers 11, 12, 13, and 14 places the chaotic events in the other chapters of those numbers in what the reader feels to be a sane—a human—perspective. The final chapter of Number 11, for instance, consists of Little Dorrit's letter to Arthur, presenting her assessment of the life of "riches" the Dorrits are leading abroad. In the last chapter of the twelfth number the kinship of Pet and Amy is developed; Amy reflects that "this same society in which they lived, greatly resembled a superior sort of Marshalsea" (p. 382). The final chapter of Number 13 contains once again a letter from Amy to Arthur. The fourteenth number, which has been devoted to the epidemic of speculation in Merdle's enterprises, concludes with an attempt to prevent Fanny's equally diseased speculation in the marriage market:
Amy's defense of genuine affection as a motive for marriage and honest work as a means of survival. Amy's values, though driven far underground during this quarter, surface periodically as if to remind the reader to exercise his keenest judgment on the events and characters being presented.

Amy's position relative to the growing importance of Merdle perhaps provides the strongest evidence that in this quarter also, as in the others, the novel continues to support Little Dorrit's values rather than those of society as a whole. That the world admires Merdle testifies to its stupidity, its inability to discriminate between the shoddy and false and the true. With Casby, that "boiling-over old Christian," as Pancks calls him (p. 305), the mask deceives; people cannot look beneath the visage to see the mindlessness of the man or consider the greediness of his action. With Merdle there is no mask.

The high priests of this worship had the man before them as a protest against their meanness... had the man habitually in their view... There was a spectre always attendant on him saying to these high priests, "Are such the signs you trust, and love to honour; this head, these eyes, this mode of speech, the tone and manner of this man?"

(p. 417)

He has no gentlemanly façade, like Rigaud, William Dorrit, Henry Gowan, or Casby. His actions are even less likely to deceive, being almost a caricature of Dickens' standard "man of business": he is lonely, isolated, non-relational. He is the prisoner of the butler, his house, and his own
obsessive behavior. He seems devoid of sensory experience, notably of sex, eating, even touching (typically offering a coat-cuff instead of a hand to shake). But as he possesses the reputation of immense wealth, his eccentricities are conveniently ignored or attributed to the strain of managing vast amounts of money.

The two central points Dickens wants to drive home concerning Merdle are the idolatry with which he is regarded, and the spiritual contrast between him and Little Dorrit. The former point is clear enough, always made with heavy irony, by representing the public as "prostrating themselves before him" like savages worshipping idols (p. 417), regarding him as "the shining light of the time," comparing him to the sun (p. 523). More telling are the scriptural allusions:

As he went up the stairs people were already posted on the lower stairs, that his shadow might fall upon them when he came down. So were the sick brought out and laid in the track of the Apostle—who had not got into the good society, and had not made the money.

(p. 462)

Paragraphs before, Dickens had described Merdle as "slinking," by his hand retreating up his sleeve, taking himself into custody by the wrists (pp. 461-2)—the psychological reverse of the openness, acceptance, and inner grace of both Jesus and Paul. The passage referring to Merdle as "the shining wonder, the constellation to be followed by the wise men bringing gifts" (p. 537) is another obvious play on the common knowledge of
the Bethlehem star over the sleeping-place of one who would speak of spiritual, not monetary gifts.

The central scriptural allusion is to the story of the rich ruler who came to Jesus asking what he should do to inherit eternal life. Jesus directs him to sell all he owns, and

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\text{distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me . . . And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, then for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God}.\text{56}
\]

(Luke 18:18-25)

But Merdle, Dickens says, was the "rich man, who had in a manner revised the New Testament, and already entered into the kingdom of heaven . . ." (p. 462). The important thing here is not that Merdle does not perform those actions necessary to the inheriting of eternal life, but that society (from the highest to the poorest in the land, as Dickens makes quite clear) worships a man who in every way perverts the ideal the scriptures set forth. Instead of the love-directives of Christ, society enthrones in their hearts Merdle and the ideal of making money.

The effect of the reference to Merdle and the kingdom of heaven is not to eclipse Little Dorrit further, but to force the reader to reconsider the judgments he has made regarding the relative wisdoms of Amy, society's "fool," and society itself. Who is to inherit the kingdom of heaven?
The rich ruler asks specifically: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" The Sermon on the Mount says that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the "poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3), elsewhere identified as the child-like (cf. pp. 23-26 above). Matthew 25 speaks of the last days, when the "blessed of [the] Father" are said to "inherit the kingdom prepared for [them] from the foundation of the world," the matter of inheritance being judged by a man's response, while living his earthly life, to human need (cf. p. 101 above). The reader may not be convinced by the remarkable coincidence between the scriptural requirements for eternal life and the personal qualities of Dickens' heroine; but perhaps he will be moved to reflect on Little Dorrit's history of loving, healing relationships with others when confronted with the man society believes has entered the kingdom of heaven: a furtive, guilty, paranoid creature who is finally linked with the Devil himself (p. 537).

The fourth quarter presents a somewhat different structural irony than the other sections thus far discussed. In the first three quarters of the novel the themes and imagery which apparently dominate each section are subtly undercut by those associated with Little Dorrit, thus creating tension and irony. In the last quarter, however, the reverse appears to be true: the principal villains die violent deaths; Amy's father dies; the secret of the codicil is revealed; and Amy marries Arthur. The quarter moves toward "harvest" fulfilment. The underlying irony now is
one's sense of the limitations of that fulfilment, despite the apparent "comic" resolution of the marriage. Should one in this case trust Dickens' apparent intention (to give final support to Little Dorrit and her values by resolving the plots in her favor), or maintain that Dickens (in that ambiguous ending paragraph) reveals either purposely or unconsciously the terrible isolation of goodness, and the general intractability of the world?

In the concluding quarter of the novel Dickens has more at stake than merely tying up the loose ends of plot, punishing the evil, and rewarding his protagonists. The section is filled with a sense of collapse—William Dorrit's "castles in the air," Merdle's empire, Fanny's marriage, and Mrs. Clennam's house and the corresponding "darkness and vengeance" of her religious code. Closely bound to these is Arthur's financial and spiritual collapse. Although Arthur has figured prominently in the previous sections of the novel, during this one, while other story lines are being resolved, Arthur's is becoming more complicated. Until the final installment he seems to be a long way from regeneration: the burden of guilt which had aged him and imprisoned his spirit has materialized into the Marshalsea which now confines him.

Arthur's insistence that he be the scapegoat in the Merdle affair, clear his mother's name of suspicion, solve the mystery of his father's watch, and secure justice for Doyce indicates his spiritual bondage to the old law: he feels he must pay the price for original sin. All men are
guilty, and he is guilty, and therefore he must suffer. His sense of growing old is directly linked with his anxiety and uncertainty (p. 438)—and is the more painful because of his equally strong desire for affection and trust. Once in prison, the depth of his despair expresses itself in his sense of unworthiness:

The prisoner, with the feeling that he was more despised, more scorned and repudiated, more helpless, altogether more miserable and fallen, than before, was left alone again.

(p. 570)

The sickness unto death which is despair is accompanied at first by a "burning restlessness, . . . an agonised impatience of the prison, and a conviction that he was going to break his heart and die there, which caused him indescribable suffering." Gradually these fits "settled down in the despondency of low, slow fever" (pp. 520-1). He avoids human contact; he can neither sleep nor eat; his mind wanders. The first visit of Little Dorrit, for whom he had longed, brings him not relief but a sense of shame—that she should see him "a broken, bankrupt, sick, dishonoured prisoner" (p. 573).

In rejecting her offer of financial assistance, he is rejecting life itself. The critical illness from which he suffers corresponds to his voluntary spiritual death.

In this quarter the two secret histories which are revealed at length are vitally related to Arthur's state of mind during this period of crisis, particularly during Book Two, Chapter 29, when he refuses Little Dorrit's offer of
financial aid. Appropriately, the first of these tales, "The History of a Self-Tormentor," is given in manuscript by Miss Wade to Arthur for his perusal. As Edmund Wilson notes, Miss Wade brings out a general theme in the novel, that of "imprisoning states of mind": she feels she can never be loved, and thus distorts the good intentions of those around her to coincide with her feeling of neglect and persecution. As Paul Herring notes in reference to this tale, "the individual himself is to some degree responsible for his position in the prison that society has built around him." Arthur does not reflect on this tale; but in his reaction to the Merdle swindle, in his rapid moral and physical deterioration while in prison, and in his rejection of that love he so desperately needs and ardently desires, the reader may see a cast of mind similar to Miss Wade's. A feeling of being unlovable; a sense that forces are at work to determine the individual's destiny; a mind so overcome by a consciousness of human evil that it is unable to embrace the good when it does offer itself--these attitudes Arthur shares with Miss Wade. Each chooses not to choose the freedom which is within man's power to enjoy--the freedom to love other persons, to forgive and to be forgiven.

The second secret uncovered in this quarter concerns Arthur's parentage and the suppressed codicil. The codicil for a time threatens to burden Little Dorrit with yet more money; but it is easily within her power to prevent this disaster. What appears to be beyond her power to overcome
is Arthur's debilitating heritage of death: his father's "timid, repressed" character, "a poor, irresolute, frightened chap, who had had everything but his orphan life scared out of him when he was young" (p. 584), who had once chosen love but hadn't strength to abide by his choice; a mother presumably of an artistic, gentle, affectionate nature, driven mad by her loss of lover and child; a substitute mother "without pity, without love, implacable, revengeful, cold as the stone, but raging as the fire," whose considerable strength of character directed itself to life-long revenge for her husband's sin of passion (p. 584). Mrs. Clennam's confession reveals anew the distorted code which has ruined two lives and threatens to ruin Arthur's at last. The philosophy of "repression, punishment, and fear" is working its poison on him at the very time of his mother's confession. That Mrs. Clennam should term this philosophy "wholesome" is ironic and tragic: these are fragmenting, life-negating feelings, designed to reverse in man the healing passions of affection, forgiveness, and joy. The themes of Mrs. Clennam's childhood--"The corruption of our hearts, the evil of our ways, the curse that is upon us, the terrors that surround us" (p. 586)--have of course been Arthur's childhood portion as well, and now absorb his mind and heart, crushing him with an unbearable load of guilt.

The phrase "Do Not Forget" which haunts both mother and son expresses succinctly Mrs. Clennam's attitude toward the sins of other people, her inability to forgive. For
Arthur the words have had a different but equally crippling meaning; for in his earnestness to do others no wrong and to make reparation for others' wrongs, he binds himself to endless suffering for a fallen world. His refusal of Little Dorrit's money is motivated largely by his unwillingness to use her as her family had used her:

"I am disgraced enough, my Little Dorrit. I must not descend so low as that, and carry you--so dear, so generous, so good--down with me . . . This is now a tainted place, and I well know the taint of it clings to me. You belong to much brighter and better scenes . . . you are to look away to very different and much happier paths."

(p. 575)

Arthur does not appear in Chapters 30-33 of Book Two, from the time the gate closes "heavily and hopelessly" upon Little Dorrit, sounding in his heart with a "funereal clang" (p. 576). But Dickens keeps before the reader Arthur's situation and the severity of the illness which follows this interview with Amy by brief but suggestive references throughout the ensuing chapters. The reader's attitude toward that illness changes, depending upon the events being narrated directly. During the revelation of Mrs. Clennam's secret, for instance, Arthur's death or complete moral collapse seems a horrifying possibility: such would be the appropriate fruit of a sterile creed like hers. But in the following chapter attention is redirected to Little Dorrit's influence on the most hardened of hearts, as Mrs. Clennam begs forgiveness of Amy. Without being able to claim this love for her own barren heart, the old woman responds to the "merciful
and gentle heart" of the young girl, who for the only time in the novel expresses her convictions in words as well as actions:

"Angry feelings and unforgiving deeds are no comfort and no guide to you and me . . . Be guided only by the healer of the sick, the raiser of the dead, the friend of all who were afflicted and forlorn, the patient Master who shed tears of compassion for our infirmities. We cannot but be right if we put all the rest away, and do everything in remembrance of Him . . . There is no vengeance and no infliction of suffering in His life, I am sure. There can be no confusion in following Him, and seeking for no other footsteps . . ."

(p. 599)

The following paragraph sets the opposition between the two women in Johannine terms, with Little Dorrit bathed in light from the window, and the old woman in black sitting in darkness.63 The subsequent collapse of the old house and its mistress symbolizes the self-destructiveness of the creed by which Mrs. Clennam had lived and perhaps also the death of that time-bound, guilt-ridden consciousness which has been Arthur's heritage from her.

Chapter 32 again invokes the memory of Arthur's present illness: he continues to lie very ill in the Marshalsea, and there is no hope as yet for his release (p. 602). But release of a different kind does occur in this chapter: Pancks, in publicly exposing Casby as a fraud, overcomes the paralysis of his own guilt and symbolically releases Bleeding Heart Yard from the grasp of a malevolent father-figure.
The opening sentence of Chapter 33 reveals that Little Dorrit is again in control of the affairs of the ones she loves: Arthur continues to be very ill, but Amy is nursing him; furthermore, Fanny and Tip are again in her care. Tattycoram's reunion with the Meagles celebrates the victory of trust and love over suspicion, the choice of the Meagles' world over a world-view which would deny that un-selfish love can exist.

Thus Arthur's reappearance has been prepared for carefully; the reader could anticipate that a change has occurred not only in Arthur's health but in his heart. Chapter 34 opens with images of Autumn and her fruitfulness, which is abruptly contrasted with the prison surroundings:

Changeless and barren, looking ignorantly at all the seasons with its fixed, pinched face of poverty and care, the prison had not a touch of any of these beauties on it. Blossom what would, its bricks and bars bore uniformly the same dead crop.

(p. 616)

The monosyllabic monotony of "same dead crop" recalls briefly the state of Arthur's spirit four chapters previously, when the wretchedness of his soul matched the bleakness of his environment. Now Nature soothes and restores him through the mediation of one of her creatures: "in the tones of the voice that read to him, there were . . . echoes of every merciful and loving whisper that had ever stolen to him in his life" (p. 617). One has a sense of the time which has passed during these chapters, a time which has witnessed spiritual crisis and a death-like illness, but which has
allowed healing to occur, the regeneration (literally new birth; "formed anew") of Arthur's spirit. 64

Only a few words are necessary in the final chapter to accomplish the final transition from deepest gratitude to mutually-realized love. Arthur still retains a reluctance to harm others, expressed in his reassertion that "this sacrifice" of Amy must be ended, that they must "learn to part again, and . . . take their different ways so wide asunder" (p. 617). Amy breaks down his final resistance with assurance now, for she understands him, recognizing that he loves her but only needs help in overcoming the last barriers to happiness which had been erected through years of disappointed affection. The paradoxical nature of the poverty which is love's fortune she grasps well, and that becomes the "great fortune" they will share:

I never was rich before, I never was proud before, I never was happy before, I am rich in being taken by you, I am proud in having been resigned by you, I am happy in being with you in this prison, as I should be happy in coming back to it with you, if it should be the will of God, and comforting and serving you with all my love and truth.

(p. 618)

As previously Little Dorrit had been associated with images of light and fertility, now this radiance embraces the two of them, the young woman and the older man who has been reborn in spirit, young, joyful, loving. Amy brings into his room "the heavenly brightness of a new love"; on their wedding morning she "comes into the prison with the sunshine
... Where in the world was there a room so full of quiet joy!" (p. 624). Dickens writes that "they were married with the sun shining on them through the painted figure of Our Savior on the window" (p. 624), reestablishing the essential connection between the story which has so concluded and the message of the New Testament.

The ending of the novel, as the novel in its entirety, is surely to be viewed in "the fresh perspective" (p. 625) which the New Testament provides on human life. The presence of Little Dorrit throughout the novel has repeatedly reinforced Jesus' teaching that each human life is supremely important: that one's patterns of conduct are to be guided by responsibility for others, by priority of persons to things. The good action is intrinsically valuable, despite its seeming ineffectiveness. The Christian faith (as contrasted with the Old Testament law) is future-oriented, toward hope and promise rather than guilt, punishment, and despair. Such hope is related to wholeness and to holiness, the integrity of the person, as it is related to help, the reaching out of the individual person to another. Little Dorrit embodies above all the joyous inner freedom which arises from a redeemed consciousness, a heart motivated by agape love.

How, finally, is the life of Amy Dorrit to be assessed? If Dickens viewed her initially as a "redemptive heroine," does he fail in his intentions, showing instead the ineffectuality of good in the world of this novel? In other words, are her values and actions to be judged by standards approp-
riate to worldly success—quantitatively measured in the manner of Mrs. Clennam, Casby, and Merdle? It has been proposed and demonstrated that Amy's very identification with the New Testament message, its parables, stories, images, and themes, has provided the key to an adequate assessment of the meaning of her life, and the significance this kind of life had for Dickens. If good and honorable and loving actions are folly (as Ferdinand Barnacle suggests to Arthur, p. 559), it is the "folly of Christ," a realm of atemporality where human actions are subject to transvaluation, a reversal of the commonly accepted modes of judgment. Professor Robert L. Patten has mentioned in connection with A Christmas Carol Dickens' admiration for the Gospels, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, "when the characteristics of this life are reversed."65 In Little Dorrit that reversal is not relegated to "the time after death," just as the coming of the Kingdom of God is not understood by the author of John's Gospel as referring to an event after physical death. The Kingdom of God is being created on this earth, in this time, in the midst of this temporal life. The two kingdoms are cotemporaneous, the ugliness and destructiveness rampant in the one continually being encountered, challenged, and exploded by contrast with the other. Like Shakespeare, Dickens does not shrink from portraying the temporal world in all its potential sordidness; but neither does he shroud man's equally strong potential to create, to love and to sing—continually accomplishing the regeneration of the human community.
The implications of this new mode of judgment are immense: this is no "magical" world in which that regeneration occurs in great numbers, or in which a new society is formed around the pair of lovers. Rather, the salvation of one man, and the intrinsic worth of each disinterested, loving action, is to be viewed as possessing ultimate value. For the redemption of Arthur is to be viewed in Christian, not pagan terms; that is, salvation is a miracle occurring individually, rather than involving necessarily the extensive transformation of the community. Widespread acceptance of the ideal of agape love is not essential to proving its truth; indeed, typically the believer in Christ is a "fool" in the eyes of society, standing apart from the mores by which his culture lives. As Paul states it:

If any man among you seemeth to be wise in his world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God . . .

(I Cor. 3:18-9)

While it is regrettable that more persons in the world of Little Dorrit do not respond to the love Amy represents, critics who would view the ending in negative terms (how many people are not redeemed) miss the beauty and mystery of the love which is present in the novel and indeed is available to the reader himself. The transformation of Arthur demonstrates in itself the great power of the spirit of love to renew the broken life. And when compared with the contrasting fates of Miss Wade and Mrs. Clennam, who
choose to shun the human fellowship through which redemption can be found, it becomes clear that Dickens intends that his reader realize that the force of love, though less noisy, is as powerful as the force of evil which apparently governs the world; through grace it can change the willing heart.
NOTES


5 Life, p. 625.


8 Life, p. 624.


10 Wound and Bow, p. 58.


14 Dostoevsky and Romantic Realism (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 71. However, Roland
McMasters, in his introductory essay to the College Classics edition of *Little Dorrit* (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1969), comments that "to challenge Amy's plausibility is perhaps to call in question more of ordinary decency and love than we might wish to doubt" (p. xxvi).


17 The Tower of Babel, Gold notes, is "one of the great mythological landmarks of alienation." Man, in his desire to shed his humanity and become divine, was punished by losing his bond with other men, his common language (p. 213). By associating Marseilles and its traders, a tangible historical reality, with this familiar pre-historical mythological symbol, Dickens immediately suggests that the temporal events in this chapter (as the events in the novel as a whole) are to be viewed "under the aspect of eternity." See also on the "Babel" concept Bert Hornback, "Noah's Arkitecture": *A Study of Dickens' Mythology* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1972), 104-5; 173-5, hereafter cited as *Arkitecture*.

18 Monroe Engel has written that the world of *Little Dorrit*, like the worlds depicted in *Dombey and Son*, *Bleak House*, and *Our Mutual Friend*, "is a hell in which nature has been corrupted, and un-nature has become the rule." See *The Maturity of Dickens* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 108. References to Eden abound in Dickens' work, as Hornbeck's concordance partially indicates (pp. 163-169).


20 Gold insists that the "name and nature" of Cavalletto even at this early stage in the novel are "a sign of an alternative and the signal of something else to come in the novel" (p. 211, pp. 213-14). It is the prison-keeper's daughter, however, who polarizes the conflict between Rigaud and Cavalletto; and that John Baptist inclines toward her prepares the reader for his eventual identification with the "fools" who cluster around Amy Dorrit.


24 World, p. 235.

25 During the progress of this chapter frequent reference will be made not only to the two "Books" and the monthly numbers of Little Dorrit, but to the four "quarters" of the novel. A quarter consists of five numbers: thus quarter one contains numbers 1-5; two, numbers 6-10; three, numbers 11-15; and four, numbers 16-20.

26 Robert L. Patten has suggested that in the context of the Dorrit universe an apt variant of the "barren heath" of Lear is the "barren hearth": as suggested earlier in this chapter, the absence of healthy, sustaining family relationships contributes to the reader's general sense of the disorder and alienation existing in this world.

27 T. A. Jackson, writing prior to both Wilson and Trilling (1938), suggested that the real "villain" in Little Dorrit is not Rigaud or his kin: it is the hell of riches and the hell of orthodox theology, "which turns the universe itself into one huge, inescapable Marshalsea, whose jailer is a fiendishly vengeful God, who holds all men prisoners for eternity." See Charles Dickens: The Progress of a Radical (New York: International, 1938), p. 166. On Mrs. Clennam's role in the novel, see Roland McMasters' essay, pp. xii-xviii, which agrees in substance with my own analysis.


29 Dickens at Work, p. 223.

30 Dickens at Work, p. 230.

31 As we will see that Dickens expects the reader to judge characters by their response to Little Dorrit, so also may they be judged by their response to her moral opposite, Rigaud. Amy and Pet instinctively recoil from him; each feels an "aversion amounting to the repugnance and horror of a natural antipathy towards an odious creature of the reptile kind" (p. 381). Lion braves his master's cruelty to attempt to warn Gowan against the evil presence (p. 369); see Fanger, p. 62. Arthur is horrified to see Rigaud at his mother's house. Gowan, by contrast, in his ready acceptance of Rigaud/Blandois as a constant companion, demonstrates his lack of moral discrimination, his shallowness and lack of feeling.

33 Donald Fanger has observed that "religion and the rise of capitalism have turned the city into a desert" (p. 83). As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, the novel is permeated with imagery of the perverted pastoral, or post-Edenic, world. A few additional examples will convey Dickens' overwhelming sense of the world's grotesque distortion of both natural beauty and natural affection. In London, the chimneys resemble a "blackened forest" (p. 80); the sunset is "wrathful" (p. 165); gardens are unfruitful (p. 185). Casby's face had a "bloom" on it "like ripe wall fruit" (p. 106). Lord Stiltstalking is described as a "noble Refrigerator," so cold he "blighted the vegetables" (p. 361). Virtually all the houses described in the novel are airless, scarcely fit for human habitation: Mrs. Clennam's, Casby's, Merdle's, Sparkler's, Miss Wade's, with its "dead yard," "wildernesses" of corner houses and "parasites" of little tenements close by. An exception is the Meagles' Edenic dwelling, invaded predictably by the serpent, Henry Gowan (Book One, Chapter 17). The Marshalsea, the "living grave" which so contrasts with the rich landscapes of which Little Dorrit dreams, is but the acknowledged tomb of human affections; the other habitations serve the identical purpose, but are clad in finery, overlaid with pretension.

34 I first heard this conception of time mentioned in connection with Dickens in a lecture on "The Christmas Carol" given by Robert L. Patten, Fall, 1969. He has elaborated on his views in an excellent study of that tale in "Dickens Time and Again," in Dickens Studies Annual, II, ed. Robert B. Partlow, Jr. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 163-196, hereafter cited as "Time." As additional examples of the quantitative view of time present in the Clennam household one notices the watch which is Jeremiah's only decoration, and the articles Mrs. Clennam arranges on the table before her as she prepares to read from the Old Testament: a "watch, handkerchief, and spectacles" (p. 75). The watch symbolizes a quantitative conception of time, "the time of notes and bills, equated with money" (Patten, "Time," p. 167), the time measured by a woman who "weighed, measured, and priced everything" (Little Dorrit, p. 15). The handkerchief can symbolize responsiveness to human need, as the exchange of the handkerchief on London Bridge "betokens the free exchange of charity between Rose Maylie and Nancy" in Oliver Twist and as such is an "emblem of mercy." See Patten, "Capitalism and Compassion in Oliver Twist," Studies in the Novel, I, no. 2 (Summer 1969), p. 220, hereafter cited as "Capitalism." In Mrs. Clennam such sensitivity to human need has been neglected. The spectacles
(which she dons before reading the Bible) surely represent her darkened vision of the Scriptures, somewhat as Pickwick's spectacles betokened his clouded vision of the world of experience. The importance of time-pieces in this novel is also borne out by the illustrations: in three representations of the Clennam household, clocks are prominent (see pp. 37, 40, 134). In Casby's house the clock is fittingly placed beneath the portrait of the young Casby on the wall, the relentless forward motion of the time-piece contrasting with the surface aspect of the man himself, who seemed to have "changed very little in his progress through life" from his seraphic countenance at age ten to his placid demeanor at the present time (p. 114). In "The Patriotic Conference" (p. 419) the conflict between the artificial, time-bound world of London and the country life is marked by the juxtaposition of an ornate clock, covered by a glass bell, and a peaceful pastoral scene hanging on the wall, complete with cows, clouds, and a windmill. "Reception of an old friend," showing William Dorrit's rude treatment of John Chivery, has a clock on the hotel mantelpiece, foreshadowing Mr. Dorrit's loss of time-consciousness (p. 476).

35 Perversion derives from the Latin pervertere, "turn round on the wrong way, overturn, ruin, corrupt" (Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology).

36 Although Dickens' meaning is plain enough here, his general reverence for New Testament teachings appears in his letter to his youngest son, quoted by Forster:

I put a New Testament among your books for the very same reasons . . . that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child. Because it is the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world; and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature, who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty, can possibly be guided. . . . I now . . . impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian Religion, as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it.  

(Life, p. 819)

In The Life of Our Lord (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1934), a retelling of the New Testament written for his own children, Dickens wrote:

It is Christianity to be gentle, merciful, and forgiving, and to keep those qualities quiet in our own hearts, and never make a boast of them, or of our prayers or of our love of God, but always to show that we love Him by humbly trying to do right in everything.  

(p. 124)

37 This marriage is but one of many marriages in Little Dorrit and in Dickens generally which are contracted for convenience or for monetary motives rather than for love: in this novel one thinks of the Merdes, Rigaud and his wife, Henry Gowan and Pet, Fanny and Sparkler, and Mrs. Clennam and Arthur's father. Ross Dabney, who has explored the destructive linking of social prestige and money with ties of kinship and marriage, sees this kind of "mercenary marriage" as a "central image of the corruption of decent relationships by false values" (p. 117). Such marriages "mix . . . economic advantages into relations which ought to be based on affection and human need" (p. 120). In terms of structure, virtually every marriage in Little Dorrit stands in direct opposition to that one contracted between Arthur and Amy at the end of the novel: the one forced upon Affrey forms a particularly vivid contrast to a marriage of affection and trust in that it is described as "a Smothering instead of a wedding" (Little Dorrit, p. 29) and thus is analogous both to Arthur's suffocating upbringing in this house and to Rigaud's actual murder of his wedded wife.

38 Life, p. 624, referring to a letter written September 16, 1855.

39 Jerome Meckier points out that Amy "personifies responsibility," in contrast to the evasions or irresponsibility of other characters in the novel. See his article "Dickens' Little Dorrit: 'Sundry Curious Variations on the Same Tune,'" Dickens Studies, III (Mar. 1967), 54.

40 Cf. Gold here:

Mrs. Clennam . . . having failed to be a woman must become a god, for she is indeed the god of retribution that she has made and her disguise is very thin.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

The god which she makes is like the one made by those at Babel, projected from a mind miserable with itself and its limitation, unwilling to accept the condition of its humanity and needing a tyrant to justify its misery and mistrust.

(pp. 220-1)
Cf. the description of Scrooge in A Christmas Carol (London: Chapman & Hall, 1843): "Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster" (p. 3).

Although the bulk of Dickens' The Life of Our Lord is adapted from Luke, in retelling the story about Jesus and the child Dickens chose Matthew 18:

The Disciples asked Him, "Master, who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Jesus called a little child to Him, and took him in His arms, and stood among them, and answered, "A child like this. I say unto you that none but those who are as humble as little children shall enter into Heaven. Whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whosoever hurts one of them, it were better for him that he had a millstone tied about his neck, and were drowned in the depths of the sea. The Angels are all children." Our Savior loved the child and loved all children. (pp. 58-9)

As further testimony to Dickens' high regard for this passage, we have his letter to Maria Winter on June 30, 1855, consoling her for the loss of her baby. "The simplest and most affecting passage in all the noble history of our Great Master," Dickens writes, "is his consideration for little children," expressed in the words "'and he took a child, and set it in the midst of them.'" See Walter Dexter, ed., The Letters of Charles Dickens: The Nonesuch Dickens (Bloomsbury: The Nonesuch Press, 1938), II, 672.

On this point Miller perceptively locates the dangers to innocence in such a world as Dickens has envisioned, and also the radical nature of his portrait of Amy Dorrit:

A world in which the goodness of childhood is doomed to be hidden away and rendered inactive by the mask of adulthood is almost as bad as a world in which childhood can be destroyed altogether. But it is just here that we recognize the crucial importance for the whole work of Dickens of his conception of Little Dorrit.

Dickens has in Little Dorrit . . . dared to imagine a person who is altogether good. And this miraculous goodness is imagined as the persistence into adult life of the purity of childhood. (p. 240)
"Scribes and Pharisees" refers as does "child-like" to a quality of being, rather than necessarily to a specific group of people. What Jesus is criticizing is a spiritual attitude.

Arthur's temporary incarceration occurs at the same point in the first quarter of the novel as his real imprisonment occurs in the fourth quarter—the eighth chapter. In each case his trouble stems from an earnest desire to do good for someone: to help Little Dorrit, and possibly assist in her father's release; to make money for Doyce, who has suffered so much inconvenience at the hands of the Circumlocution Office, and who has been kind to Arthur.


Furnish, p. 136.

Furnish, pp. 138-9. Significantly, Dickens includes the footwashing episode from John when narrating for his children the story of Jesus' last days:

Our Saviour told (Simon Peter) that he did this, in order that they, remembering it, might be always kind and gentle to one another, and might know no pride or ill-will among themselves. (Life of Our Lord, pp. 86-7)

In this small book he selects for retelling several other stories which deal with the paradoxical elevation of the humble: the wedding or feast, where one should "sit down in the lowest place. . . . For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted" (pp. 69-70). He also retells the parable of the proud Pharisee and the Publican, who had "a humble and a lowly heart" (pp. 75-76).

Furnish, p. 141.

Cf. here Patten's discussion of the midnight meeting on the bridge in Oliver Twist: the "most intense presentation" of the "possibility for transformation" occurs in this novel during the encounter between Nancy and Rose Maylie and Mr. Brownlow on London Bridge. Patten comments: "The hour, midnight, the place, the bridge, the symmetrically-constructed parties, all suggest a meeting in time and space of . . . two worlds, a crossing point from night to day, and from city to country." The opposition between these worlds, Patten recognizes, is between the city, "a world of darkness, enclosure, deprivation, and bondage," and the country,
representing "light, fields, nourishment, and freedom" ("Capitalism," p. 218). With Nancy and the world she represents, however, there is only a possibility for transformation; the good characters retire at the conclusion of the novel to a secure country retreat, leaving the scene of bondage essentially unchanged. For Arthur, who in the Little Dorrit bridge scene replaces Nancy as the prisoner of the world of darkness and enclosure, transformation will become real and permanent. Little Dorrit, who admittedly has gained part of her inner strength from her exposure to the country under Bob's care, yet retains that inner "freedom" and that ability to "nourish" those who are receptive to her ministrations, even while living in the heart of the city. The separation between country freedom and city bondage is an artificial one where persons are concerned; bondage of the will is an internal condition of the soul, not wholly the result of one's external surroundings.

51 Pancks' detective enterprise is almost a light-hearted parody of Arthur's tortured efforts all through the novel to discover the meaning of the words "Do Not Forget" and their possible connection with the Dorrits' misfortunes.

52 Moralist, p. 225.

53 Question 1 and answer from "The Shorter Catechism," The humble advice of the Assembly of Divines, . . . concerning a larger and a shorter Catechisme (1647); rpt. in The Book of Confessions (Philadelphia: The Office of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, 1966-7), p. 7. 001.

54 Gold has also noted the significance of this episode (p. 227).

55 This same passage is the theme of Trollope's novel The Warden, published 1855, two years before Dickens began writing Little Dorrit.

56 Robert Patten has pointed out that this text is one of Dickens' favorite passages; it is brilliantly perverted by Sairey Gamp in Martin Chuzzlewit.

57 Cf. the structure of Hard Times: Book the First--Sowing; Book the Second--Reaping; Book the Third--Garnering.

58 See Dickens' note for Book Two, Chapter 31 in McMasters' edition of Little Dorrit, p. 843.

59 The symbolic meaning of this imprisonment has been touched upon by several critics: Stoehr comments that
"Paradoxical as it is, Mrs. Clennam's insistence that Arthur's release must come from 'bondage' proves prophetic. Only after his imprisonment does the burden of guilt begin to lift and free him for love and work" (pp. 177-8). Gold equates Arthur's entering prison with Jonah's entering the whale (p. 226). Jonah, of course, was regarded in Medieval and Renaissance times as a type of Christ.

60 Wound and Bow, pp. 56-7.


62 Indeed, Stoehr has conjectured that Miss Wade's story provides "a dreamlike displacement and condensation of all the elements of Arthur's story suppressed and scattered cryptically throughout the novel" (p. 178).

63 Gold discusses some of the symbolic uses of "sun and shadow," pp. 227-229.

64 Hornback's provocative little book contains many insights with which I essentially agree, most notably that man must "find and make new beginnings" in this world in which he lives (p. 6). He quite properly notes the abundance of imagery drawn from the Book of Genesis. But in stating that "Dickens' mythology is one of new beginnings, a Genesis mythology" (p. 6), he neglects the vital connection between that beginning (the Creation) and the new beginning, the new Creation which is in Christ, the "new Adam." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 4:17). Again, medieval typology considered Adam as a type of Christ, the basis for that typology being that the Old Testament foreshadowed the New. The Genesis references in Little Dorrit deal primarily with man's fallen condition, post-Creation, when he left Eden and entered the temporal realm of labor and suffering (Gen. 3). A typological awareness is surely operating in Little Dorrit; for the "perversion" discussed at length in this chapter represents not only a fall from Eden, but an absence of Christian "grace," a failure of Christian charity, which alone makes the new beginning possible.

CHAPTER III: THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

In The Brothers Karamazov one encounters constellations of problems, themes, and images remarkably similar to those probed in Lear and Little Dorrit. As early as March, 1870, Dostoevsky had written to his friend Apollon Maikov of the plan for the novel which was to become Brothers: it was to consist of five long stories bearing the "overall title" The Life of a Great Sinner. The main question to be discussed in all the parts, Dostoevsky wrote, was "the same one that has tormented me consciously and unconsciously all my life--the existence of God."¹ That the author's expressly theological concern remained constant during the later conception and execution of Brothers is apparent as one reads the preface and the opening pages of Book One: the proposed hero for the tale is set forth from the beginning as "by no means a great man . . . odd, even eccentric," but one who "carries within himself the very heart of the universal" in contradistinction to "the rest of the men of his epoch" who "have for some reason been temporarily torn from it, as if by a gust of wind" (p. xix).²

The hero is thus characterized (albeit at this point through description rather than dramatic exemplification) as a "fool" in at least three ways reminiscent of the Lear fools and their Dickensian counterpart, Amy Dorrit. Alexey Fyodorovich Karamazov is "hero," but "hero" of some other cast than that traditionally lauded (thus the author's "quandary" over the
reader's possible response to a hero who is not a "great man"). The descriptive terms "odd" and "eccentric" suggest that this hero stands somewhat apart from society's norm of law and/or judgment. That it is he rather than society whom the author conceives to carry "within himself the very heart of the universal" establishes the author's attitude toward the values his hero will embody: it is he who is the "wise fool," and "the rest of the men of his epoch" who have been torn asunder from some central reality the author is anxious to represent through the mediation of his hero. Thus "two kingdoms" are suggested once again, with the hero-fool inhabiting one, and "the world" ("the rest of the men of his epoch") inhabiting another, although the boundaries of each realm are as yet unestablished.

The chatty, slightly prosaic narrative tone prevailing in Book One contrasts sharply with the astounding violence of the actions and the profundity of the issues being dramatized: as with Lear and Little Dorrit, this is a "family story" whose members embody to a shocking degree the hatred, animosity, and division rife in the family of mankind at large. The narrator calmly reminisces that Fyodor Pavlovitch Karamazov, father of this family, was "still remembered among us owing to his gloomy and tragic death" (3)—murder thus appearing in the novel's opening sentence as the background for this tale, the act which palpably expresses those broken relationships existing within the human family. With the suggestion of parricide (not
qualitatively, but symbolically the most reprehensible form of murder) follows the implicit suggestion of deicide: for as Fyodor is father to four sons, so God is father to this extended family group of all mankind. As René Wellek has observed, "Parricide is for Dostoevsky the highest symptom of social decay, a disruption of human ties that contradicts the obligation to universal forgiveness and the promise of resurrection in the flesh with which The Brothers Karamazov concludes." The problem of "the existence of God" which so tormented Dostoevsky torments the characters in this disturbing novel—and gnaws continually at the reader as well.

How is this problem explored; how (if at all) is it resolved; what correspondences exist between Dostoevsky's expressly theological concerns in Brothers and those themes, images, and problems we have discovered to dominate Shakespeare's and Dickens' profound master works? A major correspondence obviously lies in the sordid quality of the life depicted in the "temporal" kingdoms of these works as contrasted with the fragility of the atemporal kingdoms portrayed in each. In Lear and in Little Dorrit that fragility has proven deceptive; for by the terms of New Testament transvaluation, weakness becomes strength, humility power, and foolishness wisdom. Agape love becomes the standard of wholeness according to which the characters, relationships, and actions of the ascendent social order are judged; and so judged, that society—which we have spoken of variously as the "temporal kingdom" and "the world"—reveals its hollow-
ness, its spiritual poverty.

Is a similar mode of transvaluation operating in the Karamazov world? A preliminary glance at the preface has indicated that the author, at least, thought so. What Dostoevsky in fact created, however, was perhaps the most powerful of refutations of that theocentric vision which insists on affirmation: a temporal world compelling in its honesty and its despair, and an atemporal realm whose inhabitants doubt, falter, or remain silent. Perhaps the author, while purporting to delineate in Alyosha and in his spiritual father, the starez Zossima, characters of "remarkable" spiritual strength (a representation perhaps of the sainted Tikhon Zadonsky whom he so admired), created less than he intended with these figures, giving eloquent voice instead to that doubt and despair which racked his soul in secret.

A number of critics have reached exactly this conclusion: that Alyosha's story is not complete (or could not be completed); that Dostoevsky fully explores horror and spiritual death but only hints at the ways in which regeneration might occur. He died, Rozanov maintained, before his secret was made explicit; perhaps a "certain lack of harmony, order, and consistency in Dostoevsky's soul" prevented him from completing the work concerning rebirth at which he hinted at the end of Crime and Punishment and toward which he pointed throughout Brothers. D. H. Lawrence found the arguments of Ivan and his Grand Inquisitor "final and unanswerable," the Inquisitor voicing "Dostoevsky's own opinion
about Jesus," that Jesus was inadequate: that in his kiss he acquiesced to the arguments of the Inquisitor, as Alyosha with his kiss acquiesces to Ivan. Both Rozanov and Lev Shestov expressed the conviction that in Ivan and the Inquisitor Dostoevsky expressed the deepest secrets of his heart. The "Legend," Rozanov wrote, was "the only synthesis in history of a most ardent thirst for religion with a total incapacity for it." Dostoevsky wanted to believe in "the sublime gifts of freedom, truth, and moral heroism," but found he could not:

[These gifts are] pushed aside as burdensome and unnecessary, and one thing only is called for: some kind of happiness, some kind of rest for the 'pitiful rebel,' for this creature who is . . . weary and sick, and for whom compassion stifles all else in his heart, every aspiration to the superhuman and divine.

Shestov believed similarly that to him, there was "no doubt" that neither the "hero" of the novel, Ivan, nor the author believed in the "salutary power of the idea 'love thy neighbor'." Shestov believed that in all of Dostoevsky's works beginning with The Underground Man the author was repudiating the philosophy of Belinsky and his followers, whose ideas he paraphrased in this way:

It deeply moves your heart to realize that the most downtrodden man, the lowest of the low, is also a human being, and is called your brother.

Ivan, he wrote, "rebels against the most stable principles on which our contemporary world view is based."
The criticism, then (which will be amplified at appropriate points in my argument), proceeds largely along two fronts: that Ivan's and the Inquisitor's challenge to Christianity is irrefutable (and that the novelist's dramatic creations further prove it so); and that Alyosha and Zossima are too unconvincingly, perhaps too weakly, portrayed to offset that challenge. Whether or not Dostoevsky, had he lived, would in fact have written a sequel to Brothers in which Alyosha, Zossima, Jesus, and the "new life" generally would have been "vindicated," remains a matter for critical speculation; here we must deal only with the given artifact, the novel as we now possess it. I contend, in opposition to the opinions advanced by Rozanov, Shestov, Lawrence, and Blackmur that the novel as we know it does present an artistically complete and theologically coherent statement about human life; it contains not only the depressing chronicle of physical and spiritual death, but a steady movement toward healing, regeneration, and rebirth. As surely as in Lear and in Little Dorrit, the vivid depiction of metaphysical and human evil is counterbalanced by the presence of characters and the occurrence of events which testify to the aberrant nature of that evil, to its violation of a universal moral order of harmony and agape love.

We have now returned to the point at which we began, the author's explicit statement that Alyosha Karamazov is the hero of his tale, one who bears the affirmative values the novelist wants to support—in fact is the author's designated
"Christian fool."15 The powerful and compelling statements the novel makes on the reverse side of that serenity, that certainty embodied in Alyosha and in the Elder, Zossima, testifies not to Dostoevsky's inability to choose between the reassurances of the Christian vision and the seductive nihilism of atheism, but rather to his fearless honesty. As was stated in connection with the Lear and Little Dorrit worlds, such honesty is necessary: a less-than-honest confrontation of the problem of evil would rob the final affirmation of its power--would cheapen and sentimentalize this story of the miracle of rebirth. Dostoevsky refuses to falsify the human story: he holds both good and evil in tension.16

Dostoevsky, then, is faithful to "realism" in its two most common senses: as a chronicle of the observable phenomena--set forth in the narrator's journalistic style; and as a testimony to the "higher realism" which lies beneath the surface of those phenomena.17 The flat, non-committal tone of the narrative presentation accentuates, rather than deadens the tension existing between the separate realms of negation and affirmation: not only the urgency of the events unfolding but the pressing nature of the metaphysical questions raised by these events demands the reader's attention, his constant reevaluation, and finally his decision.

As clearly divided as the groups of characters in this novel seem to be (again one is reminded of the similarly
sharp distinctions in Lear and Little Dorrit), the ethical
and theological questions are not so easily resolved. For
instance, who is "responsible" for the sufferings of child-
ren? Who is "responsible" for an act which is willed but
not committed? And on what basis might one man decide who
among other men is to live, and who to die? Even the most
cursory consideration of these questions takes us to the
heart of the dark Karamazov world, where the act of parri-
cide is both hotly awaited and fearfully dreaded. The am-
biguity of the reader's--and the sons'--response has been
deliberately intensified by Dostoevsky's choice of the kind
of man who is to be his "representative father." Shake-
speare and Dickens had created a similar problem: Lear was
a proud, egotistical tyrant--hardly a wise, compassionate
parent. William Dorrit was portrayed as a weak, obsequious
man and a selfish father. Fyodor Pavlovitch (who bears
Dostoevsky's own Christian name, Fyodor) is described ini-
tially as "a type abject and vicious and at the same time
senseless" (p. 3). He was "an ill-natured buffoon . . . of
voluptuous temper" (p. 4), who not only neglected but for-
got his legitimate sons, and reportedly begot the illegiti-
mate one on the town idiot. Dostoevsky repeatedly associates
this father with insects and reptiles: "like some noxious
insect," Fyodor Pavlovitch was "corrupt and often cruel in
his lust" (p. 110). As Rozanov has commented, the old Kara-
mazov is a "decomposing corpse" who no longer possesses a
regulating norm: "everything fetid in the human soul has
irresistably begun to ooze out, soiling everything he
touches."\textsuperscript{18}

The behavior of Fyodor Pavlovitch with respect to
his wives, his sons, and his servants appears to indicate
that he is a man whose life benefits no one, whose death
would scarcely be mourned. In the "unfortunate gathering"
in Elder Zossima's cell, Dmitri voices this very sentiment:
"Why is such a man alive? . . . Tell me, can he be allowed
to go on defiling the earth? . . . I thought . . . that I
was coming to my native place with the angel of my heart,
my betrothed, to cherish his old age, and I find nothing
but a depraved profligate, a despicable clown" (pp. 83-4).
Edward Wasiolkek considers this scene the thematic center
of the novel, capturing "in image and dramatic gesture \([\text{its}]\)
polarities and dialectical oppositions."\textsuperscript{19} Those oppo-
sitions he sees as child against father, humility versus hate,
monastery versus the world, expiation versus threat. Ivan,
referring to Dmitri's murderous attack on his father in
Book Three, Chapter 9, comments "with a malignant grimace,"
"One reptile will devour the other. And serve them both
right" (p. 168). The attitudes of Dmitri and Ivan toward
Fyodor seem unassailable and justifiable; for the old man
horribly distorts not only the human ideal, but the
divine example of fatherhood. In the New Testament, Jesus
compares the unseen father with his visible earthly counter-
part in language which seems ludicrously inappropriate when
applied to Fyodor Karamazov:
What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

(Matthew 7:9-11, KJV)

Konstantin Mochulsky mentions Dostoevsky's life-long horror at acts of cruelty perpetrated against children. The author's attitude resembles Jesus' words in Matthew:

Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

(Matthew 18:5)

The parable of the prodigal son related in Luke 15:11-32 portrays the ideal earthly and heavenly father: compassionate and forgiving. But Fyodor Karamazov is the evil father who begets, then neglects, his sons; who (it is suspected) first steals the maternal inheritance of his eldest son, then seeks to rob the young man of his beloved as well. It would appear that Fyodor Pavlovitch's death would rid the earth of a man unfit to live.

It has been suggested that Dostoevsky deliberately chose to portray the man whose life is in danger as a "noxious insect." Dmitri's defense lawyer uses the sordid past of Fyodor Pavlovitch, especially his treatment of his son, to declare that the murdered man was not fit to be called by the sacred name of father, and that therefore no "parri-cide" had occurred:
"Such a father as old Karamazov cannot be called a father and does not deserve to be. Filial love for an unworthy father is an absurdity, an impossibility."

(p. 902)

The lawyer continues to say that the killing had occurred solely because Dmitri had received so little love from one who should have given him so much:

"The mere sight of the father who had hated him from his childhood, had been his enemy, his persecutor, and now his unnatural rival, was enough! A feeling of hatred came over him involuntarily, irresistibly, clouding his reason . . . an impulse of nature . . . avenging the violation of its eternal laws."

(pp. 905-6)

The reasoning is thus: one man has the right to judge which of other men ought to live and which die. That right becomes a natural process ("How can we blame children if they measure us according to our measure," as the defense lawyer puts it) if the one we are judging has wronged us (p. 903). Fetyukovitch is terribly mistaken in his judgment of the case, as the reader realizes before encountering the section "A Judicial Error." But in reality precisely this type of corrupted reasoning has contributed to bringing about the murder itself.

Fetyukovitch's argument is based upon the assumption that in certain cases it is permissible, even predictable, that one person use another as means to an end. Because Pyodor Pavlovitch was a "bad" father, it was to be expected that one of his sons should at some time become enraged by
his unworthy behavior and pay him back in kind. After the murder has been committed, both Dmitri and Ivan are horrified to realize that each unwittingly had accepted the "justice" of such an attitude. Leaving aside momentarily the questions of volition (Dmitri) and suggestion (Ivan), questions of moral guilt, the son who in fact executed the murder was indeed paying his father measure for measure, "an eye for an eye." The depravity in which Fyodor Pavlovitch had indulged had been largely of a sexual nature, i.e., the use of women as means to gratify his lusts. The extreme example of this depravity was his cold-blooded rape of Lizaveta, "an idiot, and so specially dear to God," whose presence in the town aroused even the rich to compassion (p. 115). The rape reportedly was not committed out of passion, but coldheartedly, out of "principle," to prove that even the most defective woman could be used sexually: "it was by no means impossible, and . . . indeed, there was a certain piquancy about it . . ." (p. 116). It is the child resulting from that heartless act whose moral sense develops in the same spirit in which the rape was committed: that persons are things to be used for one's convenience and disposed of with impunity. Whether such an attitude represents normative, desirable human behavior is one of the problems with which Ivan and Dmitri must ultimately wrestle.

While in a sense the reader is caught up in the same moral uncertainty over issues (such as the possible desir-
ability of Fyodor's death) as the principal characters, at the same time his responses are being subtly but carefully controlled by the author. Dostoevsky's approach is essentially two-pronged: to allow evil its full range of destructive possibility while pointing up its inherent self-annihilation; and to steadily advance his ideal of "the good," firmly grounding his ethical as well as his theological norms in the spirit of the New Testament. The novel plunges headlong toward the murder and simultaneously toward the consummation of Katerina Ivanova's intense revenge on Dmitri. As Nicolas Berdyaev has observed, "the deeps of human nature are sounded not in sanity but in insanity, not in law-abidingness but in criminality"; and indeed a mood of dionysian ecstasy, hysteria, blood, and sexuality hangs heavy like perfume in the air of Skotoprigonevsk. This phrenetic action contrasts strangely with, yet is thematically appropriate to, the atmosphere of physical and spiritual death created by the lifelessness of Smerdyakov, his "wrinkled, yellow, and strangely emasculate" face (p. 149) and his predilection for hanging cats (p. 147); by Father Ferapont's heavy chains and strict asceticism (Book Four, Chapter 1); and by the words of the Grand Inquisitor. Thus one sees that the headlong plunge of the destructive elements of the action is furthered not only by the degenerate life of the father of this tale, but by a variety of spiritual and psychological diseases suffered by the inhabitants of the Karamazov world.

But as all-pervasive and powerful as evil in this
world is felt to be, it is shown to be both destructive (of self) and disruptive (of social order; of human community). That is, the evil is present in the form of negation, a perversion of a positive ideal of human life and belief. In the portrayal of Ivan and his Grand Inquisitor this sense of "the perversion of the good" is strongly present. "Ivan," his brother Dmitri comments, "is a sphinx and is silent . . . " (p. 721). Of all the intriguing characters in this novel, Ivan is the most mysterious, unfathomable, and fascinating. It is he who tells the celebrated tale of "the Grand Inquisitor"; it is to him Dostoevsky gives the strongest arguments against God and his world. Ivan professes to love life, to love the "sticky little leaves as they open in spring" (p. 273); to accept God and His wisdom, His purpose, the "underlying order and the meaning of life" (p. 270), and most of all to love children. It is in the name of the unjustifiable suffering of children that Ivan protests that he accepts God but cannot accept the world created by Him (p. 279). He longs to experience for himself the last days, when "the hind will lie down with the lion and the victim rise up and embrace his murderer." He wants to be there "when every one suddenly understands what it has all been for" (p. 289). He demands justice, yet knows there cannot be any, because no amount of "eternal harmony" can ever justify the suffering of a single innocent child.
"I want to forgive. I want to embrace. I don't want more suffering. And if the sufferings of children go to swell the sum of sufferings which was necessary to pay for truth, then I protest that the truth is not worth such a price ... I don't want harmony. From love for humanity I don't want it ... too high a price is asked for harmony ... And so I hasten to give back my entrance ticket."

(p. 291)

A corresponding idea is present in Dostoevsky's great Pushkin speech of 1880, when he discusses Tatiana's decision to stay with her husband rather than flee with Onegin, whom she loves.

Suppose that you yourself are erecting an edifice of human destiny in order to bestow upon men at last tranquility and peace. And imagine, further, that for this end it is necessary and inevitable to torture to death only one human creature, moreover ... not some Shakespeare, but simply an honest old man ... In these circumstances would you agree to be the architect of such an edifice? ... And can you conceive ... that men, for whom this edifice was erected, would agree to accept from you happiness if it were founded upon the suffering ... of some negligible creature but one mercilessly and unjustly tortured to death; or, if they accepted it, that they would forever stay happy?

It is the similarity between this passage and Ivan's philosophy which led Rozanov to believe that Dostoevsky expressed through Ivan his secret soul, and Shestov to feel that in Brothers the author thoroughly repudiated the idea of the brotherhood of man. What Dostoevsky seems to be repudiating in creating characters such as Ivan and the Underground Man,
however, is not the idea of "the brotherhood of man" as such, but a sham version of that concept which sentimentalizes suffering and idealizes the nature of man. Ivan's analysis of the human condition quite justly shatters such a shallow understanding of man and his world.

Rozanov and Shestov were mistaken in identifying Ivan's views with those of the author, however. Not only does Ivan have a sadly truncated conception of human experience, one which judges the whole of human possibility according to the measure of the part with which he is obsessed; he misjudges his own motives, overlooking his own pride and inadequacies. Dostoevsky provides the reader with at least two deliberate parodies of Ivan's intellectual pose: Smerdyakov (a demonic parody); and Kolya Krassotkin, ten years Ivan's junior, who holds views remarkably like the older man's but in a faintly exaggerated form which lays bare the uncertainty, pride, and sense of the dramatic which characterizes both. But Ivan's story itself provides the best commentary on the inadequacy of his position and the disastrous consequences which result from philosophical ideas too callously advanced.

Ivan, in his battle with God, expressing horror at the senseless sufferings of children, believes himself the most moral of men. In truth he walks in a labyrinth of darkness, alienated equally from himself and from others. The same Ivan who speaks so eloquently in defense of little
children, who rebels against God in their name, holds a low opinion of man which accords ill with his intellectual indignation. "I think if the devil doesn't exist," Ivan tells Alyosha, "but man has created him he has created him in his own image and likeness" (p. 283). Love of neighbor is regarded as a practical impossibility: "One can love one's neighbours in the abstract, or even at a distance," he observes, "but at close quarters it's almost impossible" (p. 282). He continues: "Christ-like love for men is a miracle impossible on earth. He was God. But we are not gods" (p. 281).

Ivan's feeling that man cannot love his neighbor is perhaps as much a reflection of his own unwillingness to risk loving, a reflection of his own emptiness, as an accurate reading of the human potential for loving action. For instance, when Alyosha inquires of Ivan where he might find Dmitri, Ivan's immediate retort is, "Am I my brother Dmitri's keeper?" The similarity between his response and the words of Cain is wryly noted (p. 275); the reader marks as well the identical expressions used by Ivan and by Smerdyakov some pages earlier (p. 269). The affection Ivan expresses for Alyosha is an exception to his normal mode of relating to others: generally he is cold and remote, moving men and ideas about in his mind like chess figures, aloof from personal investment in the situations he encounters. The shattering of this self-contained and highly moral
edifice begins with Ivan's narration of the "Legend"; for here his most cherished opinions are clad in their loftiest verbal garments.

The story of the Grand Inquisitor is too familiar to require summarizing here. Where once the tale was regarded as extraneous to the novel as a whole, critics now recognize and accept its centrality in the author's over-all scheme. The problem seems now one of first interpreting the novelist's degree of concurrence with the views advanced by his stern old man (and as well with those of the creator of that persona, Ivan); then analyzing what in fact the Inquisitor does say. The first problem cannot be dealt with unless the tale is read in the context of the novel as a total philosophical construct; for in it Dostoevsky has attempted to give the strongest possible support to Ivan's attitude of cosmic pessimism. Reading the tale in isolation, as is so frequently done, results in a devastating spiritual experience; for the Inquisitor advances a rhetorically compelling argument for man's weakness and degeneracy. The greater the reader's sense of the "ought," the more immediate his response to the pitiful "truth" of the Inquisitor's analysis of man's "nature."

Dostoevsky, in the making of this tale, has not left the silent Christ defenseless, however. The difficulty lies in being able to recognize the defense without having the support of characters, actions, and imagery from the rest
of the novel to aid one in seeing what is being done. The imagery, for instance, is not hard to identify once the reader has been alerted by the previous sections of the book to look for central themes. The epigraph prepares the reader to watch for the images and themes central to the Book of John: light and dark; life and death; fruitfulness and barrenness; and in general the paradoxical nature of life itself. The portrayal of Jesus at the beginning of the tale utilizes what seems to be quite standard Christian imagery:

He moves silently in their midst with a gentle smile of infinite compassion. The sun of love burns in His heart, light and power shine from his eyes, and their radiance, shed on the people, stirs their hearts with responsive love. He holds out His hands to them, blesses them, and a healing virtue comes from contact with Him, even with His garments.

(p. 295)

As accustomed as one is in a Christianised society to hearing the clichés about a certain Jesus Christ, one might well miss the significance of the terms used here to describe him. "Light" is the central image: "sun of Love," love "burns" in the heart, "light" and power "shine," his eyes "radiate" love. He is like the sun itself (sun-Son being a familiar biblical comparison); the light given off by that sun stimulates "responsive love" in those touched by it, warming hearts and healing bodies. Significantly, Christ at this point heals a man "blind from childhood": this miracle of course recalls Jesus' similar miracles related
in the Synoptic gospels and in John; but it also recalls Ivan's graphic descriptions of the sufferings of children, for the question implicit in the situation in the tale is whether a "just" God would permit a child to become blind.24

This depiction of Christ operates in the tale both in retrospect and in anticipation. Ivan had opened the story with a description of one of the Inquisition festivities: an auto de fé. The irony is obvious: the Church glories in fires, "lighted every day to the glory of God" (p. 295). The light is of course not that of the sun, whose purpose is to stimulate the earth's fertility; it is man-made fire, burning other living creatures and wasting the earth. It is man attempting to bring about unanimity of belief by obliterating all others who deviate from accepted beliefs. Its cruelty and wrongness as means to any end, however grandly conceived, are clearly apparent. The appearance of Christ with his "gentle smile of infinite compassion" acts as a healing balm on nerves unsettled by this brief but vivid reference to the horrors of the Inquisition.

The moment of the Grand Inquisitor's appearance is perfectly staged: he materializes at the precise moment that Christ raises a child from the dead. As the child presents a portrait of life arising out of death, so the cardinal embodies death-in-life, with his "withered face" and "sunken eyes" in which there is "still a gleam of light." What kind of light it is, is revealed by the darkening of his face at
the moment of miracle, when "his eyes gleam with a sinister fire" (p. 296). His "gloomy assistants and slaves," the shrinking of his flock before him, the "deathlike silence" accompanying the seizure of Christ, and finally the "close, gloomy vaulted prison" in which the prisoner is confined, create a sense of the atmosphere of death which surrounds the old man.

Such are the initial portrayals of the two antagonists in the tale. From this point to the end the Inquisitor details his rationale for abandoning Christ in favor of the "truth." His argument is quite simple and seductive: God created man; but in so doing, he either maliciously or accidentally created a creature whose sufferings (both self-imposed and externally caused) are unbearably painful. As if this weren't burden enough, the Creator demands free worship of himself while having endowed pitifully few of his creatures with the intelligence and the strength of will to exercise that freedom. The Inquisitor has undertaken to correct some of the "mistakes" made by God in fashioning the world: an attitude of incredible audacity, but one directly reminiscent of Ivan's similar stance in the preceding chapters. The difference between the persona in the tale and the persona of the teller of course is that while Ivan can only brood over his powerlessness to change the order of things, the man he envisions is one who has been placed in a position which enables him to act on his convictions. He can fashion
an environment in which men will be "happy": an environment in which he himself, the benevolent surrogate-creator, controls the conditions of existence.

The Inquisitor presents himself as a man who has suffered for the good of the people, a martyred Messiah. He reveals that once he had coveted the freedom of Christ:

"I too was striving to stand among Thy elect, among the strong and powerful. But I awakened and would not serve madness. I turned back and joined the ranks of those who have corrected Thy work. I left the proud and went back to the humble, for the happiness of the humble."

(pp. 308-9)

Though he emphasizes his humility and his martyrdom, his sacrifice of immortality for himself to provide the contentment of the many, his words ring with pride and self-deception. The most immediate contradiction of words with facts lies in the means he has chosen to obtain the supposedly desirable aims of "community of worship," the "universal happiness of man," and the unity of all in one "unanimous and harmonious anheap." The means are those already alluded to: the tortures and burnings of the Inquisition.

The second contradiction lies in the Inquisitor's insistence that it is he and men of his ilk who truly love mankind, while Christ has acted as though he cared only for the few "great and strong." The first and second contradictions are expressed together in this passage:
We are for the weak too. They are sinful and rebellious, but in the end they too will become obedient. They will marvel at us and look on us as gods, because we are ready to endure the freedom which they have found so dreadful and to rule over them—so awful it will seem to them to be free. But we shall tell them that we are Thy servants and rule them in Thy name. We shall deceive them again, for we will not let Thee come to us again. That deception will be our suffering, for we shall be forced to lie.

(p. 301)

"Ye shall be as gods" (Gen. 3:5), the serpent's words to Eve, echo in this passage, overlaid though the words are with assurances that this god-like power is first for the benefit of the people, and second, a miserable burden to bear. Not love, but contempt for mankind motivates the Inquisitor to assume this power. Man is "weak"; he is "sinful and rebellious." Elsewhere in his monologue he refers to the nature of man as simple and naturally unruly (p. 299); "weak, vicious, worthless and rebellious" (p. 300); "weak, ever sinful and ignoble" (p. 300); "weak and vile," and altogether "weaker and baser by nature" than Christ has believed (p. 304). While purporting to promote man's happiness and security, the Inquisitor patently seeks to deny man all that makes him uniquely human, reducing him in actuality to the level of the sub-human. Mankind is likened to "a flock of sheep, grateful and obedient, though for ever trembling" (p. 300); "pitiful creatures" (p. 301); an "ill-fated creature" (p. 302) who rejoices to be led like a sheep (p. 305). He is not man but a sheep, a donkey, and finally, an ant in
an anthill.

Did we not love mankind, so meekly acknowledging their feebleness, lovingly lightening their burden, andpermitting their weak nature even sin with our sanction?

(p. 305)

The meekness and loving permissiveness with which the Inquisitor credits himself are but words thinly concealing his contempt and finally his hatred of men. Wasiolek is surely mistaken when he says that the Grand Inquisitor "loves man for what he is, not for what he is not, and the lei accepts the melancholy fact of man's weakness because it is a fact."25 The Inquisitor does not love man, however much he protests he loves "mankind." That Ivan (in his own person, stepping for a moment out of his role as narrator) vouches so fervently for the old man's "incurable love of humanity" provides ironic commentary on the cardinal's self-deception; for Ivan has created his hero in his own image. Ivan loves the abstract concept "mankind," but cannot stand individual people.26 Ivan's analysis of his hero's motives contains poignant truth about himself and his Inquisitor, repeating as well the inherent contradictions of his "Legend."

"Why can there not be among the Jesuits and Inquisitors one martyr oppressed by great sorrow and loving humanity? . . . all his life my old Inquisitor loved humanity, and suddenly his eyes were opened, and he saw that it is no great moral blessedness to attain perfection and freedom, if at the same time one gains the conviction that millions of God's creatures have been created as a mockery, that they will never be capable of using their freedom . . . that it was not
for such geese that the great idealist
dreamt his dream of harmony. Seeing all
that he turned back and joined—the clever
people."

(p. 310)

The phrase "the clever people" anticipates that moment at
the gate when Smerdyakov tells Ivan: "It's a true saying
then, that 'it's always worth while speaking to a clever
man . . .'" (p. 331), the words which, because they acknowledge Ivan's unspoken consent to the murder of Fyodor Pavlovich, return to haunt the detached young intellectual.

The "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor," then, is saturated with the spirit of death, from its initial description of the old cardinal himself through its revelation of the audacious, premeditated, and systematic way in which this man has sought to destroy man's humanness. The Inquisitor embraces as his spiritual lord "the wise and dread spirit, the spirit of self-destruction and non-existence" (pp. 298-9, 305) in place of the Christ who celebrated life and light, freedom and joy. In so doing he has openly declared his allegiance to non-life, whereas during his "saintly" period of fasting in the wilderness that allegiance was hidden beneath a mask of fanatical and proud piety. Appropriately enough, the Inquisitor adopts in his monologue the structure of the three temptations as related in Matt. 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13, and briefly in Mark 1:12-3. (Dostoevsky adopts the order as given in Matthew.) The old cardinal has created for himself a conception of human nature and human history
which reflects his own withered soul. So it is with his denial of immortality. Failing to find in his heart a conviction of the possibility of life after death, he concludes that therefore there is no "life" after death. Scornfully he comments that even if he is mistaken, and there is immortality, "it certainly would not be for such as they" (p. 308). Surely the contempt expressed in those words explains in large part the Inquisitor's denial of life after death; for in the larger context of the novel, the conviction of immortality arises from one's experience with and practice of agape love: it grows out of a prior conviction that "all are responsible for all" and that each person, no matter how insignificant or repugnant, merits love and respect. Such personal practice of agape love is alien to the Inquisitor. Where Christ's love asks men to "rise above their natures," refashioning themselves "in his image," the Inquisitor equates "love of mankind" with manipulation, the satisfaction of minimal animal needs, and systematic deception.

That Dostoevsky stands not with the Inquisitor but with Christ can be demonstrated, then, through an examination of the Legend itself. But a full refutation of the cardinal's diabolic philosophy is achieved as the Legend and its disturbing contents are viewed in the perspective of their narrative framework, as the inventive fantasy of the savagely intense Ivan. While the legend--a tale within a tale--exists at two removes from the reader, the disruptive
consequences of its philosophy are vividly dramatized as the creator of that legend attempts to live by the precepts of atheistic materialism. When Alyosha, having glimpsed into the emptiness of Ivan's soul, exclaims, "But brother! How will you live?" he identifies just this gap between the theoretical, the fictive representation of a set philosophy, and the concrete, the arena of human experience in which those theories are tested. Thus the opposition between the Grand Inquisitor and the silent Christ becomes the tension between the life of Ivan Karamazov, lived out in what Vyacheslav Ivanov has termed "metaphysical solitude," and the lives of Alyosha and Zossima, which are grounded in the spirit of the New Testament.

That this "New Testament spirit" undergirds the theological and ethical assumptions of Brothers is revealed as surely through Ivan's violations of that spirit as through Alyosha's and Zossima's embodiment of it. Berdyaev's perception that atheism and parricide are symbolically linked is faithful to the biblical conception of man's relation to God and his neighbor. The earthly father, Fyodor Karamazov, has already been termed as a distortion of the heavenly Father of whom Jesus speaks in the New Testament. "Sonship" as both familial relationship and as ethical imperative arising out of that relationship must now be stressed; for Ivan, though "son" of old Karamazov, refuses to acknowledge himself as "son" ("child") of God. That this refusal has
staggering practical implications is revealed when one reviews the conception of "sonship" disclosed in the Gospels. All men have "one Father, who is in heaven" and therefore are all "brothers," related by virtue of their essential humanness (Matt. 23:9). But "sonship" does not end with acknowledgement of the divine-human tie, that is, with "theoretical knowledge" of God. "I know" and "I believe" (credо) must be manifested in "love for one's brother and one's neighbor," in "acts of loving service."\(^{31}\) In the Johannine writings "love for the brother" is equated with light, and hatred with darkness:

> He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light . . . But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

(I John 2:9-11)\(^{32}\)

The implication here and in the Gospel of John is that the Word "enlightens" the heart of man; so enlightened, he becomes the bearer of \(\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\varepsilon\) love.

But Ivan retorts angrily that he is not his brother's keeper—the cry of Cain, who for his crime against God and his brother was condemned to wander "a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth" (Gen. 4:11-12). In I John brother-love is dealt with explicitly in the context of Genesis:
For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother . . . We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

(I John 3:11-12, 14-15)

Furthermore, the writer continues, the love of God is manifested not through words, but "in deed and in truth"—through compassionate action to relieve the "brother's" need (I John 3:16-18).

The inseparable connection between love of "the brother" and love of God is plainly expressed in I John 4:

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

(I John 4:20; see also I John 4:7-8, 11-12)

However, Ivan has cut himself off from both God and man. He wants to believe that it is possible to love "humanity" while rejecting God and remaining aloof from the world—returning "the entrance ticket." The mode of action he in fact recommends is both a-theistical and unhumanitarian: a denial of human responsibility, the theory that "there are none guilty" and that therefore none are responsible for human suffering.

In the novel this denial of human responsibility (which follows logically the denial of relatedness) is
countered by the assertion that "all are responsible for all." Zossima speaks of this:

"For know . . . that every one of us is undoubtedly responsible for all men and everything on earth, not merely through the general sinfulness of creation, but each one personally for all mankind and every individual man."

(p. 194)

Ivan indicates his refusal of this responsibility not only in his attitude toward his brother Dmitri, but in his quarrel with God. As Roger Cox notes, Ivan, rather than admitting his personal responsibility toward suffering children, says in effect that "'God is responsible for all . . . And I hate Him for all.'" 33 Ivan "accepts God" because he needs him for a scapegoat, to be sacrificed on the altar of his own moral indignation. He shifts the burden with its accompanying guilt onto a conveniently powerful and (for him) remote being, thereby banishing the problem of evil to the realm of metaphysics while simultaneously denying his own complicity in the continuation of such misery. It is surely significant that in detailing the sufferings of children he overlooks one vital factor: the miseries he describes are man-willed and man-executed; in several cases, furthermore, the child's distress is caused by a family member.

Ivan discovers to his horror that all men are bound inescapably to this world and to each other. The "pitiful, earthly, Euclidian understanding" of which he had boasted
(i.e., p. 289) proves more inadequate than he had anticipated; for if he has created the mystery and power of a Grand Inquisitor, he has also created a real-life fiction in Smerdyakov: not a creature of the overweening imagination who might be altered or dismissed, but a human agent capable not only of reflecting, but of acting upon the suggestions offered by that imagination. In Smerdyakov, furthermore, the demonic possibility inherent in the Inquisitor's philosophy is tangibly revealed: for as Wasiolek notes, if Ivan dreamed of a world built upon "enlightened, virtuous self-interest," he discovers instead that "Smerdyakov is the real embodiment of the world built upon self-interest."34

Apart from his troubled passion for Katya and his encounters with Alyosha, Smerdyakov is the only person with whom Ivan has prolonged association. Ivan's callous disregard for this half-brother who values his opinions so highly creates in itself a potentially explosive situation. As Smerdyakov comments during their final interview, "You've always thought no more of me than if I'd been a fly" (p. 768). The early stages of the master-servant relationship are only hinted at (Book Three): the reader gathers, however, that Ivan has imbued the impressionable cook with his ideas on God, immortality, and virtue; and that Smerdyakov is "fascinated" by Ivan. Ivan for his part speaks slightingly of his companion: "He's a lackey and a mean soul"; he is "raw
material" for revolution "when the time comes," to be dis-
posed of when "better ones" come. along (p. 157). Ivan is
flattered at Smerdyakov's "high opinion" of him, yet re-
gards his pupil as a non-person, an "it" rather than a "Thou."

In the peculiar tone of this relationship one detects
hints of homosexual dependency in its most destructive form.
Instead of mutual giving based on agape love and respect,
the two are at once "fascinated" by and repulsed by each
other: with an unhealthy degree of attachment is mingled a
full measure of hate. Ivan, for example, usually initiates
conversations (as in the three final interviews), although
Smerdyakov disgusts him.

Smerdyakov's comments during the first of those final
conversations reveal the extent of Ivan's former control
over the cook's intellect and soul, combined with evidence
of the strength of the personal attachment.

"I put my trust in you as in God Almighty."

(p. 737)

"What frightened me most was losing you and
being left without defence in all the world."

(p. 738)

"I thought you were like me."

(p. 740)

By the time of the second and third meetings, however, this
dependent tone has disappeared, and Smerdyakov has become
the dominant partner in the relationship. The power he
wields is knowledge of that inner corruption in his idol
which now has involved Ivan in the murder of his parent.

"You murdered him; you are the real murderer, I was only your instrument, your faithful servant, and it was following your words I did it."

(p. 758)

The horror with which Ivan responds to this disclosure reveals the depth of his previous self-deception.

Something seemed to give way in his brain, and he shuddered all over with a cold shiver.

(p. 758)

Smerdyakov, "this man who had once been his valet," now anatomizes Ivan coldly but perceptively:

"You are fond of money . . . you like to be respected, too, for you're very proud; you are far too fond of female charms, too, and you mind most of all about living in undisturbed comfort, without having to depend on any one . . . You are like Fyodor Pavlovitch, you are more like him than any of his children; you've the same soul as he had."

(p. 769)

The truth of this analysis strikes Ivan; he is speaking now not to an automaton, a bastard with a "lackey's soul," but to one who has dared to go "beyond good and evil," and who furthermore reads the truth in his own soul with disconcerting accuracy. Smerdyakov observes further: "It was your pride made you think I was a fool" (p. 769).

Smerdyakov now regards his former master with contempt combined with "insane hatred" (p. 758): the boldness with which Ivan had expounded his heretical ideas contrasts ironically to his fear when confronted with the fruits of
those ideas.

"Why do I keep on trembling? I can't speak properly." "You were bold enough then. You said 'everything was lawful,' and how frightened you are now . . . ."

(p. 760)

Ivan, it now appears, is a murderer in at least three senses, the multiple guilt of which he fully recognizes only during his third and final interview with Smerdyakov. First, he provided the intellectual rationale which issued in the violent act ("If there's no everlasting God, there's no such thing as virtue, and there's no need of it" \[p. 768\] being a direct paraphrase of Ivan's repeated contention that "There's no virtue if there is no immortality" \[i.e., p. 797\]). Second, he should have remained with his father instead of departing at a critical time: he was well aware that without his physical presence, someone would murder the old man. Smerdyakov does not fail to point this out:

"If you had stayed, nothing would have happened. I should have known that you didn't want it done, and should have attempted nothing."

(p. 763)\[35\]

The third aspect of Ivan's guilt is bound to the second: Ivan is the murderer because he hated his father. It is the murderous will, the secret desire that the other \textbf{not be}, as much as the murderous act itself, for which a man is held responsible. In meting out "guilt" for Fyodor's death Dostoevsky plays consciously with this New Testament interpretation of the Mosaic law "Thou shalt not kill":
Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

(Matt. 5:21-2) 37

Ivan haltingly admits that he might have been guilty for the death in just this sense: "God sees," Ivan raised his hand, "perhaps I, too, was guilty; perhaps I really had a secret desire for my father's... death" (p. 767), but he immediately retracts part of this admission, being as yet reluctant to acknowledge his full complicity in the crime. That realization comes only after his meeting with the Devil.

When the interview is concluded Ivan reacts in a peculiar fashion: the horror he had felt when confronted with Smerdyakov's confession leaves him, to be replaced with "joy" and "unbounded resolution" (p. 770). He intends, of course, to "save" Dmitri, to bring the "real" murderer (Smerdyakov) to the courtroom and thus effect his innocent brother's release. That this feeling is meant to be regarded temporarily as a kind of conversion experience is evidenced by Ivan's stumbling at this moment over the peasant in the snow, whom before visiting the valet he had deliberately knocked to the ground and left to freeze to death. Now altered by his confrontation with his own culpability, he
lifts the man in his arms and spends an hour reviving him.

He comments "with satisfaction" on this humane act:

"If I had not taken my decision so firmly for to-morrow . . . I should not have stayed a whole hour to look after the peasant, but should have passed by, without caring about his being frozen."

(p. 770)

The situation would seem to place Ivan in the biblical role of the Good Samaritan; what is absent from this smug observation of Ivan's, of course, is the acknowledgement that it was also he who had played the robbers' role in that tale, knocking the man to the ground and leaving him to die.

The mood of exhilaration fades when Ivan enters his own room. The ensuing debate with the Devil explodes the reader's notion that Ivan's conversion was complete, that it provided a structural device paralleling the corresponding experiences of Alyosha (the vision of Cana) and Dmitri (the dream of the babe). Ivan has not yet travelled to the depths of his soul: his "unbounded resolution" was too easily made. Though the shabby creature who torments Ivan for an hour apparently speaks nonsense, what Ivan divines from this prattle is the enormity of his guilt combined with the shallow, empty, prideful nature of his most cherished intellectual constructs. In the Devil's conversation one hears echoes of all of Ivan's "enlightened" ideas; one even recognizes the tones of the Grand Inquisitor. "I am perhaps the one man in all creation who loves the truth and genuinely
desires good," the Devil insists, parodying with his bour-
geois tone the elevated grandeur with which Ivan and the
Inquisitor had voiced their sincere "love of humanity."

After the nightmare Ivan is genuinely changed. In
the shabby Devil Ivan has seen the reflection of the seedi-
ess of his own soul; the revelation both stimulates com-
passionate response in him (in his concern for Alyosha's
comfort) and brings about the total disintegration of his
personality. Alyosha, whose arrival has dispelled the evil
vision, perceives immediately the magnitude of the conflict
which is rending his brother's spirit when he exclaims:
"The anguish of a proud determination. An earnest con-
science!" Alyosha reflects that "God, in whom I\'\' dis-
believed, and His truth were gaining mastery over his
heart, which still refused to submit" (p. 796). Performing
an act of "heroic virtue," sacrificing his liberty to free
Dmitri while not believing in virtue, is a logical conflict
which Ivan's mind cannot support: either he is a hypocrite,
or he does indeed believe in morality and virtue and in the
God who is the source of that virtue.

The climax of Ivan's story and of the issue of human
relatedness generally comes during the trial when Ivan con-
fesses his complicity in the murder.

"\'\'Smerdyakov\'\' murdered him and I incited
him to do it . . . Who doesn't desire his
father's death?"

(p. 834)
All men desire the death of their father, Ivan snarls, and only pretend to love one another. The exclamation is meant symbolically, to indicate the "sham" morality which thinly conceals man's hatred of man: "One reptile devours another" (pp. 834-5). This time, in implicating all those present and the human race in general in his judgment, Ivan does not exclude himself. He no longer considers himself removed from the human situation, but knows himself to be one with all other men.

Death, then, has been the result of Ivan's "liberated" philosophy: death for his father, suicide for Smerdyakov, and death-like dissolution of his own rational faculties. Whether that "death" will give rise to new life for Ivan as for Alyosha and Dmitri, Grushenka, and the boys, is open for speculation. Certainly within the confines of this novel the pattern for new life must be sought elsewhere.

Rozanov has noted that Fyodor's four sons "grow up in the stench of the corpse" which is their father--i.e., they come to life out of death. 38 Three of the sons, Ivan, Dmitri, and Smerdyakov, appear to have inherited from that moral corpse which is their father, the "mark of Cain"--the mark of spiritual and communal death. For Alyosha, however, and later for Dmitri, the rotten soil out of which they have sprung becomes just that nourishment which stimulates, rather than kills, life. Rozanov has commented on this miraculous occurrence: The Brothers Karamazov discloses
the mysterious inception of a new life in the midst of a life that is dying. This miracle of rebirth of course occurs every spring in nature; death is a necessary prelude to the reemergence of the life-forces. It is as well the central event celebrated in the Christian story, the Resurrection of Christ. It is the process described by the epigraph from John:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (John 12:24)

Death in this novel then, can be considered either as the ultimate negation, or as an event preliminary to further spiritual growth. In this chapter I have been referring to the idea of death in terms of spiritual rebirth only—i.e., the death of the old man and the rebirth of the new man in Christ to which Paul refers:

If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. (2 Cor. 5:17)

However, in using this epigraph Dostoevsky seems to be referring as well to life after (bodily) death, as with Alyosha's vision of the resurrected Zossima, present at the Feast of Cana; numerous discussions on the subject of immortality (i.e., Book Three, Chapter 8); and Alyosha's joyful exclamation at the end of the novel:
"Certainly we shall all rise again, certainly we shall see each other and shall tell each other with joy and gladness all that has happened."

(p. 940)

The rebellion of Ivan and his Grand Inquisitor is taken seriously by Dostoevsky; but that rebellion is based on an inadequate conception of God/Christ; a dislike of, rather than compassion for, fellow man; and a failure to recognize the destructive implications of a philosophy which elevates a few men to the stature of gods in order to secure the "greater happiness" of the many. The Alyosha-story asserts a corrective vision to counter the distorted world-view of Ivan and his Inquisitor. In presenting the inherent destructiveness of "lacerations" and "sensuality" in the Karamazov world, Dostoevsky was able to establish the need for wholeness. Within the Alyosha-story the ingredients of that wholeness are revealed.

Dostoevsky's narrator takes pains to establish the young man's robust health. He comments:

Some of my readers may imagine that my young man was a sickly, ecstatic, poorly developed creature, a pale, consumptive dreamer. On the contrary, Alyosha was at this time a well-grown, red-cheeked, clear-eyed lad of nineteen, radiant with health.

(p. 24)

The emphasis on Alyosha's good health, his "normalcy," places him immediately on the side of the affirmative: his religious convictions and practice do not originate in the broodings of melancholy, the enforced isolation of sickness, or
the illuminations which precede epileptic seizures; rather, they arise from his love of people and his devotion to God. Alyosha chooses the monastic life not because he is unfit to live in the world, but because "at that time it struck him . . . as the ideal escape for his soul struggling from the darkness of worldly wickedness to the light of love" (p. 16).

He entered upon this path only because, at that time, it alone struck his imagination and presented itself to him as offering an ideal means of escape for his soul from darkness to light. Add to that that he was to some extent a youth of our last epoch—that is, honest in nature, desiring the truth, seeking for it and believing in it, and seeking to serve it at once with all the strength of his soul, seeking for immediate action, and ready to sacrifice everything, life itself, for it.

(p. 25)

Alyosha dreams of truth established on the earth, when "all men will be holy and love one another, and there will be no more rich nor poor, no exalted nor humbled, but all will be as the children of God, and the true Kingdom of Christ will come" (pp. 30-1). In his relations with his troubled family Alyosha lives out this dream of the Kingdom, loving each member without judging any: "He was incapable of passive love. If he loved any one, he set to work at once to help him" (p. 221). His father and brothers, who seem unable to get along with each other and mingle badly with the rest of society as well, respond with affection to Alyosha's open-heartedness. Fyodor Pavlovitch, for instance,
is deeply touched by Alyosha's presence in the house. The narrator comments that Alyosha pierced his father's heart by "'living with him, seeing everything and blaming nothing.'"

Moreover, Alyosha brought with him something his father had never known before: a complete absence of contempt for him and an invariable kindness, a perfectly natural unaffected devotion to the old man who deserved it so little. All this was a complete surprise to the old profligate, who had dropped all family ties. It was a new and surprising experience for him, who had till then loved nothing but "evil."

(p. 111)

Alyosha loves the old man not only because he is his father, but also because he is a man, a member of the human family. Fyodor earns the young man's affection in spite of having "deserved it so little"; for Alyosha, loving is not a question of merit, but an attitude of being. This attitude runs directly counter to that philosophy which would seek to justify the old man's murder because he has shown himself to be unworthy to be called a father--and hardly worthy to be called a man.

The other side of Alyosha's affection for his father is that love calls forth from the heart of this hardened old sinner a response in kind. The narrator observes that when Alyosha left his father, the old man "confessed to himself that he had learnt something he had not till then been willing to learn" (p. 111). Alyosha's presence in his house had affected "even his moral side, as though something had awakened in this prematurely old man which had long been
dead in his soul" (p. 21).

Alyosha affects Ivan and Dmitri in the same way. The elder brother calls him his "angel on earth," who will "hear and judge and forgive" (p. 124). The remote Ivan confides to Alyosha that "perhaps I want to be healed by you" (p. 280). At first Alyosha's "look of expectation" had annoyed Ivan, who preferred to protect himself from intimacy; but in the end he "grew fond" of those "expectant eyes," recognizing in them Alyosha's love for him (p. 272). Only Smerdyakov of this family fails to come within the circle of the young brother's influence: it is unclear whether this is due to omission on Alyosha's part, a failure to bring the sick brother into the sphere of his healing love; or whether perhaps Smerdyakov exists in fact in an ontological realm separate from that of the other brothers, the realm inhabited by Ivan's shabby Devil.

This aspect of Alyosha's personality is paralleled in the novel by the effect of the idiot Lizaveta on the local townspeople. The narrator observes that everyone seemed to like her; and even the schoolboys didn't tease her. "She would walk into strange houses, and no one drove her away. Every one was kind to her and gave her something" (p. 115). A similar observation is made by Mitsov about Alyosha:

"Here is perhaps the one man in the world whom you might leave alone without a penny, in the centre of an unknown town of a
million inhabitants, and he would not come
to harm, he would not die of cold and hunger,
for he would be fed and sheltered at once;
and if he were not, he would find a shelter
for himself, and it would cost him no effort
or humiliation. And to shelter him would be
no burden, but, on the contrary, would prob-
ably be looked on as a pleasure."

(PP. 19-20)

Alyosha, like Lizaveta, draws out kindness in others; he
combines the innocence of the mentally defective with an
active desire to bring about reconciliation among those he
meets. As Berdyaev notes, Alyosha is a "light-bearing," mov-
ing away from self toward others; Ivan, by contrast, is
dark—a mystery, riddle, sphinx—whom others seek to under-
stand. 43 One might observe finally that Alyosha’s physical
health is an outward sign of his psychic health, as that
word connotes "wholeness." That Dostoevsky intends just
this equation may be seen by the aged, withered appearance
of the Inquisitor, and by the distorted physical appearance
of Ivan, who sways as he walks and whose right shoulder
looks lower than his left (PP. 313-4).

Positive as the early portrayal of Alyosha may be, it
cannot fully accomplish its author’s artistic and religious
purpose in the novel unless Alyosha’s humanity is revealed:
thus Dostoevsky thrusts his hero into the world to suffer
temptation and a type of death. The epigraph to the novel
continues to assert its theme:

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground
and die, it abideth alone: but if it die,
it bringeth forth much fruit.
Dostoevsky wrote in *The Diary of a Writer* of his own spiritual pilgrimage: "My Hosanna has passed through the purgatory of doubt and been purified by the cup of temptation." Alyosha succumbs to the spirit of death, the "old man," which dominates the lives of those around him. But he emerges from this experience reborn, a "new man," prepared to enter the world into which his elder had sent him, strengthened for a vocation of healing.

Alyosha's period of darkness begins with his reluctance to obey his elder's order to "leave the monastery" and "go away for good."

"I bless you for great service in the world. Yours will be a long pilgrimage . . . Christ is with you . . . You will see great sorrow, and in that sorrow you will be happy . . . in sorrow seek happiness."

(p. 87)

The obligation of obedience of one's elder is established early in the novel: "When you choose an elder, you renounce your own will and yield it to him in complete submission, complete self-abnegation" (p. 27). This point is reinforced by the somewhat dubious legend of the "flying coffin" and by the tale of the monk sent by his elder to Siberia (pp. 27-8). Alyosha does leave the monastery as his elder commands him; but the confusion and disbelief he finds outside its walls cause him to regret the elder's decision. As he reenters Zossima's cell at one point he exclaims:
Why, why had he gone forth? Why had he
sent him into the world? Here was peace.
Here was holiness. But there was confu-
sion, there was darkness in which one lost
one's way and went astray at once.

(p. 187)

Mingled with anxiety over his spiritual father's ill
health is a deeper fear that one of his brothers will murder
old Fyodor. Alyosha's spiritual crisis accelerates as a
result of the violent attack on Fyodor by Dmitri: not only
the shedding of the father's blood by one brother but the
cold cynicism of the other unsettles him. Further distur-
bing to the young novice is his conversation with Ivan in the
tavern. The elder brother's pessimism about human nature,
his illness, and the content of the disturbing "Legend" com-
bine to create fear and dissatisfaction in Alyosha's mind.
After this encounter he literally runs back to the monastery
and the safety of Zossima, his "Pater Seraphicus," who will
"save" him "forever" from the doubts stimulated by Ivan's
presence.

The monastery to which he returns is no longer a
haven of peace and joy: the world's cynicism and distrust
have penetrated the isolating walls and invaded the very
room where Alyosha's dead elder lies. The grief Alyosha
feels when Zossima dies is heightened by the shockingly
swift decomposition of the body the monks had expected
would begin performing miracles. Alyosha, caught up in the
atmosphere of death in spite of himself, feels doubly
abandoned: deserted by his spiritual father in this moment of greatest darkness; and betrayed by his God, who ought to have rewarded Zossima's goodness with some visible sign of his sainthood, rather than allowing the elder's memory to be soiled. In the Notebooks this idea appears:

When the cadaver began to smell Alyosha began to doubt for the reason that Ivan had so clearly thrown out: 'The Elder is holy, but there isn't any God.'46

The narrator confesses great difficulty in accounting for all the changes which are occurring in Alyosha during those dark hours after his elder's death. He insists that throughout this time of trial Alyosha "loved his God and believed in Him steadfastly, though he was suddenly murmuring against Him" (p. 409), an avowal which the reader might well view with the same scepticism as Ivan's similar declaration that he accepts God, His wisdom and His purpose, and believes in "the Word to which the universe is striving," yet cannot accept the created world (p. 279). Alyosha now is also calling for "justice"—not at some remote date, but now: sainthood for his elder, and peace for himself. All is not ordered in the world as he believes it ought to be, and unable to live with that ambiguity, he adopts Ivan's stance: "I am not rebelling against my God; I simply 'don't accept His world'" (p. 410).

Having brought Alyosha to the identical sceptical position held by Ivan, that of Euclidian rationalism,
Dostoevsky shows the young man rapidly moving toward the kind of desperate sensual indulgence enslaving the reckless Dmitri. Both intellectual posturing and unbridled sensuality characterize old Fyodor, of course; Alyosha's pattern of movement now is toward the ethical and spiritual pole represented by the "evil" father and away from the influence of Zossima, the "good father." One might observe that each father, though he is also a dramatic character, is more accurately the spiritual soil in which his seeds, his sons, are nourished. Ivan and Smerdykov spring from the barren soil of Fyodor Pavlovitch, while Alyosha is initially nourished in the rich soil of Father Zossima's love. Dmitri is affected by the elder's bow of expiation (Book Two, Chapter 6), Alyosha's affection, and his own suffering, and becomes a spiritual son of Zossima.

It is important to remember that, as Ivan and Dmitri are recognizably dual personalities, partaking of both negative and positive spiritual potentialities, so Alyosha also possesses a dual nature. He is Karamazov as well as monk, and thus prey as are all men to the temptations of worldliness. Dmitri, speaking of himself as an insect "to whom God gave 'sensual lust,'" comments to Alyosha: "all we Karamazovs are such insects, and, angel as you are, that insect lives in you, too, and will stir up a tempest in your blood" (p. 127). Alyosha does not deny this possibility, for he knows his inherent sensuality.
Alyosha's progress along that road of sensuality, once begun, proceeds rapidly. Encountering Rakitin after leaving the monastery, Alyosha shows signs of irritability and impatience, an absence of the "famous mildness," as Rakitin tags it (p. 409). It is a mark of his humanity: "So you can shout at people like other mortals," Rakitin taunts him. "That is a come-down from the angels" (p. 410). Anger is followed by the more serious act of willfully breaking the fast by accepting Rakitin's sausage and vodka. Dmitri, whom before he had so earnestly sought to help, is momentarily remembered and as quickly forgotten. It is only a step from neglect of "the brother" to sexual indulgence, which suddenly seems an inevitable step for the disillusioned young man; for Grushenka has long harbored plans to seduce the chaste young novice, and he is now ready to abandon all former restraints in a desperate effort to purge himself of despair.

The encounter with the beloved of his father and his brother marks not his total surrender to death-driven sensuality, but rather a rejuvenation of his life-spirit. Grushenka, at first sitting on Alyosha's lap, springs up when she discovers the great loss he has recently suffered. Her compassion for his misery, her intuitive grasp of the spiritual crisis which must have driven him to her, destroys miraculously the power of sensual desire which had entrapped him. In the Notebooks Alyosha expresses his need openly to
Grushenka:

"My sister, there is so much love in you, love me, soften my sorrow. I am in anguish . . ."48

"Alyosha," Dostoevsky writes, "instead of teaching, looks for peace from Grushenka: give me peace. My sister."49

But in the novel Rakitin mentions Zossima's death by chance; Alyosha has said nothing, being fully absorbed in his daring new rebellion. Grushenka's compassionate response to news of the death is immediate; and Alyosha's transformation occurs equally suddenly.

Alyosha bent a long wondering look upon her and a light seemed to dawn in his face . . . "I came here to find a wicked soul—I felt drawn to evil because I was base and evil myself, and I have found a treasure—a loving heart. She had pity on me just now . . . Agrafena Alexandrovna . . . You've raised my soul from the depths."

(p. 422)

"You turned me back to God," Dostoevsky writes in the Notebooks.50 In the novel Grushenka is compared with the woman whose one worthy act was to give an onion to a beggar. That action is linked with the love of Christ in Dostoevsky's plans for the novel. Zossima tells Alyosha in a dream:

"Here (Christ) sits gentle toward us, humble, and merciful, he sits in our human form, as if he himself had only given a small onion—"51

Although the novel focusses more on the male characters than on the female, the character of Grushenka strongly supports the author's affirmative theme of rebirth. Not only is she instrumental in effecting Alyosha's recovery, but later she
exerts a similar positive influence on Dmitri, becoming by the time of Book Eleven almost a Mary Magdalene figure. In her relationships with Dmitri and Alyosha as those men are diverted from death-oriented sensuality toward the light of agape love, the author is apparently underscoring the multiple meanings of "love": where she is known from the beginning of the novel as a cause of strife, her person gradually loses its exclusive association with erotic love and becomes a focus for some of the healing forces which are at work in the Karamazov world. 52

After leaving Grushenka's, Alyosha retraces the path back to the monastery, back toward the pole of the good father. He reenters the room where the corpse lies; "the weeping and poignant grief of the morning was no longer aching in his soul" (p. 432).

Joy, joy was glowing in his mind and in his heart . . . there was reigning in his soul a sense of the wholeness of things.

(pp. 432-3)

After the vision, Alyosha experiences an ecstatic union with God and His world:

His soul, overflowing with rapture, yearned for freedom, space, openness . . . Alyosha stood, gazed, and suddenly threw himself down on the earth . . . he kissed it weeping, sobbing, and watering it with his tears, and vowed passionately to love it, to love it for ever and ever.

(p. 436)

Berdyaev describes Alyosha as "the man who has emerged
victorious from the test of freedom. That is how a human
destiny should work out. Alyosha, through this time of
testing, discovers the distinction between the kind of free-
dom which defines itself in terms of self-will and defiant
self-affirmation (and leads ultimately to disintegration
of the personality, as with Ivan) and the freedom in Christ
preached by Zossima. Alyosha, reborn out of the Karamazov
world itself, returns after his ecstatic vision to serve a
"transfigured nature and transfigured earth."

The series of temptations suffered by Alyosha resembles
the temptation scenes described in saints' lives. Within
the novel itself, Alyosha's trial and transformation dramatic-
tically enacts what was described more abstractly, with com-
mentary, in the preceding book. In "The Russian Monk"
Zossima "narrates" the conversion experiences of his brother
Markel, himself, and a certain friend. The lessons he draws
from these tales—the mandates to love, serve, and be respon-
sible each for the other in this world—come alive through
the person of Alyosha, and thus embodied, serve as living
truth to others. The book on Zossima, criticized by many
as "pallid, abstract, and lacking in drama," apparently was
regarded by the author as representing the "culminating
point in the novel." In this book he "confidently expected
to overturn the powerful arguments of Ivan Karamazov and
those of the Grand Inquisitor in Book V." Yarmolinsky
severely observes that "the figure of the 'elder,' though
wrought with patient care and pious intention, is one of the least convincing of the novelist's creations." But in the total scheme of the novel, the book in which Zossima's life and teachings are recorded serves as the spiritual soil in which seeds of love are nourished, to spring forth as the "fruit of the spirit"—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5: 22-3)—in the lives which the elder has touched.

Before pursuing the specific ways in which Alyosha's life embodies the abstract teachings of his elder, some parallels between Alyosha's temptations and those of Jesus must be noted. In each of the Synoptic narrations the temptation scenes follow immediately the Father's blessing of the Son for his work in the world (Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-2). Alyosha's trial essentially begins at the same point in his career—after Zossima has sent him into the world. A period of severe testing appears to be an essential prelude to the servant's ministry. William Baird interprets the temptation of Jesus in this way:

After his baptism Jesus must wrestle with the meaning of his divine sonship. He rejects all temptations to be a . . . miracle-working messiah. He interprets his role by means of the OT [Old Testament].

That part of the novel which repeatedly recalls Jesus' temptation by Satan, the interpolated "Legend," contributes a full measure of doubt to Alyosha's growing rebellion against God. The "Legend," however, entangles itself in a
false interpretation of that crucial episode in Jesus' career, while Alyosha passes out of his period of darkness, awakening to a new understanding of Jesus' ministry as it is to be imitated in his own life. As Mochulsky has commented in discussing the conflict between Ivan's and Zossima's philosophies, both of which so decisively influence Alyosha: "Euclid's reason negates; mystical experience affirms." One might observe further that the vision of Cana which marks Alyosha's release from spiritual bondage and thus essentially initiates his career of healing is in John's Gospel also the first miracle performed by Jesus at the beginning of his ministry. The mood dominating both Alyosha's vision and the occasion of the miracle in John's narrative is joy—the same joy which radiates from the starez Zossima, who was "almost always gay," whom people visited with "apprehension and uneasiness," but from whom they returned with "bright and happy faces" (p. 29). Zossima comments at one point: "Men are made for happiness" (p. 61): his radiance contrasts with the stern asceticism of Father Ferapont and with Ivan's intense gloom. In the vision, too, Zossima is happy—"joyful and laughing softly" (p. 435). Mochulsky, commenting on Makar Dolgoruky (A Raw Youth), one of the prototypes for Zossima, observes that "a 'cheerful heart' is characteristic of all Dostoevsky's just men; it is the crowning of the spiritual way, the reflection of the Kingdom of God . . . Life in God is joy and tenderness."
The reference to the "onion" in Grushenka's story reappears, associated here with drinking the "wine of new, great gladness"; in contrast to the stern Inquisitor who would bend all of history to his will, Zossima speaks of the "little onion" offered freely which alone suffices for salvation.

From this point in the novel, Alyosha is filled with that gift of Christ's spirit, the "new wine" which flows freely at the wedding feast. He passes out of the period of temptation, reborn in joyful affirmation of life's goodness.

While neither Alyosha nor the Christ of Ivan's "Legend" chooses to oppose verbally that death-tainted philosophy which forms the core of negation in Brothers, that philosophy is effectively refuted by the total affirmative structure which undergirds the novel at all times, climacing in the triumphant conviction of immortality with which the work ends. Alyosha's life story has been advanced as the principal component of that affirmation; the death and rebirth he experiences, for instance, is clearly meant to serve as a paradigm for the avenue of regeneration open to all persons in the novel, and thus (since Brothers essentially dramatizes the story of the human family) an open possibility for all mankind. A man need not remain in the land of the dead; he need not continue to side with negation. He may at any time be reborn in the spirit of agape love.

Many of Father Zossima's statements during his three major appearances in the novel (with the peasants; with the
Karamazovs; on his deathbed) reappear in the concrete actions of his son Alyosha and in the lives Alyosha touches. Thus understood, comments such as Shestov's become irrelevant:

Dostoevsky understood and could portray only the rebellious, struggling, seeking soul. As soon as he tried to depict a man who has found himself, one who was composed and comprehending, he immediately fell into offensive banality.61

Zossima's teachings are the foundation stones on which the entire affirmative structure is built. There is no reason why Ivan and the Inquisitor must be opposed by one equally "strong" dramatic figure; such is not the nature of the opposition offered that negation. The quiet joy of Zossima, the active humility of Alyosha, the compassion of Grushenka, and Dmitri's readiness to suffer— all illustrate equally one of Zossima's central maxims:

"If you are penitent, you love. And if you love you are of God. All things are atoned for, all things are saved by love ... Love is such a priceless treasure that you can redeem the whole world by it, and expiate not only your own sins but the sins of others."

(p. 58)

Throughout the novel characters are perplexed by, harassed by, doubts about the existence of life after death. Zossima's advice on this subject in Book Two reverberates with added intensity each time the problem appears:

"There's no proving the existence of immortality, though you can be convinced of it ... by the experience of active love. Strive to love your neighbour actively and indefatigably. In so far as you advance in
love you will grow surer of the reality of God and of the immortality of your soul. If you attain to perfect self-forgetfulness in the love of your neighbour, then you will believe without doubt, and no doubt can possibly enter your soul."

(p. 63)

The *Notebooks* contain an interesting parallel passage:

"Charitable works educate the soul. Be an atheist, but by way of charitable works, you will arrive at a knowledge of God."62 The quality of that love is plainly described: it is to be "humble love," through the exercise of which a man "may subdue the whole world." "Loving humility is marvelously strong, the strongest of all things and there is nothing else like it" (p. 383).

Associated with this idea of humility is the concept of the servant, introduced by Markel in speaking to those who serve him at the last: "I would wait on you, for all men should wait on one another" (p. 344). This theme is more subtly developed in *Brothers* than in *Lear* or *Little Dorrit*; but it is present in a strongly perverted form in the master-servant relationship of the half-brothers Ivan and Smerdyakov when their roles become dramatically reversed during the last interviews, and it is an important underlying element in the conversions of all the affirmative characters in the novel as they are changed from self-sufficient or confident or proud persons to those intensely conscious of their equality with all men.

*Agape* love so practiced sows seeds in the recipient
which may lie dormant for some time, to burst into fruit even years later: such was the influence of Zossima's brother Markel on the elder's later spiritual development. (The epigraph to the novel is the key concept here.) Such in turn is Zossima's "visitation of Alyosha's soul" during the boy's time of crisis, and as dramatically, such is Zossima's effect on the life of Dmitri to whom the elder had bowed. Ivanov refers to this influence of Zossima on Dmitri at the critical moment as "the kiss beyond the grave," the psyche's recreation of a previous physical act (in this case the complement of Zossima's bow). Ivanov relates this sense of "communion with the dead" to Alyosha's later pact with the schoolboys that they preserve in their hearts the memory of Ilusha:

"You must know that there is nothing higher and stronger and more wholesome and good for life in the future than some good memory . . . If a man carries many such memories with him into life, he is safe to the end of his days, and if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may sometime be the means of saving us."

(p. 938)

The memory of their reconciliation with Ilusha, the memory of being once "united by a good and kind feeling which made us, for the time we were loving that poor boy, better perhaps than we are" is potentially a "kiss beyond the grave"; at some future time the memory of Ilusha, of forgiveness, and of this feeling of communion among the boys and Alyosha
may exert a decisive influence on a life about to be destroyed. Ivanov, correctly I believe, perceives a central analogy here between the Ilusha "brotherhood" and the community of the Church throughout history, who are bound together by the living person of Christ. The memory of the Christ who is past historical reality returns continually from outside time to exert present influence on our ethical decisions.

Alyosha's ministry in turn bears rich fruit--appropriately enough, not with the wealthy or proud, but with children and the child-like. The "great and powerful" spirits deny themselves the miracle of new life, while those who "become as little children" are freed to experience the joy of rebirth and its attendant loving fellowship.

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

(Matt. 18:3)

Two groups of characters whose importance supports the affirmative structure of Brothers emerge late in the novel: Dmitri and Grushenka, and Ilusha, Kolya, and the boys--the child-like, and the children. Again, Zossima's words, which reflect the teachings of Jesus, are reflected in turn in the actions of Alyosha.

"Love children especially, for they too are sinless like the angels; they live to soften and purify our hearts and as it were to guide us."

(p. 383)

When this admonition appears, Alyosha has already experienced his first "meeting with the schoolboys" (Book Four, Chapter 3).
The boys during this encounter do not strike one as being "sinless like the angels." Ilusha first hits Alyosha in the back with a stone, then bites the young man's finger to the bone; the other boys have been attacking Ilusha with a barrage of rocks. Alyosha, in responding to their hostility with gentleness and serenity, breaks the chain of hatred which had culminated in this violence. In so doing, he "sows the seed" which will later develop into trust and fellowship with the boys. When in Book Ten this same group is gathered together, it is not to maim or destroy, but to restore health to the crushed spirit and sick body of that same Ilusha. The fellowship of mutual affection which now joins the boys in this healing effort apparently has been stimulated and fostered by Alyosha; although once the bonds of destructive hatred are dissolved, the children's natural innocence seems to surface, allowing them to cry and commiserate and hope as only the child-like can do.

Far different are the relationships of Ivan and Smerdyakov to children. Surely Alyosha's brotherhood with the group of boys is meant to contrast directly to Ivan's indifference on one hand and the valet's deliberate corruption of a child on the other hand. In any case the attitudes of both brothers are cast in the mold of Fyodor Pavlovitch, who, it was noted early in this chapter, begot then neglected his sons in their infancy. Ivan, who speaks so eloquently of children's sufferings, refuses to accept the necessary
corollary of that knowledge, that he personally is responsible for those children and for all men. Smerdyakov intervenes directly to teach the child Ilusha the "brutal, nasty trick" of feeding a hungry dog bread stuck with a pin. That cruel action, though Ilusha might rationalize that he was tempted to do it by a second party (the arguments advanced by the adult peasant and the adult Smerdyakov to justify their innocence of wrong-doing), obsesses the child on his death-bed: he recognizes his guilt and accepts the burden of it.

The author of *Brothers* never places Ivan and the child Ilusha in direct contact with one another, although Ilusha encounters in succession Smerdyakov, Dmitri, and Alyosha. That the book "The Boys" immediately precedes "Ivan" in the novel is perhaps no accident, however. "The Boys" introduces a new character who has appeared but little in the novel up to this point, Kolya, and dwells at length on the incidents associated with Ilusha's last days. In this book two important things are happening which will gain significance when juxtaposed against the tragic disintegration of the intellectual Ivan in the following book. First, Kolya, who has been identified as an Ivan-like character and who mouths many of Ivan's ideas about God and society, is forced into a real-life encounter with the "suffering" and "death" of which he had spoken so glibly. In rejecting Ilusha for his treatment of the dog, for instance, Kolya had intensified the younger
boy's guilt. In that relationship Kolya regards Ilusha not only as his inferior, but as a non-human object which can be "taught a lesson" much as one might punish an animal. When he comes to the dying boy's bedside and witnesses the consequences of his unfeeling neglect of Ilusha, his arrogance shatters and finally falls away altogether. As he leaves Ilusha's room at last he is "crying, and no longer ashamed of it," cursing himself for "not having come before," and bitterly aware of the toll his actions have taken on the younger boy. He is, in other words, what Ivan cannot be, penitent, and therefore ready to abandon himself to the love which can redeem his pride.

The second issue is related to the first. The child Ilusha (whose death in many ways presents a contrast to the death of Zossima) provides a tangible example of the suffering of children in whose name Ivan rejects God's world. Because such a one as this suffers and dies in this world, Ivan rejects God, immortality, and virtue. Alyosha (and with him, the boys) proceeds from a different premise. Ilusha, the person who is precious to us, is dying. He is our brother. How can we support him in these last days, easing his misery through the witness of our loving acts? As Zossima had preached, the "experience of active love" heals both giver and recipient: Ilusha and his family are comforted, and the boys, even Kolya, are redeemed. The novel ends with a funeral which is really a beginning, not
an ending: for the "experience of active love" convinces
the boys as well of the existence of immortality, though
they are given no palpable, "reasonable," proof of such.
The boys are united at the last by a tender affection for
their dead friend and a belief that life is good "when one
does something good and just" (p. 939).

The development of the sub-plot with the children,
which has in its upward affirmative movement contrasted so
vividly to the death-ridden story of Ivan, finds its struc-
tural double in the regeneration of Dmitri. Fittingly, this
brother had been of all the family the most ill-treated by
his father as a child. His young adult life is described
as "irregular," "wild," impulsive, and violent. The inten-
sity with which he pursues debauchery, the "Karamazov sen-
suality" which is so strong within him, is a mark of his
orientation toward the pole of death represented by that
father against whom he continually struggles. His wild
passion for Grushenka also combines a furious desire for
life with a violent drive toward death, as in his murderous
attack on his father.

If Dmitri's sensuality in large part is destructive
to himself and others, it also links him with the earth and
its regenerative powers: the name "Dmitri" is apparently
derived from "Demeter," the earth goddess. When he quotes
Schiller to Alyosha, he expresses both honesty about himself
and a great capacity for ecstatic experience. Man, the
"Hymn to Joy" exclaims, is "Sunk in vilest degradation" (p. 125). "I am that man myself," Dmitri admits. The hymn continues:

Would he purge his soul from vileness  
And attain to light and worth,  
He must turn and cling forever  
To his ancient Mother Earth.  

(p. 126)

Unlike Ivan, Dmitri is neither isolated nor proud; he acknowledges his baseness and unworthiness, including his desire to murder his father:

"I'm afraid that he will suddenly become so loathsome to me with his face at that moment. I hate his ugly throat, his nose, his eyes, his shameless snigger. I feel a physical repulsion."  

(p. 144)

Dmitri's hatred, even if reprehensible, is out in the open, rather than festering secretly within his heart. One thinks in contrast of Ivan, the night before he departs for Moscow, getting out of bed twice to listen on the stairs with a "strange curiosity" to the life movements of his father "stirring down below," the father he plans next day to abandon to his inevitable fate. The admission that he is capable of so vile a thought as murder is torn from Ivan at the trial only after a long tortuous struggle with pride which brings him to the edge of insanity. Dmitri, by freely admitting his culpability, is able through remorse and suffering to purify himself of the taint of bloodshed. Yarmolinsky observes of Dmitri:
Though he sinks to the depth of degradation, he knows his own baseness; from the filthy pit he reaches out to clutch the hem of divinity, and he is capable of rising to the peaks of generosity and religious exaltation.67

One feels throughout the novel that this impulsive, passionate man could gravitate permanently to either moral pole, that of his father, or that embodied in Alyosha and the teachings of Zossima. As Dmitri recognizes that "man is broad," capable of holding simultaneously the ideal of the Madonna and the idea of Sodom (p. 127), so he himself is capable of the "ignominy of vice" and of unbounded affection and generosity. As his character combines seemingly irreconcilable contradictions, so also does his romantic life involve him in a series of reverses: Katya, of good family and impeccable reputation, tortures him with her furious and self-righteous devotion, thinly disguised as love. Grushenka, scorned by the townspeople, the center of murderous rivalry between father and son, acquires moral stature and achieves a kind of sainthood; she becomes Dmitri's chief source of strength during his days of testing.

The central reversal in Dmitri's story is of course the inner liberation he experiences at the moment he is about to be confined for his father's murder. His dream of the babe and the peace that vision brings him parallel Alyosha's dream of Cana of Galilee, as Mochulsky has pointed out. In the manuscript for Brothers this note appears:
The district police officer conducts Mitya away. He remembers Grushenka and her cry. The beginning of spiritual purification (pathetically, as with the chapter Cana of Galilee). 68

In the Notebooks it is clear that the suffering and humiliation Dmitri undergoes as a result of his arrest contributes directly to his refinement:

Mitya speaks of the resurrection of another man within him: he was imprisoned in me and he would never have appeared if it had not been for this circumstance. 69

In the novel the radical nature of this conversion appears more markedly:

"Gentlemen, we're all cruel, we're all monsters, we all make men weep, and mothers, and babes at the breast, but of all . . . I am the lowest reptile! I've sworn to amend, and every day I've done the same filthy things. I understand now that such men as I need a blow, a blow of destiny to catch them as with a noose, and bind them by a force from without. Never, never should I have risen of myself! But the thunderbolt has fallen. I accept the torture of accusation, and my public shame, I want to suffer, and by suffering I shall be purified."

(3.617-8)

This exclamation, as it so greatly resembles Ivan's outburst at the trial, invites the reader to make further comparisons between the two brothers. Ivan's admission of complicity when it finally occurs ends in his being carried from the courtroom screaming. His mind disintegrates under the pressure of guilt. Dmitri has already experienced despair; he is acquainted with his "depths." At the moment of
crisis he is turned around—lifted out of the pit of darkness to begin his ascent toward the light.

In examining the event which heralds Dmitri's radical change of heart it is instructive to note first that as with Alyosha's experience, the revelation comes through imaginative vision. It is through an act of imagination that the two brothers break out of the box of their despair, out of the confining structures they had created for themselves (Alyosha's cynicism and disillusionment; Mitya's despair of changing his foul "nature"). Through imagination they receive an illumination of the world. As James Carroll has observed in a recent book:

The imagination is the faculty which opens us to the divine; more important, it enables us to be human. An imaginative act by definition is an act of hope and gentleness.

Dmitri's dream is not a creative act ex nihilo, but rather a leap out of his own life situation into that of another person, in this case that of the mother holding the starving baby. It is for him a moment of intense communion, a moment of sympathetic participation in the misery of that woman and child.

He felt that a passion of pity, such as he had never known before, was rising in his heart, and he wanted to cry, that he wanted to do something for them all, so that the babe should weep no more, so that the dark-faced, dried-up mother should not weep, that no one should shed tears again from that moment.

(p. 720)
The "coincidence of opposites," the irreconcilable ideals in his heart which had so troubled him up to this point, are resolved in this moment by leaving off his obsession with himself, his paralysing despair, and reaching out toward another person with compassion. Though he is in fact now powerless to act out his compassionate intentions, the vision remains integral to his new conception of his destiny. He and all men are responsible for the welfare of all other human beings.

"It's for the babe I'm going. Because we are all responsible for all. For all the 'babes,' for there are big children as well as little children. All are 'babes.' I go for all, because some one must go for all."

(p. 720)

In his new vision of life Dmitri accepts the burden of suffering as atonement: as punishment for his past corruption; as purification; and in the biblical sense of "at-one-ment" with God and the human family. "I want to suffer and by suffering I shall be purified" (p. 618). 71

Once again one thinks of Alyosha's similar vision of life and Ivan's woefully truncated view of man's possibilities. After his dream of the wedding at Cana Alyosha reenters the world, no longer preoccupied with his own doubts; the world is the scene of his ministry, and he embraces this ministry as fervently as he embraced the earth the night of his dream. His is a life of active love, a giving of self, a continual act of communion (participation) with the world.
Ivan, unlike Alyosha and Dmitri, shields himself from participation, his one humane act of succoring the peasant being tinged with self-righteous pride, his other act of speaking up at the trial ending in madness. If one considers not the incident of the peasant but the nightmare conversation with the devil as the author's deliberate parallel to the visions of the babe and the marriage at Cana, the criticism of Ivan is completed. His "vision" is of a shabby gentleman, not even of the glorious Grand Inquisitor he had himself created: it is a failure of vision, a failure of imagination like that which had prevented him from entering into the world of other fellow human beings. Rather than sparking or representing new insights into life which might be developing in Ivan, the visitor rehashes Ivan's old philosophies: "the incarnation . . . of [Ivan's] thoughts and feelings, but only the nastiest and stupidest of them" (p. 775). Ivan lacks the creative invention to go beyond the third dimension, beyond the confines of his Euclidian earthly reasoning: he cannot make the leap into the unknown, the unexpected, the world of mystery—and thus cannot experience either affirmation or grace.

As the nature of Dmitri has recognizably partaken of both moral extremes, the destructive and the affirmative, his spiritual rebirth as much as Alyosha's testifies to man's potential for goodness. Unlike the dehumanizing effect of the earthly paradisial "kingdom" envisioned by Ivan and his
Inquisitor, Dmitri's regeneration is a manifestation of the Kingdom of God breaking into human history, in this time. His individual rebirth, while asserting the primacy of individual human freedom, affirms the unity of all mankind. From "noxious insect" using others as means to gratify his selfish pleasures, he has been turned toward the light in which his human dignity is affirmed and the worth of all human creatures is recognized. Regeneration is an event as joyful as the changing of water to wine at the Cana marriage feast, and as miraculous as the raising of Lazarus.
NOTES


2 All page references to The Brothers Karamazov are from the authoritative translation by Constance Garnett (New York: Random House, The Modern Library, 1950).


4 Cf. Rozanov's theory on this influence, p. 11.


6 Legend, pp. 70-80.


8 Legend, p. 115; pp. 175-6.

9 Legend, p. 190.

10 Legend, p. 128.


12 Belinsky, paraphrased in Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, p. 152.

13 Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, p. 221.

14 The author has given us two pieces of conflicting evidence within the novel itself: his reference in the preface to the "second" tale he will be writing, the "main narrative" which is to be "the action of my hero in our day, at the very present time" (p. xx); and the novel (mentioned by the narrator in Book Eleven) in which the story of Ivan's life will be continued, a novel which he says he "may perhaps never write" (p. 743).
15 The Russian р̄о́д̄об̄ы́ ("fool in Christ") is transliterated as Yurodivy.

16 As Robert Patten has commented, only he who has the religious vision can accept the evil and face it.


18 Legend, p. 65.


22 Diary, II, 973-4.

23 Cf. Zossima's story in which a doctor comments to the elder: "The more I love humanity in general, the less I love man in particular" (p. 64). Zossima responds realistically: "Love in action is a harsh and dreadful thing compared with love in dreams" (p. 65).

24 In the Synoptics, see Matt. 9:27-31; 20:30-34; Mark 8:23-26; and scattered references to Jesus' ability to re- store sight to the blind. In John 9:1-41 the miracle of physical healing is directly associated with Jesus' power of spiritual healing: "I am the light of the world." The spiritual "blindness" (imperception, deadness) of the Phar- isees is also emphasized. In John, the healing of the blind precedes the raising of Lazarus, a miracle which also figures prominently in Brothers.

25 Fiction, p. 169.
26 See Ivan's discussion of John the merciful in Chapter 4 of Book Five. "I could never understand how one can love one's neighbours. It's just one's neighbours, to my mind, that one can't love, though one might love those at a distance" (p. 281). Cf. Dostoevsky's commentary on Nekrasov's "burlesque poem" "Vlas": "to love the universal man necessarily means to despise, and, at times, to hate the real man standing at your side" (Diary, I, 33).

27 See p. 308. Cf. also the portrayal of Father Ferpont, Book Four, Chapter 1.

28 Fiction, p. 169.

29 Freedom, p. 29.

30 Dostoeievsky, p. 104. Berdyaev asserts that faith in man is inextricably linked with belief in God and faith in Christ (p. 190). Cf. René Fuelop-Miller, Fyodor Dostoevsky, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York and London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), pp. 48-9, where he suggests that Dostoevsky recognized that "only in love for God was the true love of neighbor and of all humanity possible."


32 Berdyaev has observed that "Dostoeievsky's Christianity was light-bearing, the Christianity of St. John" (p. 225).


34 Fiction, p. 172.

35 Many critics have commented on Ivan's abandonment of his father when he is the old man's unofficial protector. Wasielek, for instance, points out the significance of the wood Ivan is to sell for his father. The name "Chermashnya" means "dark wood"; it is worth 3,000 rubles to Fyodor Pavlovitch, the "fatal amount" in question throughout much of the novel. "The first syllable of the word, Cher, is the root of the Russian word "dark," and the practical reason . . . Fyodor is pressing Ivan to go to Chermashnya is to sell a wood." "Chermashnya," he comments perceptively, "points symbolically to the Karamazov corruption" (Fiction, p. 173).
These details support the contention that in leaving his father (although he goes to Moskow, not Chermashnya), Ivan denies that he has a moral obligation to prevent the old man's murder.

36 The Westminster Study Edition notes that "the best manuscripts do not have without a cause, which was added later to soften Jesus' stern demand" (gloss on Matt. 5:22).

37 Cf. also the passage from I John 2:9-11 quoted earlier in this chapter.

38 Legend, pp. 65-6.

39 Legend, p. 65.

40 This contrasts markedly with Prince Myshkin's frail health and epilepsy. Significantly, in Brothers the epilepsy has been displaced to Smerdyakov.

41 In the novel, several preliminary models for Alyosha are presented: the transformations of Markel, Zossima's brother, and Zossima himself. In the light of the unusual emphasis on Alyosha's normalcy, it is probably significant that Markel's conversion is stimulated by the conditions surrounding his terminal illness; Zossima, by way of total contrast, is an army officer, completely worldly and self-sufficient, when he is shaken out of his dissolute life. Alyosha falls mid-way between these two extremes; yet the same themes and images are common to all the conversion experiences.

42 An instructive parallel to the father-son relationship of Fyodor and Alyosha is provided by another father-son pair, Captain Snegiryov and Ilusha: the father, a "worthless," poverty-stricken, self-created buffoon, is loved passionately by the sensitive boy. Again, love does not assess worth as the world does: Snegiryov's characterization recalls somewhat the Dickensian William Dorrit; and the devotion of Ilusha to a ludicrous and inadequate parent recalls the similar inexplicable "folly" of Amy Dorrit.

43 Dostoevsky, p. 44.

44 Quoted by Fuelop-Miller, p. 45.

45 Cf. especially Alyosha's conversation with Ivan immediately after the attempted murder: responding to Alyosha's query whether any man has a right to look at other men and decide which is worthy to live, Ivan replies:
"Why bring in the question of worth? The matter is most often decided on other grounds much more natural. And as for rights— who has not the right to wish... even if for another man's death [.] Why lie to oneself since all men live so and perhaps cannot help living so?" (p. 170)


47 I am greatly indebted to an article by Mark Kanzer, "A Psychological View of Alyosha's Reaction to Father Zossima's Death," in Wasiolek, The Brothers Karamazov and the Critics (Belmont, Cal.: Wadsworth, 1967), pp. 103-7, for suggesting the ideational opposition of the two fathers.

48 Notebooks, p. 125.

49 Notebooks, p. 111.

50 Notebooks, p. 111.

51 Notebooks, p. 117. Dostoevsky is quite definite about linking both Zossima and Jesus with the ethical action of "giving a little onion." He experiments with another phrasing for this idea, as he considers having Zossima tell Alyosha not to be afraid of Jesus.

"He is terrifying in his majesty [Before us ... terrifying because of his loftiness,] but he is infinitely merciful, [as if all he had done] was give a little onion just like us" (Notebooks, p. 117).

52 Kanzer maintains that in Alyosha's vision of Cana at Galilee Grushenka is identified in his subconscious with the Virgin Mary, the "unattainable mother" (p. 105). Alyosha, he suggests, finds a substitute for Grushenka's physical love in the kindliness of Jesus and Zossima, who, though they themselves do not marry, find joy in ministering to others (p. 106). Although it seems obvious that Alyosha's erotic desire for Grushenka is transformed into an equally intense relationship powered by agape love, I find no evidence in the novel to support Kanzer's reading of the "Cana" episode. It must be remembered that Alyosha has been exhorted by his elder to live in the world and to marry—not only to "find joy in ministering to others" but to find erotic fulfilment as well.
53 Dostoevsky, p. 95.
54 Dostoevsky, pp. 75-6.
55 Dostoevsky, p. 208.
56 Cf. Wasiolek's comments in his introduction to that section of the Notebooks containing plans for Book Six (Notebooks, p. 89).
59 Life, p. 591.
60 Life, p. 532. A modern writer, commenting on the respect with which "even educated Russians" regarded the starez, notes that "traditionally, the rags, the chains, the clear renunciation of the world gave these men freedoms that others lacked. They could rebuke the mighty, sometimes even the tsars themselves." The similarity between the freedom of the starez and that of the medieval and renaissance fool is striking. See Robert K. Massie, Nicholas and Alexandra (New York: Atheneum, 1967), pp. 183-4.
61 Dostoevsky and Nietzsche, p. 216.
62 Notebooks, p. 94.
63 Freedom, p. 162.
64 Freedom, p. 152.
65 In Dostoevsky, as Ivanov points out, "love of children, joy in them and close and direct contact with them, is a sign of a special state of grace" (p. 95). Cf. Myshkin's effect on the village children in Chapter Six of The Idiot.
67 Life and Art, p. 373.
68 Quoted by Mochulsky, Life, p. 594.
Atonement means "reconciliation" or "appeasement"; it also carries the meaning of "being in harmony or in union with" someone (cf. *Oxford Dictionary of Etymology*).
CONCLUSION

In this essay no attempt has been made to assess the literary influence of Charles Dickens on Fyodor Dostoevsky or William Shakespeare on either of these writers, although substantial external and internal evidence has been adduced which testifies to such influence. We know, for instance, of Dickens' fervent admiration of Shakespeare's plays. Dostoevsky's *Diary of a Writer* abounds with references to Shakespeare's plays; and we know not only that he owned and read many of Dickens' novels (though apparently in French or Russian translations), but that he enthusiastically praised the English author's genius. An 1873 entry in the *Diary* boasts that "*Russians* understand Dickens, when rendered into Russian, almost as well as the English--perhaps, even all nuances. Moreover, we love him--perhaps, not less than his own countrymen."¹ In a June, 1876 article on George Sand, he praised Dickens as "the great Christian."²

However, as Donald Fanger has perceptively remarked, the conception of literary influence "has always appealed more to the cataloguing than to the critical mind."³ Often this tendency can be blinding, even misleading. N. M. Lary, for instance, lists a number of Dickens' "humble" characters who "influenced" Dostoevsky's portrayals; but, failing to perceive a more important affinity between the two writers in their similar responsiveness to the spirit and the thought-
patterns of the New Testament, he completely misinterprets the significance of Alyosha in *Brothers.* Moreover, Panger notes, but Lary apparently did not know, that Dostoevsky probably did not read *Little Dorrit*; the remarkable similarity existing between the persons and roles of Amy Dorrit and Alyosha Karamazov must be explained on other grounds. So must the correspondences between the two nineteenth-century works and their seventeenth-century counterpart, *King Lear.* The obvious literary link is the New Testament—particularly the Synoptic Gospels and the Johannine and Pauline writings. Although only in *Brothers* is the author's Christian orientation openly acknowledged, *Lear,* *Little Dorrit,* and *Brothers* explore similar themes—the problem of evil; the fate of goodness in a hostile environment; the quality of relationships between persons; the dynamics of conversion or spiritual metamorphosis; the possible sources from which spiritual affirmation and a sense of community might be formed—central to the New Testament. In all three works as well, the imagery of light and dark, of false appearance and underlying reality, and of the "two Kingdoms" is present; and again, these are unmistakably New Testament images. It is the figure of the fool, however, who has united most completely these works with one another and all three with the Christian vision. It is he who inhabits the Kingdom of God, who embodies the New Testament virtue of *agape* love, whose valuing of persons as "Thou"
calls forth humanity in the individual man and an impulse to community in collective man.

The Lear "fools"—Cordelia, France, Kent, Edgar, and the Fool--; Amy Dorrit; and Alyosha Karamazov do not inhabit an esoteric spiritualized realm, isolated from the Kingdom of this world, however; their participation in the chaos and the misery of the world's creatures is the arena of existential confrontation where the regeneration of man can continually occur. It is here they live and act and heal. As Enid Welsford has commented, "Shakespeare's ethics were the ethics of the New Testament, [lang] in Lear his mightiest poetry is dedicated to the reiteration of the wilder paradoxes of the Gospels and of St. Paul..." The dramatic figures whom we have termed "Christian fools" embody those "wilder paradoxes." They manifest wisdom-in-folly, the "folly of Christ," which challenges the accepted in the name of the human, which affirms man's essential goodness and the goodness of life itself, despite man's ambiguous life-situation and the duality of his nature.

Finally, the fools in King Lear, Little Dorrit, and The Brothers Karamazov express that vision of life and that mode of ethical action to which their creators assent: with the daring of genius Shakespeare, Dickens, and Dostoevsky have established a heroic ideal defined not by success, courage, wealth, or military prowess, but by weakness and humility, the practice of agape love, a willingness to suffer
for others, and a concern with the regeneration of both individual and communal man.
NOTES

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